

Analysis of the contribution of the Youth Livelihood Program towards enhancing Self-Reliance among the Youths in Lira City, Uganda

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the contribution of the YLP towards enhancing self-reliance among the youths in the west division of Lira City.

Methodology/approach: The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design. A closed-ended structured questionnaire with a five Likert scale was used to collect data from a sample of 249 respondents based on the program theory postulated by Reynolds (1998); it entails the logic behind how programs are built, with particular emphasis on the program process. Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics aided by SPSS (version 20).

Results: The findings suggested that the YLP program enhanced self-reliance among the youths by 11.1%. The youths in Lira City West Division moderately benefited from livelihood support (3.10, SD = 1.08) and institutional support (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.241). A robust regression analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between the YLP program and self-reliance ($R^2 = 0.111$). Livelihood support (Coef = 0.159, p-value 0.0025) was found to be positively and significantly correlated with self-reliance. However, the statistical analysis revealed that institutional support had a negative relationship with self-reliance (p-value > 0.05, 95% CI).

Limitations: During the study, it was difficult to find some respondents since they were scattered looking for activities to earn a living therefore extra efforts were ensured such as using research assistants in order to find the respondents. Inadequate funds to facilitate the study like transport to the field, and printing questionnaires were also a problem. The researcher got a loan from friends and the bank to cover the gap.

Contributions: This study contributes to the understanding of local community development initiatives using the empowerment approach.

Keywords: Youth livelihood program, self-reliance, livelihood support, institutional support.

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1. Introduction

Youths have become one of the nation's most valuable assets when carefully nurtured toward goal orientation through training, psychological, financial, and spiritual support on how to live better lives (Gough, 2016). In a number of countries across the world, the majorities of youths are out of school or not employed in the formal sectors, and others lack employment. Governments must take appropriate actions to adequately prepare and orient youth toward work, family, and societal development in order

to accelerate global sustainable development and achieve SDG 7 (Mwesigwa & Mubangizi, 2019). The term “the youths” is best described as a stage of transition from dependence to independence. The United Nations (UN) considers youths as those falling between 15 and 24 years of age without prejudice. The description from the Africa Youths Centre considered the youths as individuals aged between 15 and 35 years, and this has been adopted and considered by a number of countries in Africa, including Uganda (MUTISYA, 2020). In support of that, young men and women are considered as youths and recognized as vital resources tied to the economic development of countries (Diraditsile, 2021).

A study conducted in Morocco revealed that “livelihood programs” are those services that are provided by either the government or other organizations to the community so as to meet their basic needs and contribute to their future well-being (Kwayu, Paavola, & Sallu, 2017). These programs are financial support, vocational skills training, and institutional support focusing on the youth’s empowerment, poverty reduction, employment creation, and self-reliance among the youth and the general community (Mwesigwa & Mubangizi, 2019). In this respect, self-reliance can be achieved through the YLP and several livelihood interventions [also known as livelihood capitals (Khatun, Baten, Farukh, & Faruk, 2022)] have been established by different countries for youths. Self-reliance among youths has been defined as the circumstance where young people gain autonomy over their lives or make their own decisions without being directed by others (Bellaqa, 2021). The global report on the youth population shows that approximately 1.2 billion youths were aged 15 to 24 years worldwide by 2019, accounting for 16.6% of the overall world population. According to the projections in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, the number of youths in the world is expected to grow by 7% to 1.3 billion by 2030 (Krisch, Averdijk, Valdebenito, & Eisner, 2019). This is the targeted date for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Munro, Van Der Horst, & Healy, 2017).

The latest report released by the International Labor Organization shows that the global youth unemployment rate remains high and stands at 13.6% as of 2020. The contributing factors to this high youth unemployment are largely attributed to lack of or inadequate job opportunities, barriers to entering the job market due to limited experience, and the increasing population size. Humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, and other organizations have been focusing on supporting disadvantaged youths in African countries through financial, material, and skills training support programs in order to create self-reliance among the youths regardless of the socio-economic status and educational level attained by an individual. International organizations have focused their efforts on politically unstable and impoverished developing countries that need more empowerment in terms of social capital such as Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Vietnam, and others in order to improve the livelihoods of their families and the general population (Easton-Calabria et al., 2017; Wanggai, 2021).

The Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region is faced with a youth unemployment rate of 10.6 %. Numerous studies conducted and documented in Africa reveal that the majority of youths work in the informal sector; many are unemployed and remain poor despite their educational level (Ackah-Baidoo, 2016). Working conditions for those in the informal sector remain poor due to low wages, a dearth of social safety networks and insecurity, making it difficult for a number of African countries to move on par with the more advanced nations. In support of that, an African Development Bank report shows that between 10 and 12 million youths enter the workforce in Africa each year, yet only 3 million formal jobs are created annually, and so a number of graduates end up driving taxis in countries such as Cameroon, Uganda, and Kenya. Several interventions have been sought to ensure that youths gain self-reliance through multi-faceted skills training, financial support, business entrepreneurship skills, and institutional support aimed at reducing both poverty and unemployment among youths in poor countries. Nonetheless, youths in low-income countries must acquire skills and abilities for social and economic development, as well as the ability to compete globally. The government of Tanzania, for instance, started implementing the ESR with the aim of producing competent youths in the agricultural sector and other hands-on-driven activities necessary for self-reliance (Regmi, Andema, & Asselin, 2020). This suggests that when a good number of youths across African countries become self-reliant, they will be confident enough to make proper decisions, utilize the acquired skills, become responsible

for both their families and communities and develop the capacity to support themselves and those who depend on them.

Uganda has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world, with an approximately 3.7% annual population growth rate. The highest proportion (78%) of the country's population is under 30 years of age (Kaba, 2020). This poses both a great challenge and vast opportunities for the government. Estimates suggest that approximately one million young people enter the job market annually, leaving the rate of unemployment among young people at 30%. Institutionally well-qualified youth are unable to find work, and the situation is exacerbated for both semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Those who cannot exploit their full potential are often associated with gambling or drug abuse (Ejang, 2020). The study conducted in Kenya by the National Youth Bungee Association in 2017 established that over one million youths were empowered in order to increase their employment prospects and economic capability, essential for self-reliance (Rapando & Achieng, 2021). One of the major targets of UNDP is to address the challenge of unemployment among youths through the provision of vocational skills, increased competitiveness of the youths within the labor market, building the capacities of national institutions to mainstream the youths' employment, and supporting youth-led enterprises to pilot innovative ideas. All these interventions focus on enhancing self-reliance among the youth (Nakiyingi, 2019). In Ghana, the MASO provided training services for the youth covering market-oriented skills training, coaching, mentorship, and creating youth access to land, finance, and other essential services (Fox & Kaul, 2018).

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) is the government of Uganda's financial support program designed as an intervention in response to the high rate of unemployment and poverty among youths in the country. It covered approximately 112 districts with a budget of UGX 265 billion from 2014 to 2017. The YLP was adopted by the government, private sector, civil society organizations, and non-governmental organizations (Mwesigwa & Mubangizi, 2019). It was based on three pillars, namely: skills development, institutional support, and livelihood support, aimed at promoting self-reliance among the youth. The livelihood support component constituted 70% of all the YLP, and this included viable income-generating activities such as dairy production, high-value crops, poultry/egg production, piggyery, aquaculture, animal traction, agro-forestry, post-harvest handling, value addition, trade, and service sector projects. The YLP aimed to promote self-reliance among the youths in the target communities (Mango et al., 2021). In Northern Uganda, there is still a high population growth rate of approximately 3.2% and a youth unemployment rate of 2.4%, both increasing by 0.72% from 2019 to 2020. This challenge contributed to a high dependency ratio and exerted pressure on the available resources needed for livelihoods, employment, economic development, and family welfare. In order for the youths to be self-reliant and reduce the high rate of unemployment, the government of Uganda has come up with several interventions such as skilling the youths, Emyooga, poor youth projects, youth empowerment schemes, and lately, youth loans through the YLP. Nonetheless, a good number of interventions have failed due to corruption and mismanagement of the youth projects, a lack of ownership and involvement of the youths in the projects (Aryemo et al., 2019).

The government of Uganda supports the youths in Lira City through several programs. The recent livelihood support Programme (Emyooga) targeted the youths with the aim of stimulating and strengthening self-reliance through financial support (Lira, Robson, & Klooster, 2022). Lack of skills and experience, tribalism, a lack of relevant information on available jobs, a lack of self-confidence, poor decision-making, and a lack of resources to start a business were the major causes of poverty and unemployment among youths (Ojek, 2018). Despite the fact that the government and its implementing partners are working hard to enhance self-reliance among the youth, available statistics suggest a rapid increase in the unemployment rate among the youth with a 0.7% increment. Therefore, this study investigated the contribution of YLP in enhancing self-reliance among the youths in Lira city.

Unemployment among youths continues to rise at a rate of about 0.7% per year, posing one of the most significant challenges to the government. Although approximately one million young people enter the labor force each year, 30% of institutionally qualified youths are unable to find work, and the situation is even worse for semi-skilled and unskilled youths (Ejang, 2020). The youth unemployment rate was

19.7% in 2017 and approximately 50% of the youth are not engaged in any income-generating activity save for being self-employed (Asiimwe, 2022). The YLP was strategically designed as an intervention to create employment opportunities and self-reliance among youths, with an annual budget of UGX265 billion (approximately US \$100 million) aimed at livelihood support programs. The research done by Ekesionye and Okolo (2012) in Uganda found that government and non-governmental agencies had implemented different youth livelihood projects in the community, but there was still a high level of poverty and unemployment among the youths, something that amplifies the level of youth vulnerability (Mwesigwa & Wahid, 2021). This suggests that a number of young people are jobless, lack self-reliance and are only involved in gambling activities such as sports betting as a source of livelihood (Mwesigwa, 2018). Therefore, this study investigated the contribution of YLP in enhancing self-reliance among the youths in Lira City. The study investigated the contributions of YLP towards enhancing self-reliance among the youths in Lira City.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The research was based on program theory, which entails the logic behind how the program is built, with a particular emphasis on the program process. Consequently, the modeling uses three components: program activities or input, the intended outcome, and the mechanism of achieving the outcomes. As such, the process of the program outcome is contingent upon and must clearly follow the described procedures or channels. The program's critical input must describe and define the composition of the program, how it will be delivered, the strength or amount of treatment required, and the expected outcomes after accomplishing the project. The program theory was later supplemented by the theory of process, which focused on how the project can be implemented by clearly entailing the steps through which an intervention or Programme is implemented and includes steps related to the organization's plan for delivering interventions as well as a service utilization plan for ensuring use of the program services (Da Silva & Toda, 2021; Kadiyala, Rawat, Roopnaraine, Babirye, & Ochai, 2009). The theory further suggests that to ensure the successful implementation of any program targeting the community, the process or mechanism concerning the program must be detailed, such as the information about the important steps, links, and phases of the expected transformation, the process, policy standards as well as some of the implementation issues (Olin, Kase, & Toda, 2021).

In addition to that, the output/outcomes must be broken out into immediate, intermediate, and long-term impacts. With respect to the youth's livelihood program, the outcomes such as the improved capacity of the youth, self-confidence, responsibility, employment opportunity, and reduced poverty must be clearly entailed in the program. For the past decade, the majority of funding has been focused on youth employment, but there has been limited evidence that those interventions build skills, increase knowledge, and create self-reliance among community youth. The numerous research conducted on the YLP only merely focused on issues such as empowerment, poverty, and unemployment, leaving a wide gap in self-reliance. The study conducted among the youths reported a low level of confidence, especially to implement problem-solving strategies and engage the youths in activities that do not require them directly or with less commitment (Parris, Varjas, Meyers, Henrich, & Brack, 2019). The theory further suggests that people who design projects must focus wisely on the long-term effects and the project's sustainability when the projects kick-off. The YLP that focuses on vocational skills training such as tailoring, hair styling, nursery bed management, and modern agriculture will create more self-reliance in the community and have a longer-term impact than projects that focus on money distribution (Okwelle, Deebom, Harcourt, & Okwelle, 2017). The facts remain that during training, the youths develop self-confidence, capacity, and decision-making skills, and they take on responsibilities for managing what they own.

2.2 Contributions of Livelihood support towards enhancing self-reliance

The main focus of livelihood support within the community is to enhance self-reliance through poverty reduction and creating employment opportunities for youth with economically disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the study conducted in the Makindye division on the contributions of the youth livelihood projects, it pointed out that YLP creates employment opportunities for the youths, which enables them to develop financial capability, hence promoting self-reliance among the youths in

the community (Nanyonga, 2021). Another study conducted in Uganda shows that people who benefit from the YLP become role models to others in the community. This could be a result of skills, confidence, responsibility, and effectiveness in the decision-making process gained by the YLP beneficiaries. Furthermore, the study conducted in Ibanda municipality on the contributions of the YLP towards improving the livelihoods of the youths revealed that the YLP has changed the lives of the youths directly and indirectly, but mostly in poverty reduction and employment creation. The support given to the youths increases their capacity to start and operate small businesses (Muhoozi, 2021). Another study conducted in China on the livelihood support program found that the community generated a lot of income, approximately 43% of the income was generated through selling products collected from the forest that was planted as a result of the livelihood program. These products include firewood, fish, crabs, and prawns, with agricultural and non-farm incomes accounting for 25% and 32% of total income, respectively, confirming that the project is the primary source of income (Aye, Wen, Marin, Thapa, & Tun, 2019).

The study conducted in Bangladesh to investigate the livelihood strategies for the community found that strategies such as community-based awareness, advocacy, mobilization, microfinance, and infrastructure-related support program were implemented to enhance self-reliance through shaping attitudes, capacity, and making them develop confidence towards reducing poverty, exclusion, and disparities among them (Seddiky, Giggins, & Gajendran, 2022). The study conducted on the role of livelihood assets in suitable livelihood strategies shows that assets such as human, natural, and financial assets have significant outcomes. Furthermore, with the improvements in household labor capacity and cash income per capita, young people may shift from agriculture to other businesses (Hua, Yan, & Zhang, 2017). In respect to the study, livelihood support, which was provided by the government and other non-governmental organizations, plays a key role in developing self-reliance among the youths in the community as a result of capacity development through financial support, improved seeds, agricultural machines, and the provision of skills (Kadiyala et al., 2009).

Another study conducted in Nigeria among students on the perception of farming as a means of livelihood revealed that 70% of them were willing to take part in farming as their source of income and the other %ages had a negative attitude towards livelihood support program through farming (Agumagu, Ifeanyi-Obi, & Agu, 2018). A similar study conducted on the youth's livelihood support programa in Ethiopia pointed out that most of the youths own their farmland due to the YLP. According to a Chinese study, the majority of youths receive assistance through livelihood support programs to create their own employment opportunities and develop the capacity in monitoring and promote ongoing businesses (Bharti, 2016). Also, the study conducted in Nigeria on women's empowerment through farming, trading, crafts, food processing, hairdressing, and poultry was the major economic activity performed by women. The study further suggested that other services such as personal savings, family assistance, philanthropic assistance, loans, and credit cooperative societies are the available sources of funds for women (Ekesionye & Okolo, 2012). Numerous literature reviews show that most of the research done, none of it focused on the youth's livelihood support and self-reliance in Uganda. Surprisingly, even the few studies conducted are majorly based on the youth's empowerment and none of them were conducted in Lira city.

2.3 Contribution of institutional support towards enhancing self-reliance

The institutional support program strengthens youths' belief in their own self-sufficiency as a resource in reducing poverty and unemployment crises among both educated and uneducated members of the community (Lardier Jr, Herr, Barrios, Garcia-Reid, & Reid, 2019). The study further linked empowerment through skills training, financial support, and institutional support such as policy, monetary, and non-monetary, to be one of the fundamental capital for critical consciousness among youths to bridge the gap in dependability and lack of self-reliance. A similar study conducted in Indonesia in 2019 found that the institutional strengthening of farmers affects simultaneously and significantly the participation of farmers in the development of self-confidence, which subsequently impacts the individual's self-reliance (Anwarudin & Maryani, 2017).

The study conducted in Japan found that the integration of employment, education, health, social care, and housing among displaced people into the legal framework was important for the implementation of government projects. In this matter, the youth's livelihood support program in the country should be integrated into the policy so as to enable easy planning and monitoring of the project indicators like poverty reduction, wealth creation, and the reduced unemployment rate among the youths since the policy entailed all the inputs and output indicators. The Government of Uganda is guided by the legal framework for the design and implementation of the livelihood support program. However, little is known about the legal framework governing the implementation of the livelihood support program and the expected outcomes. The study done in Mozambique found that heterogeneous institutions consisting of social and economic individuals can effectively achieve social mobility. Those kinds of groups offer opportunities for all the members to gain information, skills, and equal participation (Mwesigwa, Bogere, & Ogwal, 2022), and the group members can easily attain a state of self-reliance in comparison to other groups.

The study conducted on rural livelihood resilience and food insecurity found that the government lacked the metric for measuring the dependability and vulnerability of an individual (Pelletier, Hickey, Bothi, & Mude, 2016). Based on the livelihood projects being implemented in the country, little post-survey on the impact of the project on the lives of the youths is rarely or has not been conducted among the beneficiaries. In support of that, the study in 2000 on institutional support and sustainable livelihood in Southern Africa pointed out the key players in promoting and ensuring the project creates self-reliance among the youths in the community, such as management of their own ideas at the individual level, supervision by the government, policy issues, and managing changes produced by the project (Didarali & Gambiza, 2019). Furthermore, another similar study conducted in South Africa found that the private sectors have an important role to play in shaping community development in terms of employment creation, skills training, and development (Didarali & Gambiza, 2019). Another similar study conducted in Latin America reported that institutional support programs play a complex key role in promoting community self-reliance. This was explained based on the legal framework or the policy set by the government on the livelihood support program. The study conducted across East Africa on the development of self-reliance among displaced people cited the institutional support program as one of the livelihood programs promoting self-reliance among people.

The types of support, such as policy development, financial support, and non-monetary support, were reported. The study further pointed out that self-reliance depends on factors such as the environment, assets, access to good networks, access to markets, and access to public goods, and almost all of them provide the government and non-governmental institutions with information (Betts, Omata, & Sterck, 2020). The researcher concluded that self-reliance among the youths relies on institutional and governmental support programs but the provision of the institutional support program was found to be inadequately promoted. Furthermore, the study conducted in Afghanistan on the transformation change and self-reliance through national policy and development framework work stated that the government prioritized the reforms underpinning the growth strategies of the country, such as national priority programs, sector strategies, and existing reform plans, but growth agenda data was lacking. In all, the programs prioritized by the government were aimed at ensuring the successful implementation and monitoring of the outcomes of the project (Haque, 2020).

According to Müller (2022), self-reliance could be promoted by limiting the factors embedded in actors aiming at promoting self-reliance in the community. To conclude, the facts remain that different sectors must play their roles wisely from the time of project formulation, budgeting, recruitment of implementers, selection of beneficiaries, pre-project survey, real implementation, project monitoring, and finding out the impact created by the project. Therefore, the researcher found few studies conducted on institutional support for youth, and those few were conducted before the introduction of many of the YLP, such as Emyooga in 2020 and the recent one about the parish model, in which the process has just started.

2.4 Relationship between the YLP and self-reliance

The YLP has been designed strategically as an intervention for the youth to enable them to effectively participate in national development and improve their quality of life. The program focused on skills development, livelihood support, and institutional support. The study conducted by Schön (2020) to assess the level of self-reliance reported that self-reliance is associated with the livelihood support program since the community will develop self-confidence, capacity, and take responsibility when fully supported by the government or other implementing partners. The Ugandan government's approach to self-reliance entailed clear links between the YLP and promoting and enhancing community self-reliance. The provision of vocational skills training to community youths serves as the foundation for enhancing their individual capability, capacity, and self-reliance. Those young people can easily start their own businesses and make a lot of money or become employers, hence becoming independent or self-reliant (Okwelle et al., 2017). The evidence collected by the Uganda government on the refugees living in Uganda's rural Uganda settlements shows that just about 1% depend entirely on humanitarian assistance, have developed self-reliance, operate their own businesses and even employ others.

The study conducted by Awidi and Quan-Baffour (2021) found that agriculture extension education and financial literacy facilitate the acquisition of skills for adaptation and self-reliance in the community. The study further suggested that an adult's education provides immediate, relevant skillsets for adaptation. The study conducted on self-reliance and Neoliberalism reported that self-reliance is constituted through interaction, labor institutions, thinking ability, and the collective interest of people (Hébert & Mincyte, 2014). Nanyonga (2021) study on the YLP sheds some light on the impact of the YLP on self-reliance through job creation, poverty reduction, financial capability development, and decision-making effectiveness.

Another study conducted in Uganda shows that people who benefit from the youth livelihood support program become role models in the community. This has been a result of the skills, confidence, responsibility, and effectiveness in the decision-making process gained by an individual (Kadiyala et al., 2009). Another similar study found that countries with legal frameworks regulating livelihood projects can easily measure the strength and weaknesses of the project outcomes for immediate intervention (Pelletier et al., 2016). Therefore, the literature reviewed revealed a positive and significant correlation between the youth's livelihood support program and the development of self-reliance among disadvantaged or vulnerable youth in the community. The study conducted in Uganda on the youth's livelihood program and self-reliance among the youths and the few conducted on the livelihood support program focused on empowerment, and it was before the introduction of the Emyooga program by the government in 2020. The literature reviewed showed that there was no study related to the objectives under study found in Lira City. Furthermore, the researcher did not find any literature related to livelihood programs and self-reliance among youths in the Lira City West division. More so, most of the literature was not current therefore, the study provided information related to the research gaps.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

Research methodology entails research techniques or procedures used to gather and analyze data and can be explained as a way to systematically solve the research agenda or research problem (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). This study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional research design with a quantitative data collection method. This method is powerful when you want to understand the details of a process, problems, needs, or the community and the real context of the subject under investigation (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The researcher adopted the study design because of its benefits in providing data that helps in describing the relationship between the YLP and self-reliance. The study was conducted in Lira City West Division. It covered Amuca ward, Barapwo ward, Omito ward, Kakoge ward, Jinja Camp ward, Anai ward, Ober ward, and Adyel ward. These wards were selected because they accommodate many youth groups which were registered for YLP. Regarding gender and age; 41% were male and 59% were female while the majority of the respondents (53.8%) fell in the age bracket of 25-30 years although 18.1% were aged between 15 and 18 years and 28.1% were aged between 18 and 24 years.

3.2 Sample Size determination

The sample size of 254 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table of 1970. This table was chosen because the total number of groups and the actual number of youths were known to the researchers.

3.3 Data collection methods and tools

Unstructured, open-ended questionnaires were developed using the Likert scale to rate the respondents' responses. During the data collection process, questions were read by the researcher or research assistants, who translated them into the local language (Luo) and allowed the respondents to select the best answers in the presence of the researcher or assistants.

3.4 Data quality control

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, it was piloted using a test-retest procedure. The same questionnaire was administered to 10 youths who benefited from the youth livelihood program within Amuca ward twice (at a two-week interval) under the same conditions. The correlations between the scores at time 1 and those at time 2 were estimated using SPSS (version 20) to determine the Cronbach alpha values. The alpha value was found at 0.895. Since the value was more than 0.7, this implied that the tool was reliable. Face validity was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire. To ensure face validity, the researcher forwarded the structured questionnaire to the supervisor, who is an expert in the area covered by the research, for editing and review to ensure that all items constructed could help achieve the aim of the study.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was done at the level of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate levels. Univariate analysis is the simplest form of data analysis where the data being analyzed contains only one variable. Since it's a single variable, it doesn't deal with causes or relationships. The data was presented in the form of %ages, means, frequency, and standard deviation in tables. The bivariate analysis using correlation analysis was performed using Pearson correlation and the multivariate analysis using robust regression was conducted to test the relationship and the magnitude of the relationships.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

A number of questions were asked in regard to the background information relating to age, gender, level of education, employment status, and religion. As manifested in Table 3, the majority of respondents (53.8%) were aged between 25 and 30 years. It can be observed that female respondents 147 (59%) were significantly higher than males 102 (41%); this revealed that more females in Lira city benefited from the YLP compared to males. Regarding marital status, it is observed that the majority of the respondents 125(50.2%) were married. In terms of education, the majority of them (92.9%) completed primary school, and Christians dominated the study, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (249)	% (100%)
Age of the respondents		
15-18	45	18.1
18-24	70	28.1
25-30	134	53.8
Sex of the respondents		
Male	102	41.0
Female	147	59.0
Marital status		
Single	102	41.0
Married	125	50.2
Divorce/ separated	22	8.8
Level of education		
No education	57	22.9

Primary	92	36.9
Secondary	84	33.7
Institution	16	6.4
Religion		
Christian	129	92.0
Muslim	20	8.0

4.2 Contribution of livelihood supports towards enhancing self-reliance among the youths

The proportion of respondents that benefited from livelihood supports such as piggery was very high (Mean = 4.72, SD = 0.67). Goats (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.885), high-value crops (Mean = 3.56, SD = 0.923), and financial support (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.663) were particularly beneficial to the youths. This implies that the government provided some livelihood support to the community compared to others. Moderately, some respondents reported that they have benefited from poultry (Mean = 3.18, SD = 1.222), farming machines (Mean = 2.84, SD = 1.167), agro-forestry (Mean = 3.05, SD = 1.214) and produce buying and selling (Mean = 3.08, SD = 1.207). However, the number of youths who benefited from honey production (Mean = 2.0, SD = 1.520) and the market for crops (Mean = 1.872, SD = 1.271) was lower than in the statistics. This study's findings revealed that some of the support given to the youths was not equally distributed. The overall mean of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.08 clearly show that the youths in Lira City West Division moderately benefited from youth livelihood support as in Table 5 below.

Respondents rated the different rewards from 1–5 depending on their level of agreement with the statements. The mean score for all respondents (Mean), the standard deviation, and the % agreement with the statements are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the contribution of livelihood support

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Milk production (Cows)	245	1	5	1.64	1.245	Very low
Piggery	249	1	5	4.72	0.672	Very high
Goats	249	1	5	3.88	0.885	High
Poultry	249	1	5	3.18	1.222	Moderate
High valued crops (Hybrids)	249	1	5	3.56	0.923	High
Farming machines	249	1	5	2.84	1.167	Moderate
Honey production	249	1	5	2.0	1.520	Low
Agro-forestry	249	1	5	3.05	1.214	Moderate
Market for Crops	249	1	5	1.872	1.271	Low
Produce buying and selling	249	1	5	3.08	1.207	Moderate
Financial support	249	1	5	4.28	0.663	High
Overall				3.10	1.08	Moderate

Legend: 4.21–5.0 (Very high); 3.41–4.20 (High), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate); 1.81–2.60 (low); 1.00–1.80 (very low)

4.3 Contribution of institutional support towards enhancing self-reliance among the youths

As manifested from this study, the descriptive statistics from the study respondents revealed that some of the institutional supports such as supervision of project activities by expertise (Mean = 4.05, SD = 1.311), monitoring and evaluation of project activities (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.835), institutional technical teams providing support to projects (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.682), and dissemination of information on youth livelihood to the public were high. In addition to that, pre-and post-project surveys to find out the gaps and impact created after the project end (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.241), implementation of livelihood support policy by teams (Mean = 3.04, SD = 1.090), capacity building and training of the youths by technical teams (Mean = 3.36, SD = 0.892), and transparency and accountability of all program were moderate in the respondents' views. Generally, the overall mean of 3.14 and the standard deviation of 1.09 imply that institutional support was moderate, as shown in Table 3 below. Items 1-11 in the Table below represent the various forms of institutional support provided to the youths. Respondents rated the different rewards from 1–5 depending on their level of agreement with the statements. The mean score

for all respondents (Mean), the standard deviation, and the % agreement with the statements are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on Institutional supports

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Supervision of project activities with expertise	249	1	5	4.05	0.994	High
Strengthening the capacity of the youths on project management by expertise.	249	1	5	2.17	1.311	Low
Pre- and post-project surveys to find out the gaps and impact created after project end	249	1	5	2.71	1.241	Moderate
Monitoring and evaluation of project activities	249	1	5	3.82	0.835	High
How is the Implementation of livelihood support policy by technical teams	249	1	5	3.04	1.090	Moderate
Ensuring capacity building and training of the youths by technical teams	249	1	5	3.36	0.892	Moderate
Institutional technical teams provided support to projects	249	1	5	4.02	0.682	High
Transparency and accountability conducted	249	1	5	2.81	1.45	Moderate
Dissemination of information on youth livelihood to the public	249	1	5	3.41	1.103	High
Having a strong grievance handling and feedback mechanism	249	1	5	2.97	1.231	Moderate
Promoting good governance at all levels of implementation	249	1	5	2.27	1.187	Low
Overall				3.14	1.09	Moderate

Legend: 4.21-5.0 (Very high); 3.41-4.20 (High), 2.61-3.40 (Moderate); 1.81-2.60 (low); 1.00-1.80 (very low).

4.4 Level of self-reliance among the youths in Lira City West division

To determine the level of self-reliance among the youths in Lira city, a number of questions were asked; respondents moderately agreed that the youths were in self-reliance (Mean = 3.09, SD = 1.159), number of youths benefited from YLP developed capacity after the project (Mean = 3.25, SD = 0.986), number of youths trained with livelihood skills who are working (Mean = 2.90, SD = 1.231), number of youths who benefited from YLP and became responsible (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.966), and number of youths trained with livelihood skills and are utilizing the acquired skills (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.966). Furthermore, respondents disagreed that a number of youths trained with entrepreneurship skills started businesses (Mean = 2.42, SD = 1.084), a number of youths who benefited from YLP and developed confidence after the project (Mean = 2.75, SD = 0.986), and active groups formed remained active (Mean = 2.45, SD = 1.077). Generally, the overall mean of 2.865 and standard deviation of 1.934 implies that the level of self-reliance among young people was moderate. Items 1-10 in the Table below represent the various questions on the level of self-reliance among the youths. Respondents rated the different rewards from 1–5 depending on their level of agreement with the statements. The mean score for all respondents (Mean), the standard deviation, and the % agreement with the statements are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on the level of self-reliance among the youths

Variable	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Youths in self-reliance after livelihood program	249	1	5	3.09	1.159
Number of youths benefited from YLP developed capacity after the project	249	1	5	3.25	0.986
Number of youths trained with livelihood skills who are working	249	1	5	2.90	1.231

Number of youths trained with entrepreneurship skills started business	249	1	5	2.42	1.084
Number of youths who benefited from YLP and developed self-confidence after the project	249	1	5	2.75	0.986
Number of youths who benefited from YLP and become responsible.	249	1	5	3.06	0.966
Number of youths trained with livelihood skills and are utilizing the acquired skills	249	1	5	3.06	0.966
Number of youths training in their own business and have stable finance	249	1	5	2.88	1.013
Number of youths who benefited from YLP and got employed after the project	249	1	5	2.79	1.466
Active group formed and remained active after the YLP	249	1	5	2.45	1.077
Overall				2.865	1.934

4.5 Relationship between the YLP and self-reliance

To determine the relationship between the YLP and self-reliance, Pearson product correlation was used to establish the relationship. The correlation results were interpreted on the basis that when two variables are related, they vary together negatively or positively. It was found that skills development support was significantly correlated with self-reliance ($r = -0.196$, $p < 0.01$), youths' livelihood support was positively and significantly correlated with self-reliance ($r = 0.022$, $p < 0.01$), and institutional support ($r = 0.190$, $p > 0.01$). The study further pointed out that both youth livelihood support and skills development support correlate with institutional support as in the Person r correlation of ($r = 0.227$) and ($r = 0.030$) respectively. This implies that YLP increases self-reliance among the youths and the type of support they associate with one another as in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Correlation between Independent variables and Dependent variable

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Self-reliance	1.00			
Institutional support	0.191	1.00		
Livelihood support	0.022	0.227	1.00	

Significance at 0.01 level

4.6 Robust regression to determine the effect of the YLP on self-reliance

A robust regression analysis was performed to determine the effects of the YLP on self-reliance. The findings in Table 12 produced an adjusted R^2 value of 0.111, which meant that together, the constructs of the YLP contribute to about 11.1% of self-reliance among the youths in the community. The study findings revealed that there was a difference of about 11.1% in self-reliance among the youths who benefited from the YLP (Livelihood supports and Institutional supports). The study findings revealed positive significant effects of skills development support on self-reliance among the youths (Coef = -0.490, p -value 0.000) at a 95% confidence interval. This implies that the YLP that teaches skills play a significant role in increasing youth's self-reliance. The livelihood support (Coef = 0.159, p -value 0.0025) was found to be having positive effects on self-reliance and there was no relationship between institutional support and self-reliance (p -value > 0.05 , 95% CI) as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6. Regression analysis on the YLP and self-reliance

Self-reliance	Coef.	St. Err	t-value	P-value	95% Conf	Sig
Constant	41.797	4.982	8.389	.000	31.980	***
The youths livelihood supports	.159	.070	2.256	.0025	0.20	***
Institutional supports	-.038	.0058	-.657	.512	-.152	
Summary						
Adjusted R2 =0.111	Durbin Watson = 1.693					

Therefore, this means that the YLP is positively correlated with self-reliance among the youths however it constitutes only 11.1% of self-reliance among the youths. This implies that 89.9% of what makes the youths self-reliant is not investigated in this study.

The study established that a moderate number of the youths benefited from youth livelihood support provided by the government of Uganda (Mean = 3.10, SD = 1.08). The evidence is that some livelihood support such as the provision of cows, piggyery, goats, high-value crops (hybrids), and financial support were commonly provided to the youths in Lira city west division by the government of Uganda as reported in this study. The Pearson product correlation conducted found that there was a positive significant relationship between livelihood support and self-reliance ($r = 0.022$, $p < 0.01$). This finding is consistent with the findings of a study conducted in Makindye division on the contributions of the youths' livelihood projects, which found that the YLP create employment opportunities for the youths, allowing them to develop financial capability and thus promoting self-reliance among the youths in the community (Nanyonga, 2021). Another similar study done in Uganda shows that people who benefit from the youth livelihood support program become role models to others in the community. This could be a result of skills, self-confidence, responsibility, and effectiveness in the decision-making process gained by the youth livelihood beneficiaries.

The livelihood support was positive and significantly correlate with self-reliance. However, a moderate number of the youths benefited from the support. The study findings support the program theory, which emphasizes that program activities, the intended outcome, and the mechanism of achieving the outcome must be detailed. This finding is in line with a study done by (Lardier Jr et al., 2019), who found that institutional support contributes a lot to strengthen the belief of the youths towards their own self-reliance as one of the resources in reducing poverty and unemployment among both educated and non-educated people in the community. Another similar study conducted in South Africa found that the private sectors play an important role in shaping community development in terms of employment creation, skills training, and development (Didarali & Gambiza, 2019). Institutional support ensures the successful implementation of any projects targeting the community but does not create self-reliance. As noted earlier, in order to ensure the successful implementation of any program targeting the community, the process or mechanism concerning the program must be detailed, such as the information about the important steps, links, and phases of the expected transformation.

A robust regression analysis was used, and the adjusted R^2 was 0.111, indicating that the YLP contributes to approximately 11.1% of self-reliance among community youths. According to the findings, there was an 11.1% difference in self-reliance among the youths who benefited from the YLP (Livelihood support and Institutional support). There was no relationship between institutional support and self-reliance ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$, 95% CI). As argued in this study, community empowerment through training, providing financial support, and other support contributes a lot to the development of self-reliance. This can be seen clearly with unemployed youths recruited and trained in tailoring, entrepreneurship skills, agriculture, and financial management who end up developing confidence in opening small businesses which later become employers.

5. Conclusion

On the contribution of livelihood support, it was found that support such as provision of cows, piggyery, goats, high-value crops (Hybrid), and financial support was common in Lira city west among the youths. However, poultry, farming machines, agro-forestry, honey production, and produce buying and selling were limited as a result of the geographical setting, which affects the sustainability of some livelihood support to the youths within the city. The overall mean of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.08 indicated that livelihood support was moderate during the past YLP by the government of Uganda. The study concluded that the youths' livelihood support has a positive correlation with self-reliance ($r = 0.022$, $p > 0.01$). Regarding the contribution of institutional support towards enhancing self-reliance among the youth. The study found that institutional support was moderate during the YLP (Mean = 3.14, SD =

1.09). Support such as pre-and post-project surveys to find out the gaps and impact created after the project by experts (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.241), implementation of livelihood support policy by teams by both government and the community (Mean = 3.04, SD = 1.090), capacity building and training of the youths by technical teams (Mean = 3.36, SD = 0.892), and transparency and accountability showed that all program were not well-implemented. There was no significant association between institutional support and self-reliance among the youths ($r = 0.190$, $p > 0.01$). And regarding the relationship between the YLP and self-reliance among the youths in Lira City west division. This study concluded that the YLP positively and significantly correlate with self-reliance as indicated by the fact that they contribute to 11.1% of self-reliance. Lastly, both skills development and livelihood support were found to have positive and significant effects in enhancing self-reliance among the youths (Coef = -0.490, p-value 0.000) and (Coef = 0.159, p-value 0.0025) respectively. Finally, institutional support was proved statistically not to have an effect on self-reliance (p-value > 0.05, 95% CI).

5.1 Limitation and study forward

This study covered only one city in the country yet there are more than ten cities; this makes the results hard to generalize. Therefore, a different study can be conducted in other cities to determine whether these results are uniform across cities in Uganda.

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