

Building the Creative Economy in Africa



Developing Creativity into a Business



Learning Unit 2

Table of Contents

Learning Unit 2: Developing Creativity into a Business

<u>1. Introduction</u>	3
<u>2. Learning Objectives</u>	4
<u>3. What is a Niche in the Creative Economy?</u>	4
<u>4. Finding Your Niche</u>	8
<u>5. Writing or Recording an Artist Statement</u>	13
<u>6. Building a Customer Profile</u>	16
<u>7. Conclusion</u>	17
<u>8. Transcripts</u>	19

Learning Unit 2: Developing Creativity into a Business

1. Introduction

Welcome to the second Unit of the course. In Unit 1, you looked at

- What the Creative Economy is,
- Why is it important?
- How the Creative Economy benefits the country, community and people,
- How other creative people established their own business,
- The skills you would need to be successful in the Creative Economy and
- How to protect your intellectual property.

The next few units focus on building your skills and knowledge about the Creative Economy. The aim is to help you learn how to turn your artistic interests, talents and cultural heritage into a successful business.

This week, we will focus on exploring your vision for your business:

- How does your vision align with the market and what people want and are willing to pay for?
- How will you stand out from the competition in your field?
- How to express this vision in your artist statement?

These are particularly important questions if you need to find funding to start your business. Whether you get your start-up funding from a bank, an investor, or even friends and family, they will want to know the answers to these questions before they fund you.



2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand what a Creative Economy niche looks like and why it is important
- Identify your niche
- Create an artistic statement
- Develop an audience profile
- Learn how to embed your cultural heritage into the Creative Economy

Please be on the lookout for **short activities** to complete throughout the unit. They will help you achieve the learning objectives mentioned above. **Video transcripts** can be found at the end of the Unit.

3. What is a Niche in the Creative Economy?

A niche is a unique or specialised part of the market. It is **something new or different** that **stands out**. A niche can be special for several reasons:

- **Rare skills or ideas:** If very few people have the skill or idea you have, it becomes a niche. For example, creating a unique design that no one else makes, playing a rare instrument, or sharing stories that are hardly heard can give you an advantage. This could make it easier for you to succeed as an artist, musician, or storyteller.
- **Limited availability in a specific place:** If something is common in one place but is rare in another, it can be a niche in the second place. For instance, Zambian art might be widely available in Zambia but rare in the USA, making it special there.
- **Rare materials:** Products made with unique or hard-to-find materials can become a niche. For example, basket weavers who use fine, rare-coloured, or extra-strong grass can create niche products.
- **Unique combinations:** If a business needs a special mix of skills, materials, or ideas that are hard to find, it can create a niche. For example, a product may use rare fine grasses and require special fine weaving because the grass is fine. This unique combination can make the product a niche product.



Having a niche makes it easier to sell your products because it sets you apart. A niche market doesn't have to be small—it just needs to show how what you do is different from others. When customers see that they can only get your product or service from you, it builds trust and can create a lasting relationship.

There are a **range of benefits** to targeting your creativity for a niche market: it

- reduces competition – the more you go into the specifics of a market the less the competitors
- meets a unique market demand and so it improves sales retention
- builds brand loyalty
- reduces the need for general explanations as your consumers will be familiar with the product
- allows you to tailor very specific messaging to your audience
- improves reputation and credibility.

Artistic and cultural skills are often unique to a group or community, making them perfect for niche markets. For this you need to understand your special skills and how they fit into a larger market. To show how this works, let's look at an example of a niche market business in South Africa's Creative Economy.



Case Study: Monkeybiz

Monkeybiz was started in 1999 by Barbara Jackson and Shirley Fintz, two South African ceramic artists. It all began when they showed a small, beaded doll to Mathapelo Ngaka, a part-time art student. Mathapelo shared the doll with her mother, Makatiso, a skilled bead artist. Inspired by the doll, Makatiso asked, "Can you make a doll that stands out?" This question led to the creation of Monkeybiz.

The organisation aims to revive beadwork while helping women become financially independent. Beading holds cultural significance, especially in the training of Sangomas (traditional healers), as it represents different stages of initiation and rites of passage. Since 2000, Monkeybiz has supported over 450 bead artists, with all profits going back into the community.



Image: **Monkeybiz beaded animals**

Image Credit: Monkeybiz



Activity 1: Turning Cultural Beading into a Successful Business

Watch either the following video or read the interview transcript and then answer the questions that follow.

[Video – Monkeybiz Art That Makes a Difference](#)

or

[Read a transcript of the interview with Monkeybiz General Manager Kate Carlyle at the end of this Unit.](#)

As you do, make notes in your exercise book on the following questions:

1. What are the principles guiding their art business?
2. What is distinctive and niche about the Monkeybiz art products?
3. Why do they use beads and why do they produce different aims and objects? How did the idea of making beads come up?
4. What is their strategy to introduce unique art forms to a broader or potentially unfamiliar audience?
5. How do they differentiate your products in a market possibly dominated by more conventional or commercialised art?
6. How do they engage with the community, both in terms of artists and consumers?

Our Reveal:

Here is what we thought.

1. What are the principles guiding Monkeybiz's art business?

People don't usually engage in an art business to make money alone. There are other things that matter too. What were these for Monkeybiz?

- To promote local arts and preserve culture
- To empower people within marginalised communities.

2. What is distinctive and niche about the Monkeybiz art products?

Beadwork is very common in Southern Africa, but at the time of starting the business, people had not used it to make animals and run it as a viable business. That is why it is a niche.

3. Why does Monkeybiz use beads and create different animals and objects?

Beadwork is an important part of South African culture, with deep artistic and symbolic meaning. Each colour has a specific meaning, making beadwork a way for artists to express themselves. Monkeybiz also creates different beaded animals and objects because people enjoy unique products that match their tastes. For example, they make animals like porcupines, pandas, elephants, camels, and koi fish. This variety keeps the work fun for artists and ensures buyers get something special that's not commonly found.

4. Why does Monkeybiz include the artist's story with their products?

Sharing the artist's story highlights what makes each product unique. It also helps buyers understand the culture behind the art and encourages artists to value their own heritage.

5. How does Monkeybiz stand out from mass-produced art?

Every Monkeybiz product is handmade, so each piece is unique—unlike machine-made art, which all looks the same. Monkeybiz also attaches the artist's name to the label, adding a personal touch. This also encourages and helps buyers who collect works from specific artists. Monkeybiz creates detailed, unusual designs, like beaded armchairs and various animals, that stand out. By using African beadwork and explaining the meanings behind the colours and patterns, they add cultural depth and value to their products.

6. How do they engage with the community, both in terms of artists and consumers?

Monkeybiz organises market days which are held twice a month. The artists can sell their artwork on these market days. The market days are also times when community members get together. By selling on these days, the artists and the consumers can interact more easily. The artists can explain their product and get feedback on it. Monkeybiz also supports its community with services like a soup kitchen and a funeral fund so the community also feels committed to buying their products as they can see that the money they spend is going to good causes.

*How did your answers compare with those given above? Did you agree or disagree?
Did you come up with other points that we had not spotted?*

This section has introduced you to the idea of business niches and why they are important. We have done this through the example of one company. Showing what is original about a creative product and telling the story behind it helps a business to stand out and be distinctive. This can be very important for creating a market and connecting with the buyers.

4. Finding Your Niche

How can you stand out in a busy market where many others are selling creative products? This section will help you answer that question. As you start this section, think about what you love to do and why it's unique. This passion is important because it helps you express yourself, and if things get difficult and your business faces challenges, staying connected to what you love can help you keep going. However, finding a niche is a journey; it can take time to identify it.

Let us go back to 'H' and Volley, the two artists you met in Unit 1, with many years of experience in the Creative Economy. Let's listen to what they have to say about finding a niche.



Activity 2: Two Artistic Niches: Dance and Music

Watch these two videos of 'H' and Volley where they talk about their niches and how they developed them to build their businesses:

['H' Patten's Business Niche](#)

[Volley Nchabeleng's Business Niche](#)

As you watch, make notes on the following:

1. What stands out about their passion and niche?
2. How did the artist's culture and environment shape their niche?
3. How do their niches differ from the mainstream art markets they are involved in?
What makes them unique?

Our Reveal:

1. What stands out about their passion and niche?

Their passion lies in preserving and celebrating cultural heritage through storytelling, music, and dance. They show this by performing with unique instruments and weaving mythological stories into their art. This combination highlights their deep respect for their roots and their desire to share their culture in a meaningful way.

2. How does their culture and environment shape their niche?

Their culture and environment are central to their niche. Storytelling and music are often tied to communal activities, like gatherings under the moon or ceremonies marking life events. These performances go beyond entertainment—they pass down knowledge, values, and traditions that reflect their life.

Using indigenous instruments also connects their niche to the environment, as these instruments are often made from local natural materials. This shows resourcefulness and a connection to the land. The cultural importance of specific instruments, dances, and stories keeps their performances rooted in the community's lived experiences.

3. How does their niche differ from the mainstream?

Their niche stands apart from mainstream entertainment or storytelling in several ways:

- **Authenticity:** Unlike mainstream storytelling, which often simplifies cultural stories for a wider audience, their work stays true to their cultural roots.
- **Cultural Immersion:** While mainstream performances often focus on spectacle or commercial success, their work immerses audiences in their heritage, offering a **more authentic and educational experience.**
- **Oral Histories:** Their storytelling is tied to specific times and events, such as moonlit nights or ceremonies, blending entertainment with the passing down of cultural knowledge. This is different from mainstream stories, which are often removed from their original context.
- **Unique Instruments and Dance:** They use indigenous instruments and dance forms, creating a distinct sound and visual experience that contrasts with the global focus on Western music and dance styles.

How did your answers compare with those given above? Anything we missed?

So far, we have had the chance to hear from two incredible artists who shared insights into their niche and how they have carved out unique spaces for themselves in the creative industry. We also explored a niche art business based in South Africa, which gave us a glimpse into how creativity intersects with culture and entrepreneurship.

Now, we are going to shift our focus to another inspiring story. This time, we'll hear from Aysha, a cook and creative entrepreneur from Kenya. Aysha shares how she has developed her own niche within the culinary world, highlighting her challenges, successes, and the cultural influences that shape her work.



Activity 3: A Culinary Niche in Kenya

Watch the following video:

[Meet Aysha Creative Entrepreneur](#)

As you watch, think about:

1. How does Aysha's approach to her niche compare to the other artists we have heard from?
2. What strategies does she use to stand out in her field?

Our Reveal:

1. How does Aysha's approach to her niche compare to the other artists we have heard from?

Aysha's focus on chapati as part of Swahili cuisine highlights how she roots her creative work in her cultural heritage, much like the other artists who might draw from their unique cultural or personal contexts to define their niches. However, Aysha's emphasis on culinary tradition aligns her niche with a functional, everyday art form—food—making it both culturally significant and universally relatable. While the other artists might focus on visual or performance arts, Aysha's work brings attention to how cuisine can be a powerful medium for cultural expression and connection.

2. What strategies does she use to stand out in her field?

She uses several strategies. These include:

- Highlighting a cultural speciality: Aysha focuses on chapati, a beloved dish in Swahili cuisine, and positions it as her signature offering, showcasing its versatility and significance.
- Diversifying her offerings: By including various desserts, she broadens her appeal to different tastes while still staying within the Swahili culinary tradition.
- Promoting regional tourism: Aysha connects her culinary work to the broader goal of drawing tourists to her region, using food as a gateway to cultural exploration. This approach makes her work not just about food but also about promoting her community and heritage.

How did your answers compare with those given above? Did you come up with other points that we had not spotted?

Now that we have watched several videos showcasing unique niches, including Aysha's story about Swahili cuisine and her focus on chapati, it is time to turn the focus inward. Each of us has something unique to offer—a skill, a passion, or an idea that can become our creative niche.

A niche is more than just what you do; it is about what sets you apart and how you connect your work to a bigger purpose, just like Aysha connects her culinary art to her cultural heritage and regional tourism. Remember, a niche doesn't have to be perfect or fully formed—it's something you can refine over time as you learn and grow. Aysha didn't just cook; she turned a beloved dish into a way to share her culture and bring people together.

Next, let's think about how you can do the same with your creative work.



Activity 4: Discovering Your Niche

Please try to answer the following questions. You could write your responses, draw, use images or photographs, or even video your responses:

1. What inspires, or is inspiring about you and your art or skill?
2. Why are you passionate about it and why is it unique?
3. Why do you think other people might be interested in it?
4. Why do you think they may buy your product?

We encourage you to answer these questions without worrying about what you should say, as there are no right or wrong answers for this. This exercise simply helps you to think about your niche in more in-depth ways.

This exercise should have helped you to discover your niche. It would have shown you that a talent or unique skill needs to be made to fit into a market need, i.e. what people will want to pay money for. But, as we said earlier, finding your niche is not a one-off process. You may need to keep going back to it to refine it.

Building on the previous activity, we will guide you in further refining your niche, aligning your unique skills with market needs and potential customers.





Activity 5: Refining Your Niche

Using this visual aid, reflect on how your personal interests, skills, community (market) needs, and potential income sources converge.



To do this, put yourself in the centre and think about it from your point of view:

1. What do you like (interests, passions)?
2. What are you good at (strengths and talents)?
3. What does the community need? (Community here is market, so 'What is the market, and what specific need does it respond to?')
4. What can you get paid for?

There are no right or wrong answers. This is an exercise which helps you think about your interests and strengths in relation to the market and what it needs. It should help you to focus on your own creative market.

Now that you have learnt about how to identify a niche market, the next step is telling prospective buyers what that niche is and why they should buy from you. What do you have that others don't? This can be done by writing an **artist statement**.



5. Writing or Recording an Artist Statement

An **artist statement** is a short paragraph that helps the audience to understand what you are selling and why you think it is important. It can be a written statement or a video recording that can be used on websites and social media. It should be done in a way that will help you to increase the number of people who know about your creative work and thus will help you to increase your audience. Now, let's see how others have produced artist statements. For this, we return to 'H' and Volley.



Activity 6: Producing an Artist Statement - Listening to Others Part One

Watch the following videos:

[Dr. 'H' Patten Artist Statement](#)

[Volley Nchabeleng's Artist Statement](#)

While you are watching, note down:

1. What stands out most about the artist statements?
2. What did you like?
3. Did it give all the information you expected? If not, what was missing?

You can share and discuss your ideas with the group before writing and producing your own artist statement.

Our Reveal:

1. What stands out the most about the artist statements?

What stands out is the distinct way each artist tailors their message to their audience and practice. Volley emphasises the importance of adaptability and collaboration, particularly when engaging with different generations and integrating indigenous instruments with more contemporary sounds, such as the violin. 'H' focuses on establishing credibility through experience and clearly defining their artistic niche, blending African and Caribbean music and dance with jazz influences. Both statements highlight their commitment to preserving and evolving their respective art forms.

2. What did you like?

Volley keeps indigenous instruments relevant for younger generations by collaborating with violinists to blend traditional and modern elements. This shows their forward-thinking approach to bridging cultural gaps.

'H' clearly explains his principles and work, focusing on African and Caribbean music and dance with a jazz twist. His 40+ years of experience add credibility and depth to his practice.

3. Did it give all the information you expected? If not, what was missing?

While both statements are insightful, there are a few areas where more detail would be helpful:

- **Volley:**

He says they are ambassadors for indigenous instruments, but it would be interesting to know more about the specific instruments he uses, notable collaborations, or key projects that highlight his efforts.

- **'H':**

- While 'H' shares his artistic focus and influences, more detail about his specific works, notable performances, or exhibitions would enrich the statement.
- It would also be helpful to understand what drives 'H's artistic choices—what message or emotions does he aim to convey through his fusion of music and dance.

How did your answers compare with those given above? Did you come up with other points that we had not spotted?

Below is another example of artist statement. Different artists will relate to different arts and artistic statements so we hope listening to a few people will help you find one you can relate to.



Activity 6: Producing an Artist Statement - Listening to Others Part Two

Watch the following video.

[Lilian and Agnes Discuss Basketweaving as an Artistic Expression](#)

Lilian and Agnes don't answer all the questions we asked earlier, which 'H' and Volley covered. But they do give some insight into their art. We hope hearing these different perspectives will help you as you start thinking about your own artist statement.

You have been introduced to the value of identifying your niche and heard from many people about their artistic statements. In the activities below we will guide you to produce your own artist statement.



Activity 7: Producing Your Artist Statement

An artist statement should be between 150 to 200 words. Use simple and clear sentences to explain what your art or cultural skills are and why they are special and unique.

Here is a list of key questions to guide you on what to include:

1. What is the product?
2. What motivates you and why did you start the creative process?
3. What influenced you?
4. What is the gap that you fill in the community and market?
5. Why might people be interested in buying this product? Who is the product aimed at?

7. Why is this product timely?
8. What is the story behind it? What are the indigenous, intergenerational or cultural values in your product and in the ways in which you make this?
9. How will this product improve people's lives or experiences?

Here are some simple guidelines to help you:

- Use your own words instead of quotes or borrowed phrases.
- Use simple language that everyone can understand. Avoid technical terms. Only use local or indigenous words if they are essential to your work.
- Highlight what makes your work unique and how it stands out from others.
- Share the story behind your work. Is there a cultural heritage involved? Explain briefly if your community has been making this for years and why they started.
- Use "I" statements to make a personal connection with your audience.
- Ask a colleague for feedback before sharing your statement publicly.

Creativity may be your starting point, but if the goal is to create an artistic or cultural product that people are willing to pay for- the product needs to be something people want to buy.

In the final part of Unit 2, you will build on this understanding by learning how to create **detailed customer profiles**.



6. Building a Customer Profile

Customer profiling means making detailed descriptions of your ideal customers.

These descriptions, or personas, include information about their age, behaviour, likes, and needs. By knowing these details, businesses can adjust their products, services, and marketing to better fit what their customers want. This helps in reaching and connecting with potential customers, leading to more satisfaction and loyalty.

In the next activity, you will create a 'customer persona'—an imaginary character that represents a key segment of your target audience. For this you need to think about ideal customer, focusing on the main group you believe will be most likely to purchase your product.



Activity 8: Building a Customer Profile

Recreate a blank version of the table below and then using the table below for guidance, fill in your table with all the important details about your ideal customer. The more details you add, the clearer your customer will become. This will help you market your product to them more effectively.

Characteristics			
Demographic	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>
Economic Situation	<i>Wealth status or income bracket</i>	<i>Spending behaviour</i>	
Personality	<i>Tastes</i>	<i>Trends</i>	<i>Moods</i>
Behaviours	<i>Interests</i>	<i>Hobbies</i>	<i>Likes and dislikes</i>
Where do they shop?	<i>Markets? Shops? Malls? Online?</i>		

Once your table is complete, focus on completing the diagram next.

So far you have thought about the customer from your perspective. But now we encourage you to look at you and your product from your customer's perspective.

Imagine a customer. What will they get by buying from you? You can use the material in Activity 7 and the table above to pick out some of the value that they might get.

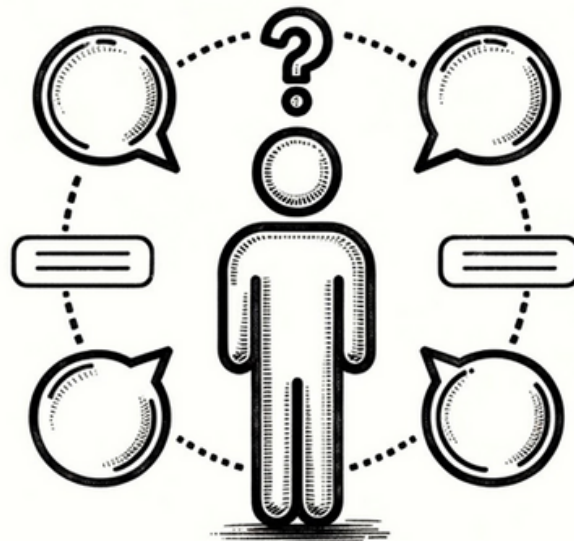
Recreate the Customer Persona diagram in your exercise book and then fill in as follows:

Rectangles: Reflect on the previous activity and add the values of your product or service that resonate with this customer. There are two rectangles in our diagram, but feel free to add more if needed.

Example: Woman who is 35 years old, has got some money but she likes to spend it on local materials.

Speech bubbles: Now, try to imagine that the customer is saying what they like about your product.

Here is an example: "I really like this product because as a woman I wear a lot of African scarves. I usually have to travel to a specific market to buy them, but now I can go online, choose the ones that are trending and have them delivered."



We encourage you to do this exercise because it will bring the customer to life in your thinking. You need to visualise them and to understand their specific requirements if you want to find a market.

After completing this exercise, you should have a clear understanding of your customer base. At this point, you may want to revisit your niche and artistic statement to ensure they directly address your customers. This final exercise brings together everything you have learned, putting it into words and action. Doing this will help set you up for success on your creative business journey.

7. Conclusion

You have reached the end of the second unit of this course. We hope you found it engaging and practical. Throughout this unit, you have delved deeper into the process of building a creative business, focusing on aligning your artistic vision with audience needs.

What We Have Explored:

- The importance of refining your niche to ensure it aligns with your interests, strengths, and market demands.
- How to create a compelling artist statement that effectively communicates your vision, passion, and unique value.
- The concept of customer profiling and its role in understanding audience needs and crafting targeted strategies.

What Creative People Can Take Away:

This unit has provided you with practical tools and strategies to define your niche. It should have helped you to think and speak about your artistic identity in a way that connects with your market and your audience.

Reflecting on Learning Objectives:

By the end of this unit, you should have:

- Understood what a creative niche is and why you need to try and find one.
- Learned how to identify your niche.
- Created or updated an artist statement that highlights the unique aspects of your work and connects with your audience.
- Developed an audience profile so that you know who your target audience is.
- Learned how to embed cultural heritage into your creative business.

Applying What You Have Learned:

This unit has equipped you with actionable steps to:

- Identify and refine your niche in the Creative Economy.
- Communicate your artistic vision through an effective artist statement.
- Profile your audience and tailor your offerings to meet their needs.

Interested in Finding Out More?

Here are some additional resources you may find useful:

- [Learn About Niche Markets — Benefits, Examples, and Strategies | Adobe](#)
- [What is a Niche Market?](#)

Looking Ahead:

As you move into Unit 3, which focuses on marketing engagement, take with you the insights gained here.

8. Transcripts

Monkeybiz: Art that Makes A Difference

Barbara: My name is Barbara Jackson, and I funded and founded Monkeybiz in the year 2000.

Mataps: My name is Matapelo Ngaka. I've been with Monkeybiz since day one, since it was started. They call me my Mataps, short way.

Shirley: I'm Shirley Fintz, and I founded Monkeybiz with Barbara Jackson and Matapelo Ngaka. I'm a sculptor. I'm a ceramic artist. So is Barbara, that's kind of why we got the whole thing together.

Barbara: I think that all the patterns are amazing. I love what you do. I'm very proud of being South African and the South African aesthetic. I realised that people were suffering, and they needed to provide themselves with some form of income.

Mataps: There's a lot of lack of jobs. That is the most thing, and the people are starving.

Barbara: Essentially, we're an art bead project, but we set it up to alleviate poverty and illness in South Africa.

Mataps: Now we're working at the township of Macassar, the biggest community for Monkeybiz. Here, I'm just taking you to some of the houses to see some of the artists and their houses. We're going to just come in here. This is the mother and the daughter. They're just doing beadwork here.

Barbara: We found a few artists to begin with, about two, and then the artists found us.

Namhla: My name is Namhla Maudie Dabula. I've got four years here at Monkeybiz. They give me hope, for my family and the community.

Barbara: Once we started with Monkeybiz and the artwork, we really connected with the communities and we realised how they were struggling, people were dying of AIDS, people just didn't have enough nutrition. So, with our profits, we provide services like an AIDS clinic, soup kitchens at every meat market day.

Mataps: Before 1994, there was not even one brick house. Today there's many. Poverty is still high, but Monkeybiz makes a huge difference, but we still need to do more. In the time of apartheid, the beadwork was dying, but now the beadwork is coming back again. Really, they feel proud.

Barbara: Traditionally, beadwork was for adornment and not really 3-dimensional. We wanted to contemporise beadwork as an art form. The people live in these townships and maybe they've got some chickens and goats, but a lot of them were born in the township, so they've never seen animals, except for a few stray dogs and cats.

Shirley: We had to show them pictures. They didn't know what a lion was. That is why we get quite distortions of the animals, it's because they've never really actually seen one. I mean, we love it. We love it because it's more creative and it's more offbeat.

Barbara: Every piece that comes from Monkeybiz is an artwork, and every woman signs their name on the back of a tag so that when you're buying the artwork, you know who made it, so that if you're collecting, you can seek special artists.

Mataps: When I see those artists coming here at my mum's house, bringing those artworks that they feel proud of themselves to make, and they know that at the end of the day they're going to have some money from them. I feel very good and I'm feeling happy to see the difference that we make for the people at the township.

Barbara: They then get a meal which is provided by a caterer who lives in the township as well. Then those animals are brought to the city and then we assess it, and we deposit the money into each person's bank account.

Shirley: We needed to educate everybody about having a bank account. I mean, people there, they want to see the cash, they want to see the money that they're getting. So we had a whole process which was also quite empowering and quite an amazing part of Monkeybiz, that everybody's now got their own bank account.

Shirley: After a year we were like, OK, we put about R400,000 of our own money into this project and we've both got a really cool collection of dolls and nobody was really responding in the way that we thought.

Barbara: It took a long time, but once the work was out there, people started to notice it.

Shirley: I don't know what happened energetically, something shifted and suddenly we got our first big order from America. We called it Monkeybiz because Barbara and I felt like we were monkeys in the whole world of business. We just thought we were going to help a couple of people create a cool product that we would buy and our friends would buy, but it just went wild.

Barbara: I think that, fortunately, we're kind of reaching cult status where people are really attracted to the animals and their uniqueness.

Shirley: We were at Sotheby's. We had a sell-out exhibition at Sotheby's, like about four or five years ago. We've exhibited in many galleries all over America.

Barbara: Monkeybiz helps women to help themselves and they create artwork that provides income to the communities and makes people strong.

Shirley: Allowing women to express themselves from the townships is probably something that they never thought they would be able to do, and we can see that it really touches a lot of women's soul.

Namhla: Monkeybiz changed my life too much. I've got a lot of things. And my children went to school. I was not working. And then Monkeybiz changed my life.

Barbara: It's kind of giving people hope, and before there was no hope and now, we're teaching the women to dream.

Mataps: To buy a piece of Monkeybiz makes a huge difference, because from the start when someone makes that piece, they make a piece with their love. And you know, some people don't buy it because they're feeling sorry for the people, they really buy it because it's unique and it's made originally by the artist in South Africa. And it makes a huge difference because the people, at the end of the day, they're going to have a living from that artwork that you buy.

Barbara: A lot of people want to help charities, but they don't know how to. And Monkeybiz kind of helps people to do something, whether they come and volunteer or whether they buy our artwork, they're helping and they're putting their money into something good.

'H' Patten's Business Niche

'H': As an artist, you have to know what is your niche, where do you fit and how do you bring people in. As a dancer and a storyteller, I can just dance and I can tell stories that are general, stories come in many different categories. You have problem stories, trickster stories, you have stories that are mythological, stories that are traditional, stories that explain how things happen in the world. But then you have the kind of oral histories where people are talking about themselves, or you might be talking about yourself, but the importance of talking about yourself is not to be self-indulgent, but to be able to communicate something to everybody that they can connect with and relate to. So therefore, if I'm looking at storytelling, for example, I can tell a general fable and everybody understands that, but then there are those people who want to connect and understand more about my culture and so therefore when I'm telling those stories, I can tell the specific stories about my culture where I actually am going into the context of how we tell stories.

So, for example, within the context, I will talk about the telling of ghost stories or dopy stories and stories about the spirits and the fact that in the Caribbean and in Africa, these are the stories you tell when it's a dark night, as opposed to when it's a moonshine night. And then you're telling the more general stories that are just purely for entertainment, but also the way in which you engage with the audience and bring the audience in. So, we might say something like when I say crick, then you say crack, crick, crack, crick, crack. So that you start to show the call and response nature of storytelling and how you actually engage the audience and make sure you keep them on board. If I'm telling a more general story, I will always situate it so that the audience feels as if they're being drawn in, they are part of the action and they are being considered. If you don't engage your audience, you lose them very quickly.

Volley Nchabeleng's Business Niche

Volley: I play African instruments and all African instruments are made out of tree: whether it's a drum made out of a tree as a shell or an animal skin, and then there's human being who plays and vibrate the sound so my kind of instruments that the instruments they play, they are kind of unique. But above all everyone can play Marimba but I always bring the uniqueness of my culture, the embedded. You know, we have a certain reason we specialise with six, eight kind of reason but I always say the six commercial 6-8, then there's a 6-8 from Limpopo that is a special one and where sometimes they will have the pipes and do polyrhythmic and interlocking of a dance and so.

Always in my music, I always have that identity so that whether I meet people from central Africa and any part of Africa, this identity of me as embedded and it kind of brings out me and make me special and amongst themselves, you know so.

I'm so passionate about what I'm doing because right now of course the most, the most important thing is money. I'm able to feed my family to take care of me, finance. Financially, I can say I'm getting there. I want more. You can't be enough with money, so yeah, but basically, I travel a lot, and I find peace sometimes. I always say music is bigger than us. You cannot be bigger than music. We all play music. But you cannot be proud, have that pride to say you are too special because you can pass in this world and the music still remains so there's a lot of things I've saw about the instruments I play Sometimes I got the people who don't know me, but because they saw the picture of me with an instrument in their hand, they want to come to the festival to listen to the instrument. So, the instruments are more important, more than Volley himself. So that's why I love them and I'm so passionate because I just find peace, I feel like when I'm on stage, I rule the world. I can stop a president passing. It's like, hey, this is my time. I'm in charge.

Meet Aysha: Creative Entrepreneur

Aysha: Sometimes the challenge is when we don't get order on time and then sometimes when you don't get order, maybe you lose some monies and because some of us are single parents and even when you're married, you want to have your own business and have your own profit. Sometimes it's not profit, sometimes you create network so monetary tasks sometimes it's not the right thing but sometimes you look at networking where we can create networking. Where we are looking forward to have, maybe contractual, like from government or their representatives to give you kind of job so that you can secure and once you were given those kind of maybe a capital where you can have all these like you can have an order of 100 chapatis or maybe there's a program like this where you can facilitate a whole bundle of chapatis. It's quite a lot for them. In that way job is created because you tend to hire people who want to help you so it's creation of job is coming from there.

Dr 'H' Patten's Artist Statement

'H': And it's important to have an artist statement, a strong artist statement, because that's how people who are looking for artists to do any particular type of work will find you. So it's important within the artist statement, you not only state what type of art you do, but you actually state the kind of principles that you work to. So, for me and is very important within my artist statement, I state that I'm a visual artist, a dancer, storyteller, choreographer and a filmmaker so that people know all the different elements to my work. Then I will. I will state how long I've been working for.

So, I've been working for over 40 years in the arts and the fact that I actually focus on African and Caribbean music and dance so that people know exactly what field I'm working within, so that if they're looking for a jazz dancer, for example, if they came to me, they wouldn't know that they're going to get the African and Caribbean dance with maybe a jazz influence. But they're not gonna get a straight up jazz dancer. And so, it doesn't waste their time, and it doesn't waste mine. But having said that, once you are a dancer, you can apply for jobs that are advertised as contemporary dance, dance tutors, etc. Because what I do is contemporary African dance and I also can work with contemporary dancers so that we produce African contemporary dance.

Volley Nchabeleng's Artist Statement

Volley: Well, as a creative, I think it's important to know your craft. You know, for me as a musician, you cannot always have the same repertoire or to same people. When I go to a corporate, there's a certain package of songs that I know they will relate with these ones.

And when I played the like the young generation, where maybe it's age below 30, I know they need this funk and fast tempo. You know it happened to any creative. I think I encourage every creative to know if you are you are a teacher you are sharing with the corporate you cannot just talk as if you're talking to kids because these people are potential to support what you are doing. You know, so well myself, as the musicians are playing African instruments, of course indigenous. And I think people love them because I, I try by all means, after realising that the young generation, they know that they lost interest. Then I became more of it's like I'm ambassador of the instrument. I travel all means to sell them to them in a way that it will make sense to them. So, if I need to incorporate Western instruments with them so that they can relate because a lot of people know the guitars and the pianos and violins. So sometimes I'll do the collaboration with, collaborate the indigenous instruments with the violin so that we can see, oh this, they can play together, you know. So now they start to follow it to then and sometimes I was saying in Africa we have string instruments like violin. So, we I will share the this is where violin comes from. But the original it was like 1 string, and someone developed it to six strings or four strings, and then we collaborate together. Some of the of soundscapes I include that, you know. So that's how I make my music. And I found that people really enjoy it and love it. And I love it too.

Lilian and Agnes Discuss Basketweaving as an Artistic Expression

Lilian: My name is Lilian Sianyeuka. I live in Chief Mweemba's area District Sinazongwe. This pattern means, right now it is the rain season, these are the butterflies, if you notice and see a lot of butterflies, then you should know that it is about to rain, so this is the pattern on the basket signify. When we were weaving and thinking how do I weave it we are adding patterns and designs, then our elders would tell us, our children, these patterns signify butterflies. When you see butterflies flying around, then you should know the rains are near.

Agnes: My name is Agnes Mapulanga. I come from Mweemba District Sinazongwe. Patterns on this basket represent that in our club we should not be like the wind, just like the patterns on this basket. We should be calm and peaceful. There should be peace in the club. Patterns on this second basket represent the guineafowl. The guineafowl pattern means we should not be all over the place, like the guineafowl, we should be calm and steady. We should be calm and avoid quarrelling so that our club will not fall apart. Patterns on this basket represent our way of life. How we used to live in the old days. When we used to live along the Zambezi River as the Tonga people. As a Tonga person, this house represents the mud huts. Huts we used to live in. We all came from this hut before we started living in gable roof houses and so forth. We were living in huts made from poles.

