



PIVOT
Collective

Pivot Mobiliser, 2025

Introduction

Between April and June 2025, Pivot Collective facilitated a series of Pivot Mobiliser workshops with young changemakers from across Cape Town. These gatherings created **creative** and **reflective** spaces for young people to share their personal journeys of community action and activism. Participants expressed what **inspired** them to engage in activism, the **barriers** they face, their **visions** for future communities, and ideas for designing spaces that support activists. They also surfaced systemic frustrations and reimagined what community life could look like.

The insights captured here reflect the **voices**, **dreams**, and priorities of participants representing organisationsand movements that work with diverse groups of youth. This document synthesises what we heard and learned, offering guidance to youth, civil society actors, and funders seeking to support thriving, youth-led change.



The Spark: Why Youth Act

- Activism for many began with a feeling: something is deeply wrong. Whether born of trauma, community observation, or role models encountered in everyday life, a common thread was that young people act when moved by an emotional, lived connection to injustice. One participant shared: ***"I was shot by a stray bullet, and that experience propelled me to bring different conversations to my community."***

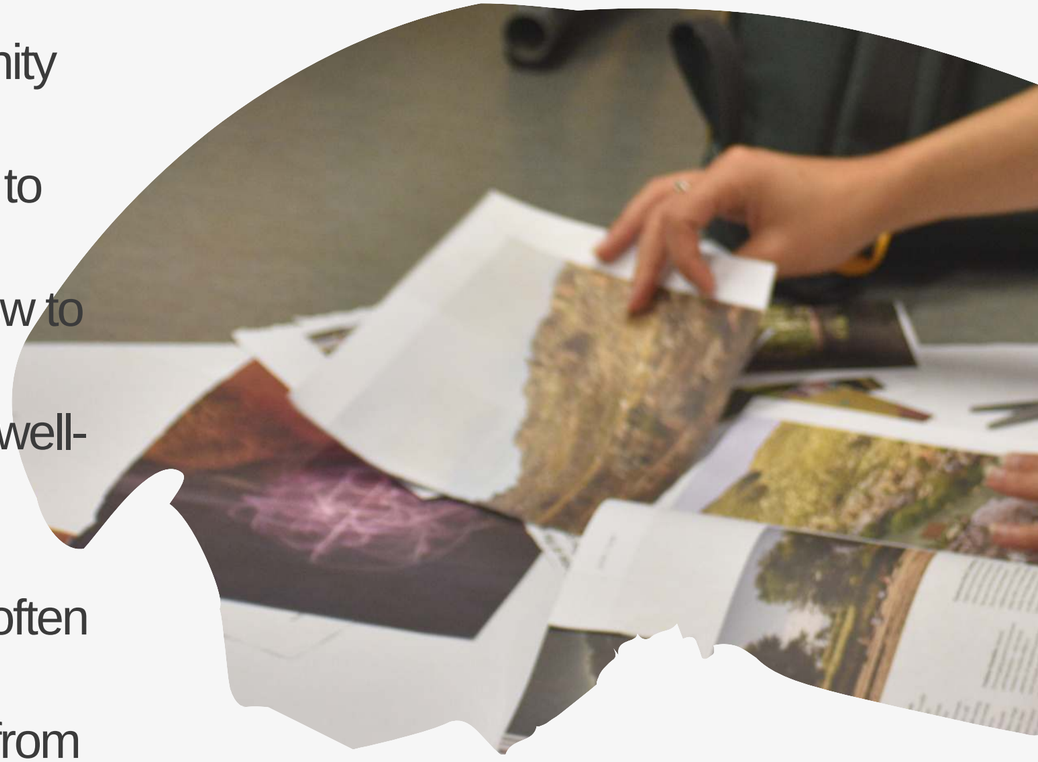
- But the spark isn't only pain; it also stems from hope, inspiration, and culture. From netball coaches to book club founders to storytellers, youth channel personal experiences into communal purpose. Schools, community spaces, and mentors often act as the first incubators of changemaker identities.



"There are willing people in the community… but we still need help with basic needs before we can dream."

Hurdles: What stands in the way of `youth changemakers

- Economic pressure: The need to earn a living versus continued community action
- Lack of job security challenges sustained activism. leading to a migration to corporate space over public domain
- Information inequality: Access to resources, funding, and guidance on how to navigate systems is limited and complicated.
- Mental health: Many struggle to balance activism, survival, and personal well-being. As one put it, ***"You can't care for others if you're emotionally unwell."***
- Systemic fragmentation: Government departments and local institutions often operate in silos, leaving youth to connect the dots alone.
- These challenges often lead to burnout, disengagement, or a shift away from activism altogether.



“We need systems that remind us we are not alone”

Visions of Thriving Communities



Despite adversity, youth articulated bold, coherent visions for the communities they are trying to build:

- **Education that is decolonized** and in mother tongues, with Pan-African values and practical application.
- **Mental health and wellness** support as a foundation, not an afterthought.
- **Economic freedom** through social entrepreneurship, alternative models (e.g. co-ops), and financial literacy.
- **Equity and inclusion** that recognizes intersecting identities (gender, disability, body diversity).
- **Environmental justice and food sovereignty**, led by communities, grounded in indigenous knowledge.

These are not abstract dreams. Participants discussed how they are already contributing to these futures, from starting local gardens and film collectives to mentoring youth and hosting knowledge-sharing spaces.

> We are a community of young changemakers in need of participatory grants to achieve collective and individual visions.

The System Isn’t Built for Us — Yet

A clear call emerged: simplify the systems that are supposed to support youth. The language of grantmaking, the complexity of applications, and the hierarchical way information is distributed must change. Youth proposed "participatory grants," where funders collaborate with communities to design and allocate resources.

"Information must be co-created, accessible, the process simplified and red tape removed

They also highlighted the importance of valuing different forms of knowledge and leadership. Not all changemakers speak the dominant language of policy and funding nor should they have to.



“Being yourself should not be something you have to negotiate.”

Pivot Collective's Own Learning and Commitments

As facilitators, we were reminded that our role is not to extract insights, but to honour and reciprocate. The SID (Social Impact Designers) programme will be actively shaped by what participants shared. In response, we commit to the following actions:

- Designing spaces of care, not just output by prioritising emotional safety, accessibility, and reflection in all SID sessions, and by measuring success through participant experience as well as deliverables.
- Respecting participants' time, presence, and ideas by starting and ending sessions on time, transparently communicating how insights are used, and crediting contributions in programme materials and outputs.
- Following up with clarity and shared decision-making by closing feedback loops after each engagement, inviting participants into programme design decisions, and clearly outlining next steps, roles, and timelines.

We affirm that youth are not "the future", they are shaping the present. Our role is to resource their leadership, amplify their voices, and actively remove structural and institutional barriers that limit their work.



"Don't make procedures too tedious. The responsibility of doing the dirty work is critical."

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thank you

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