

Youth activism

 By [Antoinette Pombo](#)

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Youth Dynamix (YDx), the specialist youth and family research agency in Johannesburg, has revealed a new awakening in the youth market that will change the landscape for brands Africa into and beyond 2016.

This new movement will have an explosive impact on South African business. Much greater than any of the trends that have shaped the youth market in the past. Much more powerful than the mass-[transition to SnapChat](#), the unbending power of music and the development of content marketing as the centre-pieces of all successful youth campaigns.

The new awakening has begun...

I'm talking about the newly awakened youth activism we've only just had a glimpse of recently when university students practically brought the country to a standstill and the government to its knees, abolishing fee hikes at campuses nationwide for 2016.

“ [FEATURE] We look back the [#FeesMustFall](#) campaign which dominated headlines in 2015 <https://t.co/etcN5wxbgB> [pic.twitter.com/5CnuVlfAT0](https://t.co/5CnuVlfAT0)- Eyewitness News (@ewnupdates) [December 9, 2015](#) ”

This movement has been brewing for some time with students protesting against the slow transformation process at universities, the lack of transport to campuses, accommodation and tuition fees. But these demonstrations have been largely isolated to individual campuses and have resulted in relatively small gains.

This all changed in October of 2015 when the youth realised just how powerful they can be when they unite. A new and unstoppable sense of awakening and purpose was born within this segment of the population.

The youth have a newly-found voice that will amplify beyond belief!

Since the school riots of the seventies and eighties, the youth has largely been a 'dormant volcano'. But as Andrea Kraushaar, Research Director at YDx explains, it's certainly not because they haven't had any major gripes...

YDx's YouthTrax research has exposed a powerful monster ferociously growing in the undercurrents of the youth market over the recent years:

- 70% of the youth market are disillusioned about finding employment in SA,
- 55% believe the standard of education in South Africa is inferior to other countries,

- 74% say the government isn't living up to its promises,
- 49% are not confident about their future in South Africa, and
- 50% have considered leaving the country.

This research has also revealed an extreme lack of confidence and self-esteem in young people... Possibly being the very reason we haven't always seen the same level of passion we saw recently across the country in the 'Free Education' movement.

But now that the youth have discovered what they're really capable of, there's no turning back. This new awakening has armed them with the very arsenal they've been yearning for, for years... a voice.



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Youth marketers, beware!

Jane Lyne-Kritzinger, MD of YDx, explains that powerful activism movements like the one we witnessed in October 2015 will become the new trend into 2016 and beyond.

The youth will easily unify to create a force to be reckoned with, not just on campuses around the country, but first and foremost through social media - the digital platform they have grown up with, and are now able to claim as their own.

Across Africa, social media has increasingly become far greater than just a way to connect with friends or getting news about the world. It doesn't only provide the youth with a platform to share their stories and get their opinions out there; but also gives them an extremely powerful voice and sense of solidarity and unity - even across borders.

Word-of-mouth has never been this crucial as this young generation gains momentum as catalysts in their families, communities and society at large. With this newly discovered confidence and sense of purpose, the youth will quickly expose brands that step out of line.

With over 50% of Africans currently under the age of 20 and Africa being the fastest growing continent in terms of smart-phone use, you can imagine the explosive magnitude of this voice.

If you're not 100% *au fait* with the dynamics of the youth market in Africa, you could fall into a pitfall that could take your brand a lifetime to resurrect.

ABOUT ANTOINETTE POMBO

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