

Creatives Makhado is unlocking SA's creative talent

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

28 Jan 2021

Creatives Makhado is a platform designed and created by Muvhusi Tshilimandila to discover, uplift and unlock South Africa's creative talent.

Muvhusi Tshilimandila, who has been providing artists with a place to showcase their work to a bigger audience, shares more about [Creatives Makhado](#).



Muvhusi Tshilimandila, creator of Creatives Makhado

■ **Can you tell us a bit about Creatives Makhado?**

Creatives Makhado is a digital platform under the Creatives Makhado Agency created to discover local talent. The platform provides artists with a place to showcase their work to a bigger audience, and also serves them with tools, resources and education needed for them to thrive in their creative careers.

Not only does the platform illustrate the works of creatives, but also gives artists a chance to be scouted by the big league. We feature all types of creative collaborations, ranging from; art, music, fashion, photography and many more. The platform is designed to unlock the creative potential of South African talented kids. It should not be mistaken for a magazine, because it is not. We do not report news or some sort, we only showcase the work or the product and soon there will be so much more.

■ **When, how and why did you get started?**

It started running in 2014 when I was 16 years. But the vision came when I was 15 years staying in a small town in Limpopo (Makhado, Louis Trichardt). That's when I found the purpose of changing the lives of young talented kids.

“ *The thought came after witnessing the saddening of struggling artists. I felt that something had to be done to help these talented kids to get their work recognised.* ”

That is when I thought of "Creatives Makhado" - the name comes from my hometown.

Since my hometown is small, I decided that for me to fulfill my purpose I had to move to the big city. So when I was 15 years old I moved to Gauteng Pretoria to chase my dreams. I move in with my brother who was already at university.

Long story short, the first year I started to connect the dots. The following year I had finally designed the platform and we had two celebrities showing us support. I started doing word of mouth, letting upcoming artists know about the new platform and the benefits. And now it's a go-to place for tons of local creatives. The platform has grown and is still growing, and now it has a large team behind it - where some are focusing on finding talented artists, then some are responsible for promoting them and helping them understand the South African creative industry.

■ ***What is the core function of 'Creatives Makhado'?***

To grow our client revenue by connecting their brands with some of the most influential names in the country. After years of successfully collaborating and pioneering meaningful partnerships, Creatives Makhado has extended its offering as a full service PR and specialist influencer marketing agency. We have forged strong relationships with a host of industry forerunners as well as identifying the talent on the rise that can really fuel up a brand's social currency..

■ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

Finding and gathering a dedicated team has always been a challenge, from the time I started up until now, but lucky I always overcome it. Finding someone to help me design the platform was quite a challenge, it took time, it nearly drained my spirit. Recruiting a team of leaders was also a mission, now our agency is up and running well with three full-time employees and over 10 freelancers from all over South Africa.

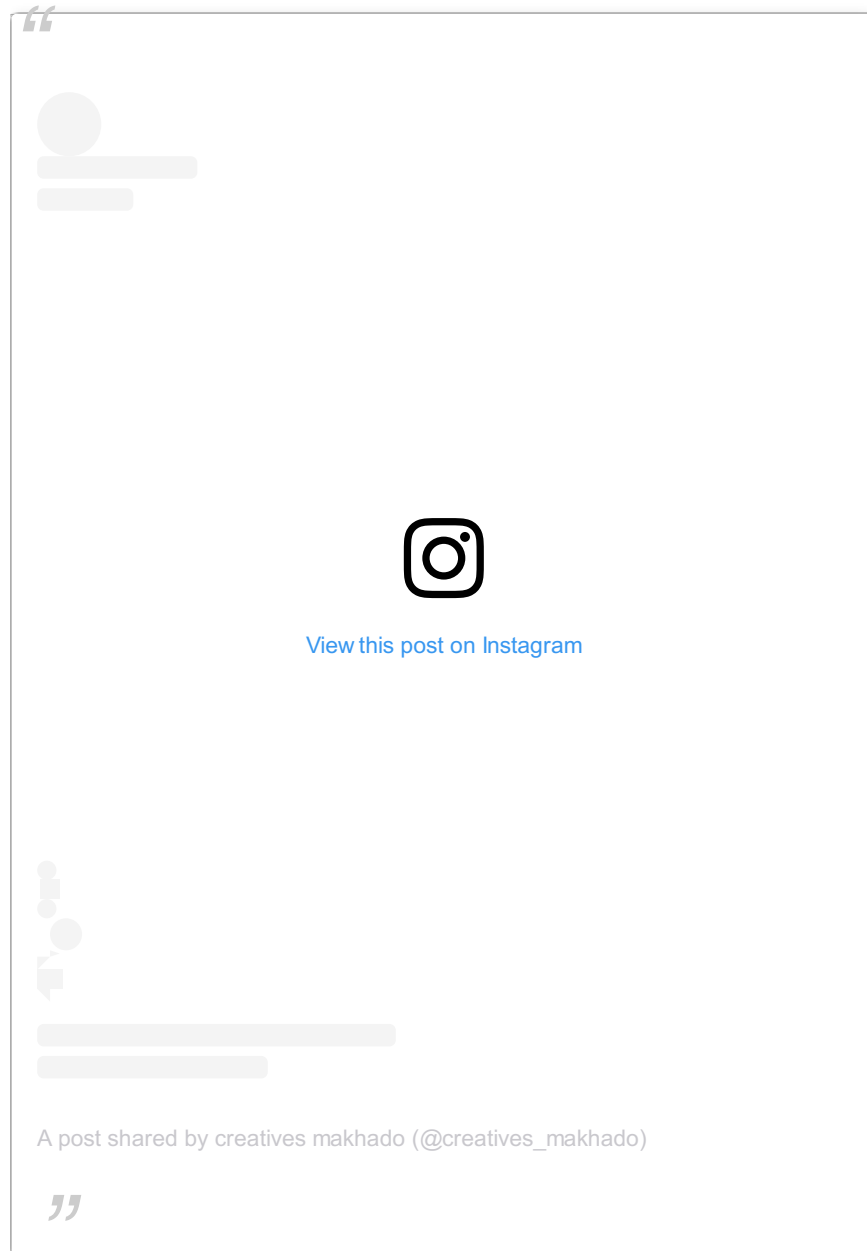
Getting celebrities and influencers behind our movement with no money was a challenge, but each year we always accomplish our wishes. Another challenge was getting artists and creatives to trust me, nobody trusted a word I said when I was starting out, I had to create value and stand as a professional agency. Getting celebrities was to increase our brand credibility, so that artists can join the movement. Before I registered the company, we had challenges of making a decent income. Now we have clients and members doing money for themselves and the agency.

■ ***Since starting out, have there been any success stories of the artists from the platform?***

Yes, many upcoming artists have done the most after their feature on our platform, such as Cape Town's music group 'Island Exclusive', we took them from obscurity to headlining big shows, as well as getting coverage on TV. After joining our platform, they have been invited to appear on radio and tv shows. The first celebrity to support our movement, is the first

one to collaborate with upcoming artists from our platform. AB Crazy(kalawa) did a song with Island Exclusive. The video for the song got playlisted on Channel O after our followers kept tweeting it.

Another one I love is the, Vuli F story. During the first Lockdown in 2020, we ran a digital competition through our platform, it was called the #ReflectorDotRapContest. An artist from the villages of Kanana named Vuli F won the competition and walked away with R1500 in cash and a one month promotion deal. He's also appeared in magazines and on radio shows.



er we shared a sponsored post, the video went from 6K to 110K views on YouTube. People loved the song, they didn't even understand it but they loved it. It was the first Venda Amapiano song. By the time the video was on 20k views it got playlisted on *Channel O*. Our audience kept requesting it so it became one of the most played songs on *Channel O*. That's when *MTV Base* finally accepted it then it circulated for months and months and till now it still plays and is still growing.

📊 **What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?**

There's no really big challenges because we're a digital operator - our platform and our movement moves online. The pandemic is actually helping us recruit more creatives as many people are now on social media full time. We emphasize every artist to go digital because it's the new way. The only real challenge I can say is that we cannot host our workshops. We had a high school tour planned, as well as hosting workshops in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town.

📊 **What sort of assistance will you need going forward?**

Sponsorship, funding or investors. And also maybe a partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture, or DTI. All I need right now is some mentorship and training from someone who has a broader experience with the industry that my business is in and good capital.

📊 **What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?**

My advice is that never settle for small, be creative and know your worth.

“ Even though you don't see light, just keep pushing, keep learning, keep doing your thing and eventually someone will love what you do. ”

When you're at the beginning, work as hard as you can, do not lose hope, just put in the work and try to set standards for your business, in the long run it'll pay off. Nothing is going to come easy, I myself learnt the hard way. You have to learn to work harder, learn to be professional, learn to be brave and confident, learn to network and connecting with other business owners. Partnerships are crucial in business.

“ The first thing you need to nail down is your branding. Oftentimes we see artists make the mistake of waiting for their fans to define them, rather than first defining themselves, getting clear on their niche, and trusting that will attract the right audience.— Creatives Makhado (@creatives_m) [January 26, 2021](#) ”

📊 **What has been your proudest achievement thus far?**

Selling over 50,000 projects in one year and generating over one million streams without conforming to traditional music industry norms. Also reaching 1 million members on our platform is the biggest achievement. We've also hosted our own huge show with 6000+ attendees

📊 **What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?**

The greediness, ignorance and exploitation (I'm planning to change this). From the small companies to the big companies; and from the government to the public. All I want is unity, because selectivity is killing our industry.

“ Startup companies are always looking to work with big people even though they are ill-treating them; whereas they could have just partnered with another startup company and make magic. ”

Investors should also stop looking at foreign companies, and start looking for local businesses with great potential. So many companies like mine reach out every day for help but none of them see it, even the government turns a blind eye. So I'd

like to see startup businesses uniting to cover the gap the government left. Greediness and Exploitation must also stop, partnerships should be beneficial both sides.

■ **What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?**

Motivation, vision, passion, self-confidence, creativity and consistency. That's what I believe are the traits that a hard-working entrepreneur needs to succeed.

■ **Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.**

My biggest struggles is cash flow management, time management and capital/strapped Budget. Sometimes we do the work, send an invoice only to receive the payment month end, all the costs messes with the cash flow. Or we get so much money in one month and misuse it through promotions and advertising our platform.

Capital has also been a struggle. I always had dreams of growing the Agency big enough but the capital doesn't allow me. Without receiving any funding, I had to work part time jobs in order to grow this agency. Until now, I'm still getting side cash and invest it into the company. Even though cash flow is fine, it seems like we never have enough in our budget to market the company to its full potential.

■ **Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?**

Being an entrepreneur comes with a lot of benefits. Entrepreneurs are untouchable, and have the opportunity to change lives.

“ *The more entrepreneurs we have in our country the better and easier things will be. I wish we had more entrepreneurs so they can impact society and be a role model to the young ones who are already taught to be workers.* ”

I encourage more entrepreneurs so that we can diversify wealth and create legacies instead of giving all the money to the same people.

■ **Where would you like to see 'Creatives Makhado' in the next 5 years?**

I'd like to see our platform empowering millions of people and being respected as the number one creatives platform. We've been expanding at a rapid rate, and there's no reason for us to believe that we can't do it. For the agency I'd love to see it big enough to have branches in all South African major cities as well in some foreign countries. I want to have partnerships with international organisations so that we can create a bridge for South African creatives to get discovered globally.

We want to have joined with the government to unlock the creative potential of our country. In five years I see our agency hosting the biggest festivals in the country, and also listed in JSE or NYSE to be traded by the public and having our own channel on TV

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