
**ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME
(YLP) IN SHEEMA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The study was about Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Poverty Reduction among youths in Sheema District, Western Uganda. It was guided by the following objectives; to examine the indicators of poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District and to determine whether there is a relationship between youth livelihood programme (YLP) and poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District. The descriptive survey design was also adopted since it encourages the use of cross-sectional approach that is useful in obtaining an overall picture as it stands at the time of the study. This study utilized Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size table to come up with an adequate sample size of 272 and the sample size table allows the researcher to determine the sample size for a given population with 95% certainty. The quantitative data from this objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics formulae provided by the statistical packages for social science SPSS v.16. The analyzed results were tabulated appropriately using frequency Tables and percentages and sample percentages to illustrate the responses to the questionnaires. The findings revealed that Youth Livelihood Programme trainings are adequate to all group members as indicated by 60(23%) who strongly agreed, 36(14%) who agreed, 97(37%) who were not sure, 33(12%) who disagreed and 97(37%) who strongly disagreed. The study revealed that Youth livelihood programme groups are involved in income generating projects in sectors like Agriculture trade, service industry, vocational skills, agroindustry (value addition), creative industry, agroforestry and ICT as indicated by 57(22%) of those who strongly agreed, 73(28%) who agreed, 51(19%) who were not sure, 25(10%) who disagreed and 56(21%) who strongly disagreed. The researcher concludes that Money should be put at parish level to avoid delays in giving the money to the youths.

Keywords: Youth, Livelihood Programmes and Poverty Reduction

Background to the study

The Youth Livelihood Program [YLP] is a Ugandan government program that targets poor and unemployed youth between the ages of 18 and 30 with the intention of offering strategic and sustainable youth interventions (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). To enable the youth to contribute to national development (Zowena et al., 2023). The Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development was entrusted with the implementation of the program with an initial budget estimate of UGX 265 billion for the first five years (Gemma & Ibrahim, 2015). The YLP will be designed as; skills development, livelihood support and institutional support. On the other hand, poverty reduction refers to a set of measures, both economic and humanitarian, to permanently lift people out of poverty (Christopher & Micheal, 2022). Sheema district faces a high rate of poor youth due to

Statement of the problem

Over the years, the youth unemployment rate in Uganda has increased from around 23% in 2003 to over 70% today (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). Recent studies attribute these trends to a number of factors such as; skills mismatch, negative perception of young people towards blue-collar jobs, rural-urban migration to name a few (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo and Komunda, 2022). In an effort to improve the living conditions of its youth, the Government of Uganda introduced the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) in 2014 as a mechanism for youth to access seed capital for their own projects in a revolving fund. In all districts of Uganda, many youths reported benefiting from the program and their well-being was evidently improved (Polycarp et al., 2023). Despite the positive economic growth that Sheema has, it has not created enough and decent employment opportunities for the youth. As a result, youth unemployment remains one of the main development challenges. Therefore. Unemployment, vulnerability and underemployment remain widespread among youth in the district (Oliver et al., 2023). However, the introduction of the Youth Livelihood Program in Sheema District presents new opportunities for the growth and transformation of youth livelihoods in Sheema and other districts of Uganda. Against this backdrop, the study sought to assess whether the Youth Livelihood Program contributes to reducing youth poverty in Sheema District.

Specific objectives

- To assess the level of youth livelihood programme (YLP) in Sheema District.

unemployment, at least 64% of youth aged 18-30 are unemployed. The government is trying to tackle the high rate of youth unemployment which leads to poverty, in 2011/12 it introduced youth venture capital funds, the fund offers fixed subsidized interest loans and is dependent on public resources as well as funds offered by commercial banks. promote youth entrepreneurship to combat poverty by creating jobs among the youth (Faridah et al., 2023). The Youth Livelihoods Program is a program of the Government of Uganda (Oliver et al., 2023) that targets poor and unemployed youth aged 18–30 with the intention of offering young people strategic and sustainable interventions to enable them to contribute to national development. Therefore, this study evaluated the impact of a youth livelihood program on youth poverty reduction in Sheema District (Vincent & Peter, 2023).

- To determine whether there is a relationship between youth livelihood programme (YLP) and poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District.

Research Questions

- What level is youth livelihood programme (YLP) in Sheema District?
- What is the relationship between youth livelihood programme (YLP) and poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District?

Literature Review

The Level of Youth involvement in Youth Livelihood Programme

The Government of Uganda recognizes that youth participation in past livelihood and employment programs (ie al., 2022). Poor youth mobilization and sensitization, inappropriate targeting, poor beneficiary selection mechanism, skill mismatch with market demand and poor youth mindset, among others. The Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) is designed to provide strategic and sustainable interventions for youth to enable them to effectively participate in national development and improve their quality of life (Ntirandekura, Friday, Mbisi, et al., 2022).

The program focuses on three components namely; Skills development, livelihood support and institutional support (Pletscher, 2015). The overall objective is to enable young people in Uganda to realize their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels. It has three program components which include: skills development, livelihood support and institutional support. Culture and creative industries fall under the skills development component (Racheal et al., 2023). Recommended investment options include fashion and design, clay modelling/ceramics, weaving and embroidery, video and audio editing, leatherwork and computer use and applications. The program provides a floating fund that young people can invest in priority businesses that include culture and creative industries (UNESCO, 2015).

Relationship between Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) and Youth Poverty Reduction

The Youth Livelihoods Program (YLP) provides support in the form of revolving seed credit for skills development projects and income generating activities initiated by youth groups (Noah, 2021). The YLP is managed by the Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development (MGLSD) and implemented through district and lower local governments (Faith et al., 2023). The evaluation methodology was guided by the theory of change and used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Youth livelihood programs designed to provide strategic and sustainable interventions for youth to enable them to effectively participate in national development and improve their quality of life (Turyatamba et al., 2022). The program focuses on three components namely; Skill development, livelihood support and institutional support. Rising poverty rates in various countries due to youth unemployment have motivated some countries to establish a Youth Capital Fund (YCF) (Simpson, 2021). In African countries, entrepreneurship support and promotion has been identified as a strong component within the Youth Employment Network (YEN) of the United Nations, the ILO and the World Bank. For example, the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS) is a youth initiative to enable young people in Namibia to access capital, enabling them to

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participate significantly in Namibia's socio-economic development, according to a report on the scheme (Cand et al., 2022).

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was also adopted since it encourages the use of cross-sectional approach that is useful in obtaining an overall picture as it stands at the time of the study. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data from field, quantitative approach involved use of questionnaires while qualitative approach involved use of interview.

This study utilized Krejcie& Morgan (1970) sample size table to come up with an adequate sample 272 size. The sample size table allows the researcher to determine the sample size for a given population with 95% certainty. To obtain the above appropriate sample for the respondents, Krejcie& Morgan (1970). Questionnaire that consisted of a mixture of open-ended and closed-ended questions were used. Open ended questions meant to gather more information through elaboration and explanation. Closed ended questions, on the other hand, were asked to verify and confirm, usually eliciting only simple and specific answers. Open-ended questions offered more freedom to the respondents to expound on their

views, feelings or attitudes towards a subject whereas closed-ended question items limit the respondents to specificity of the responses for purpose of quantification and approximation of magnitude. The questionnaires were administered to youths for obtaining information concerning their understanding and perceptions of the link between youth's livelihood programme (YLP) and poverty reduction. Interview schedules were designed and used to obtain qualitative data from local leaders using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). These were subjected to interview because they have much information on the problem under investigation. Interviews helped in digging out additional information that was not be captured by the questionnaires. The purpose of the interview was to solicit views concerning youth livelihood programme (YLP) and poverty reduction among youths in Sheema District. Interview guides were used because they assist the interviewer to remain focused during probing time for deeper information.

Findings of the study

The findings from the study were presented and analysed in line with specific objectives as showed below.

Table 1: The Level of Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) in Sheema District.

Responses	SA		A		NS		D		SD		F	%
	5		4		3		2		1			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Youth livelihood programme groups have access to advisory workshops and trainings.	37	14	97	37	36	14	60	23	32	12	262	100

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YLP trainings are adequate to all group members	60	23	36	14	97	37	32	12	97	37	262	100
Individual members are satisfied with YLP trainings and workshops	32	12	32	12	60	23	97	37	32	12	262	100
Workshops and trainings are important in accessing and using funds efficiently	94	36	75	29	25	10	37	14	31	12	262	100
Technical persons like CDOs and local leaders are active in trainings.	87	33	72	27	35	13	22	8	46	18	262	100
All group members attend workshops and trainings	57	22	73	28	51	19	25	10	56	21	262	100
The procurement process of YLP is transparent.	56	21	51	19	57	22	73	28	25	10	262	100
YLP Group still running and using funds for the intended project.	45	17	78	30	31	12	10	37	14	25	262	100

Source: Field Data, (2022)

According to table 6 above, the responsible who participated in the study revealed that Youth livelihood programme groups have access to advisory workshops and trainings as indicated by 27(13%) of those who strongly agreed, 97(37%) who agreed, 36(14%) who were not sure, 60(23%) who disagreed and 32(13%) who strongly disagreed (Ronald et al., 2023). The other respondents revealed that Youth Livelihood Programme trainings are adequate to all group members as indicated by 60(23%) who strongly agreed, 36(14%) who agreed, 97(37%) who were not sure, 33(12%) who disagreed and 97(37%) who strongly disagreed. The respondents also revealed that Individual members are satisfied with YLP trainings and workshops as indicated by 32(12%) who strongly agreed, 32(12%) who agreed, 60(23%) who were not sure, 97(37%) who disagreed and 32(12%) who strongly disagreed (Rashid et al., 2023).

There are other respondents who revealed that workshops and trainings are important in accessing and using funds efficiently and also participants are made aware of the terms and conditions not forgetting aims and objectives of the programme which is to be implemented. This was indicated by 94(36%) of those who strongly agreed, 75(29%) who agreed, 25(10%) of those who were not sure, 31(12%) of those who strongly agreed (Isaac et al., 2023).

The other respondents who participated in the study revealed that technical persons like CDOs and local leaders are active in trainings. They argued that as it the directive from the Government for CDOs and Local leaders to sensitize

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the youth about government programmes to be implemented, the CDO and other local leaders like Chairperson LCI, LCII, LCIII and area councilors have the responsibility to organize the training for youth on how youth livelihood programme should be implemented as indicated by 87(33%) who strongly agreed, 72(27%) who agreed, 35(13%) who were not sure, 22(8%) who disagreed and 46(18%) who strongly disagreed (Emmanuel et al., 2023).

The other respondents revealed that all group members attend workshops and training. They argued that the government through the Ministry of Local Government organizes workshops for monitors of youth livelihood programme like the CDO and other local leaders like Chairperson LCI, LCII, LCIII and area councilors who in turn organize workshops for youth who are implementers for Youth Livelihood Programme. This was indicated by 57(22%) who strongly agreed, 73(28%) who agreed, 51(19%) who were not sure, 25(10%) who disagreed, 56(21%) who strongly disagreed (Tasha et al., 2023).

The other respondents revealed that the procurement process of YLP is transparent because the Local Governments are responsible for mobilization & sensitization, beneficiary selection, facilitating projects preparation, appraisal and approval of projects, monitoring and supervision. Beneficiary selection is conducted through community participatory mechanisms (done in the community). Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development provides the technical guidelines, support capacity building, financing, and overall coordination (Annet et al., 2023). YLP support is provided through Youth Interest Groups (YIGs) of 10-15 persons in form of Revolving Funds (Soft Loans-with youth friendly terms) as indicated by 57(22%) who strongly agreed, 51(19%) who agreed, 57(22%) who were not sure, 73(28%) disagreed, 25(10%) strongly disagreed (Frank et al., 2023).

The respondents also revealed that YLP Group still running and using funds for the intended project, the Youth Livelihood Programme was designed in the financial year 2013/2014 to respond to challenges of unemployment among the youth and up to now, the program still runs. Over 100 billion Shillings, has been injected in the Fund since its inception. This is out of an estimated budget of 265 billion Shillings that was earmarked to empower youth countrywide. This was revealed by 45(17%) of those who strongly agreed, 78(30%) who agreed, 31(21%) who were not sure (Allan et al., 2023).

The study findings revealed that Youth livelihood programme groups are involved in income generating projects in sectors like Agriculture trade, service industry, vocational skills, agroindustry (value addition), creative industry, agroforestry and ICT as indicated by 57(22%) of those who strongly agreed, 73(28%) who agreed, 51(19%) who were not sure, 25(10%) who disagreed and 56(21%) who strongly disagreed. The findings are similar with (Noah, 2021) who mentions that the Youth Livelihoods Programme (YLP) provides support in form of a revolving start-up credit for skills development projects and income generating activities initiated by youth groups. The findings are revealed that YLP Group still running and using funds for the intended project, the Youth Livelihood Programme was designed in the financial year 2013/2014 to respond to challenges of unemployment among the youth and up to now, the program still runs. Over 100 billion Shillings, has been injected in the Fund since its inception. This is out of an estimated budget of 265 billion Shillings that was earmarked to empower youth countrywide (Musaibah et al., 2023).

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Table 2: The indicators of Poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District

Responses	SA		A		NS		D		SD		F	%
	5		4		3		2		1			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self-sustainability as result of funds obtained from YLP	41	16	32	12	60	23	97	37	32	12	262	100
Increased income	37	14	97	37	36	14	60	23	32	12	262	100
Educating children in good schools	50	19	78	30	47	18	52	20	35	13	262	100
Building permanent houses	56	21	51	19	57	22	73	28	25	10	262	100
Starting up income generating projects	57	22	73	28	51	19	25	10	56	21	262	100
Reduction in borrowing	60	23	36	14	97	37	32	12	97	37	262	100
Youths are able to access financial services.	87	33	72	27	35	13	22	8	46	18	262	100

Source: Field Data, (2022)

According to the table 2 above, the respondents who participated in the study revealed that self-sustainability themselves as result funds obtained from Youth Livelihood Programmes. They argued that the youth who started with the programme have obtained money to start up income generating projects and this has made them to be self-reliant. This was indicated by 41(16%) of those who strongly agreed, 32(12%) who agreed, 60(23%) of those who were not sure, 97(37%) disagreed and 32(12%) strongly disagreed (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023).

The other respondents who participated in the study revealed that increased income as another indicator of poverty reduction among the youth. The respondents argued that when youth are carrying out economic activities, they have a possibility of increasing their income and this was indicated by 37(14%) who strongly agreed, 97(37%) who agreed, 36(14%) who were not sure, 60(23%) who disagreed, 32(12%) who strongly disagreed.

Other respondents revealed that educating children in good schools as another main indicator of poverty. They argued that as there is no parent who can educate his child in a good school, a person who educates his child a good school is an indication reduced poverty. This was indicated by 50(19%) who strongly agreed, 78(30%) who agreed, 47(18%) who were not sure, 52(20%) disagreed and 35(13%) strongly agreed.

The other respondents revealed that starting up income generating projects as another indicator of Poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District. They argued that no one can start an income generating project when he or she does not have funds and in Sheema, youth have started income generating projects like Poultry farming, cattle farming, goats rearing among others. This was indicated by 57(22%) of those who strongly agreed, 73(28%) of those who agreed, 51(19%) of those who were not sure, 25(10%) disagreed and 56(21%) who strongly disagreed.

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Other respondents noted that building permanent houses as another indicator of Poverty reduction among the Youths in Sheema District. The youth who have been able to set up permanent houses is an indication of poverty reduction as construction projects consume a lot of money. This was indicated by 56(21%) of those who strongly agreed, 51(19%) of those who agreed, 57(22%) who were not sure, 73(28%) disagreed and 25(10%) who strongly disagreed. The other respondents revealed that reduction in borrowing as another indicator. The youth in Sheema who are able to carrying our income generating projects have been able to reduce on borrowing because they are able to facilitate themselves in their economic activities. This was indicated by 60(23%) of those who strongly agreed, 36(14%) of those who agreed, 97(37%) who were not sure, 32(12%) disagreed and 97(37%) who strongly disagreed. Lastly, the other respondents revealed another indicator as youths in Sheema District being able to access financial services because they have collateral security. Some of the respondents revealed that in undertaking their income generating projects, they have been able to acquire some assets like land and building of commercial houses. This has made the them to acquire loans from financial institutions like SACCOs and banks as evidenced by 87(33%) of those who strongly agreed, 72(27%) of those who agreed, 35(13%) who were not sure, 22(8%) disagreed and 46(18%) who strongly disagreed.

Table 3: The relationship between Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Poverty Reduction among the Youths in Sheema District

Responses	SA		A		NS		D		SD		F	%
	5		4		3		2		1			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
All group members are involved in income generating projects	57	22	73	28	51	19	25	10	56	21	262	100
YLP targets poor and unemployed youth to harness their social-economic potential and increase self-employment	37	14	97	37	36	14	60	23	32	12	262	100
The youth are provided with marketable vocational skills and tool kits for self-employment and job creation	32	12	41	16	60	23	97	37	32	12	262	100
The youth are provided with relevant information and knowledge for attitude change (positive min set change).	87	33	72	27	35	13	22	8	46	18	262	100
Entrepreneurship and life skills are an integral part of their livelihoods	60	23	36	14	97	37	32	12	97	37	262	100
Workshops and trainings are important in	94	36	75	29	25	10	37	14	31	12	262	100

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accessing and using funds efficiently												
YLP Group still running and using funds for the intended project.	71	27	78	30	47	18	31	12	35	10	262	100

Source: Field Data, (2022)

According to table 8 above, the respondents who participated in the study revealed that Youth livelihood programme groups are involved in income generating projects in sectors like Agriculture trade, service industry, vocational skills, agroindustry (value addition), creative industry, agroforestry and ICT as indicated by 57(22%) of those who strongly agreed, 73(28%) who agreed, 51(19%) who were not sure, 25(10%) who disagreed and 56(21%) who strongly disagreed (Ntirandekura, Friday, Mbisi, et al., 2022).

It was also indicated that Youth Livelihood Programme targets poor and unemployed youth to harness their social-economic potential and increase self-employment as indicated by 37(14%) who strongly agreed, 97(37%) who agreed, 36(14%) who were not sure, 60(23%) who disagreed and 32(12%) who strongly disagreed (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022).

The respondents also revealed that the youth are provided with marketable vocational skills and tool kits for self-employment and job creation as indicated by 32(12%) who strongly agreed, 32(12%) who agreed, 60(23%) who were not sure, 97(37%) who disagreed and 32(12%) who strongly disagreed (Akankwasa et al., 2022).

There are other respondents who revealed that the youth are provided with relevant information and knowledge for attitude change (positive mind set change). The respondents revealed that the information given to them through workshops and seminars by facilitated by the community development officers has made them to change their minds for a positive change for development. This was indicated by 87(33%) of those who strongly agreed, 72(27%) who agreed, 35(13%) of those who were not sure, 46(18%) of those who strongly disagreed (Ntirandekura, Friday, & Muhammad, 2022).

The other respondents who participated in the study revealed that entrepreneurship and life skills are an integral part of their of their livelihoods as indicated by 60(23%) who strongly agreed, 36(14%) who agreed, 97(37%) who were not sure, 32(12%) who disagreed and 97(37%) who strongly disagreed (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022).

The other respondents revealed that all group members attend workshops and training. They argued that the government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development organizes workshops for monitors of youth livelihood programme like the CDO and other local leaders like Chairperson LCI, LCII, LCIII and area councilors who in turn organize workshops for youth who are implementers for Youth Livelihood Programme. This was indicated by 57(22%) who strongly agreed, 73(28%) who agreed, 51(19%) who were not sure, 25(10%) who disagreed, 56(21%) who strongly disagreed.

The other respondents revealed that the procurement process of YLP is transparent because the Local Governments are responsible for mobilization & sensitization, beneficiary selection, facilitating projects preparation, appraisal and

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The respondents also revealed that YLP Group still running and using funds for the intended project, the Youth Livelihood Programme was designed in the financial year 2013/2014 to respond to challenges of unemployment among the youth and up to now, the program still runs. Over 100 billion Shillings, has been injected in the Fund since its inception. This is out of an estimated budget of 265 billion Shillings that was earmarked to empower youth countrywide. This was revealed by 71(27%) of those who strongly agreed, 78(30%) who agreed, 47(18%) who were not sure, 31(12%) who disagreed and 35(10%) who strongly disagreed.

Conclusions

The researcher also concludes Youths beneficiaries need to be taught much on capital investment decisions by the Government. This should involves identifying such projects or assets to invest in and generate returns from them. Besides, these decisions significantly affect the profitability and stability of the firm. In addition, the researcher also concludes that Money should be given to the youths in full amount according to their budgets because many youth have struggled a lot with this poultry and other projects because they are not given enough money.

Recommendation

The researcher concludes that new policy regarding youth livelihood program funds should be formulated for example funds under this program should be put at parish level to avoid delays in giving the money to the youths for their programmes that reduce poverty reduction. In addition, the government should decentralize the funds under youth livelihood program up to parish level.

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