

The Arts: An Effective Medium to Promote Female Education in Ghana

ITAC THINK TANK: January 2019

Hosted by Peter Atsu Adalety (Ghana)

This is the transcript of one of ITAC Collaborative's monthly Think Tank sessions. Each session focuses on a new theme and is hosted by someone from a different country.

In January of 2019, Peter Atsu Adalety provided a brief overview of his work in Ghana and the important role that the arts can play in not only building girls' self esteem and sense of self worth but also in changing the way that society sees them by witnessing their transformation.

Instances in which the text is in [brackets] indicates when the transcriber was not certain of the speaker's original word choice. Ellipses in parentheses indicate when the sound was indecipherable for transcription.

Peter:

I am very happy to see everybody – I am so grateful! And, just as a recap — I know ITAC4 has been a wonderful experience for almost everybody out there and I am just so, so enthused!

I just want to begin: have you folks seen the video links I've sent?

Guest 1:

I saw a little.

Peter:

Okay! I just need feedback from the video

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

I think I sent an email about an hour ago ish (...) with some extra information for everyone that Peter sent over – some context about Ghana and the landscape that he works in. So there's a video that some people may have had time to watch and some may not have. Has anyone else other than (Guest 1) had a chance to have a look at that?

Guest 2:

No.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

No, I know it was quite short notice so don't worry if you haven't. Maybe Peter it would be good to explain the overall ideas in the video.

Peter:

Okay, I have watched a lot of videos, but that video really, you know, gave me the opportunity to have in-depth knowledge about what was going on here in Ghana. It was the CAMFED International non-profit organization that put it across. It showcases what actually is happening in this country. [It has to do with the NGO trying to get the ladies or women back to track.]

I just want to know quickly what is the ratio – between 1 to 5 – I just want to know from the various countries [about girl child] education in your various home countries. [With] the ratio between one to five: are you having an issue with girl child education?

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

So, do you mean, in our countries do we have issues surrounding female education around young people?

Peter:

Exactly.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure, okay. Did you ask for a number between 1 to 5?

Peter:

Yeah, between 1 to 5. I want to know the ratio.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure. Well, I'm happy to start the ball rolling. In Scotland, we certainly don't face the same kind of issues as outlined in the video in Ghana. For us, it's not so much of the gender gap as it is a class gap as to whether or not people attain a certain level of education.

Sediname:

Okay. I would like to put in something. In Ghana, [our cultural setting] does not allow women, girls to be specific, to have formal education way back from the ancient days. We've always had

this notion that the kitchen is for the girls, so you always see way more of the guys going to school and then the ladies are behind.

Now that modernization and some technologists are trying to bring up or give us exposure for a lot of girls to “hang up” now but I think there is more that needs to be done.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yeah. What about our colleagues from the (United) States? I see we have a couple of new people who've joined since we introduced ourselves. Do you want to say hi quickly to everyone?

(Guest 3):

Sure! Can you hear me? My name is (Alex Zacharias). I'm calling from Green Bay, Wisconsin in the United States. Sorry for being late. We have a major snow storm going on right now and I had to dig my way in.

I'm a teaching artist and what we have is an after-school program at the Boys and Girls Club where I teach filmmaking. I'm a professional filmmaker.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Great. Thank You. (Lindsay), do you want to say hi?

(Guest 4):

Sure. Hi, I'm Lindsay. I'm calling in from Boston, Massachusetts. I'm really happy to be here. I'm a theatre artist, a teaching artist, and an educator. Really excited to talk with you guys!

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Great! In case you missed it, the question Peter just posed was [asking us to] describe the gender gap in education as [he had described] in the male-female divide in education in Ghana and he asked if that was something we experienced in our own countries.

Do either of you want to respond on behalf of the US?

(Guest 4):

Sure! I think from my experience it's not so much an access issue, at least at the primary school level, but it's more of a representation issue in terms of where girls can see themselves represented in different fields and the way that that impacts what they see for themselves in their future.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure.

(Guest 3):

And my experience has been...

(Small, amicable conversation about who is speaking at the moment.)

My experience has been that it comes in waves. There's been some years where I've had one or the other so it hasn't been consistent and I really can't explain why that's so in my situation.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Does that give you some context, Peter, about where the rest of us are coming from – perspective wise?

Peter:

Yeah, exactly. I appreciate the feedback. I'm doing this because I just want to take the opportunity to know what is going on in your home countries. Personally, I find this very alarming because [when] you look at the men and the women, women, from my perspective, are able to contain a lot, you know? So, when you are able to educate the girl child, you are almost able to bring into perspective a huge group of people – an army! – who are able to take care of things. I'm happy for the feedback from individuals.

I just want to read something for those who didn't have the opportunity to watch the video.

CAMFED is an international nonprofit organization tackling poverty and inequality supporting girls to go to school here in Ghana. They are here to (...) and empower young women [to] step [up] as leaders of change.

Now, sadly, the fact remains that chronic poverty excludes many girls from education. Large numbers leave school to do “kayayo” here in Ghana. When you say “kayayo”, it relates to girls who have not [had] the opportunity to go to school or girls from vast, you know, lands who are not really having the opportunity to get herself good in school.

So, they come to the big city, precisely Accra, and you see them carry (...) and [they live] somewhere in the northern region of Ghana [...] and from other parts of the country. They then come here to Accra and they don't have good places to sleep. They don't have good food to drink. And they carry huge things just to make sure they make ends meet.

Now some of these girls leave their homes because their parents force them into early marriage and because they don't want to fall victim to this, so they have to leave their homes and come here just to make ends meet. These are some of the reasons why, in Ghana here, some NGOs or advocates try to make sure that they bring girls back to school and that is what I do as a teaching artist or as a talent coach.

My recent project was a project that is organized in Hohoe one of the rural towns in Ghana. They organized an event called Miss GBI 2018 where ladies are given the opportunity to showcase their talents and their intellect and that is when we realized that some of those ladies [in the] contest we're not having the opportunity to go back school.

What we are doing right now, as I join some of the organizers which (...) is also part of the project, is that we are trying to use the arts to educate the girl or to promote the girl child education in Ghana so we are trying to use theatre – we are trying to use the visual and the performing arts to promote the girl child education in Ghana.

So, those of you were not able to see the video, [you can check that later]. That's what we are doing here in Ghana. Sedi, will shed more light on this.

Sediname:

Alright, thank you very much, Peter. That was awesome.

It's been an issue in Ghana and it so saddens my heart whenever I see a lot of ladies out all day. As a teacher, even in my teaching or when we are giving instructions, I think there is some sort of art in everything we do because it's about art as a vessel for storytelling and [communicating] humankind's relationship with the environment. So, a lot of people, we want them to go through the art to convey a lot of messages to the society at large.

A lot of people also love to go to the arts teaching – just as Peter is doing as an arts teacher, but then, as I distinguished, there are other things that needs to be done which involves art, but not necessarily focused on the packaging.

In that regard, I always want girls to look at the arts to be an effective medium to promote education in Ghana because, as I said earlier on, for our history or our culture? If it allowed the girl child to start going to school from an early stage (...) In the olden days, it's only the boys that go to school. But now modernization and technology have been able to give us exposure and you can see some going to school now.

To add to what Peter said about the [kayayo], it's [all over what we are talking about right now]. Those girls that we are talking about that don't have shelter – that don't have a place to sleep and sometimes they have to sleep in the gutter – some at the car parks without food. (...) When this happens, they have been exposed to all forms of all social vices and violence which is very bad.

And it's also a calling. We actually have to get something going – we have to get some models to be able to carve out this particular problem and get some solutions to it.

(Guest 3):

If I may say, I think the commonality that I'm hearing that's unfortunate is that, globally, there's always been a gender issue. You know, boys... girls... and I think we're in interesting times where, fortunately, girls – women are starting to step up and have a voice. I truly believe that the arts are one vehicle for that launch, if you will. So, I agree; there are embedded cultural biases towards women and girls, and I am glad we are acknowledging that.

And the questions of what do we do and how do we do it, and for me specifically how do I do it visually as a filmmaker? You know, help them tell their stories but it can be any art form to tell their stories so thank you for sharing that.

Peter:

I just want to (shed) a little bit of light. I was talking about my last project in the Hohoe region of Ghana where the girls were given the opportunity to showcase their talent. One of them, you know, is doing everything as much as possible to go back to school – to continue from tertiary education. As I talked to her, she's not having enough funds.

Now, what did I do? I picked this girl and brought her to Accra where I engaged her in a large theatre production. The opportunity was to give her the platform so people can see her and they (could) recognize how tough she is – how intelligent and how talented she is because we can't allow her to sit back home.

So, some of us are trying to use the live performances – it can be visual or the performing arts – to allow people to understand their need for the girl child to go back to school and this is what we have started out there.

Sediname:

Okay. Oh, can I come in?

Peter

Yeah, you're coming in.

Sedname:

Okay. Okay, so I want us to look at how to improve learning through the arts. So, we expose these girls to whatever it is they have to know and then how to transfer their learning in and through the arts towards other disciplines. Because we have other disciplines that I think we need to touch on as far as they go [...]. But we can do that through the arts, and then how to discover and create understanding of human behavior and thinking skills to help these girls to be able to involve themselves in art experiences. Yeah, that's one big thing I would like us to look at. Yeah.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure. So that poses an interesting question about the most effective methods we think of as artists in a participatory setting, engaging people, not just women, but I guess that topic of today, and but engaging young people who may be disconnected from education via the art. So I know that's almost all of our primary purposes, but I'd love to hear some of - how some of you feed into that and what methods or projects you've run that might speak to some of that.

Guest 3:

Well, one project that we did is ... Unfortunately, here in the United States, there are women, single women with children that don't have access to reports for whatever condition they're in. So, I had girls in my class go film their stories. So, it was sort of creating a message. First, empower my girls that they can go out and help other girls and women by simply asking them, you know, by simply giving them a platform. So that - my vision was empowering girls to go out help other girls using the art form.

Guest 4:

When I was in Chicago, in the United States, I worked on a mentorship program called Trailblazers, and we partnered with a settlement house, which in the United States, is houses that have been created to welcome or help assimilate the immigrant communities that are coming in. And the longest running one, in Chicago is the longest continuous running one in the states is there and has been welcoming people for over 100 years. We partnered with them so we had free space and what we did was starting to tell stories and part of our projects were always to interview people from the neighborhood so that while we were promoting a middle schoolers points of view, they had to see it in context with where they were and who they were talking to, and it created a multi generational connection.

We also partner with parents who were able to [...] and the local food bank to always make sure there was food as part of it, so that a lot of kids after school, you know, at least they would come because they were getting some food from the neighborhood which was really helpful for continuing - like getting commitment - and also created because of the class divide is similar to Scotland, but that's the access problem, that they were able to communicate across classes and

strata. Because usually, especially in places like Chicago, they'll stay very separate. And, so this is another opportunity for those who have more to bring via food, so is this communal giving, and so they were able to talk to each other across classes.

We always had a majority female situation and oftentimes when I work in the theater, it's always majority female. So it's a one unique space other than their schools, where they are in a dominant [place]. So what we did, we started opening it up to younger people, so that those older girls? We would teach them how to lead workshops so that they became the leaders and saw themselves not as learners, but as people to bring up the younger people.

Peter:

Great.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Okay, anyone else want to chime in on that? Tony, you look like you're about to say something.

Guest 1:

There's another program at the organization I work for young audiences has done to try and help people who are underrepresented in certain parts of the field get training. So, one of those that works in Portland would be sound engineering for music and having free programs for - hoping to get a lot of women into the field, helping them engineer a live music production and learn the skills of that trade, which is not, I would say I guess, not the music making itself but part of the music industry (...) that access and connection to other people in the field.

I just have a couple of ideas that are similar, I say I would say. One is: I worked with one organization in our city that [...] had the students write plays and there would be different organizations that we would partner with, including a homeless shelter - including a sight for young women who were pregnant or just had a child and had to leave their school for a bit. And we would work with them to help them write a play that really connected to an emotion that they understood [...] and a conflict they understood in their lives. It was abstracted to be a nonhuman character to kind of help them be more free. And then [...] they would direct professional actors in their own way. And then many of those go on to be faced to the public.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

It's so interesting because there's so many commonalities between what everyone's doing. Alex, I'm a filmmaker too. That's my background: filmmaking and theater. And we did a very similar project, empowering people to tell their own stories by placing this camera in their hands. And Stephanie, what you said about mentorship and making people who maybe had marginalized [causes] previously the lead teachers and empowering them to then be the ones imparting

information rather than sort of being taught at is interesting. It seems to be happening, separately, but at the same time, it's quite interesting. Peter, did you have some kind - you had a mentorship program you just finished?

Peter:

Yes, I just had a mentorship program. The idea is to empower artists in Ghana. But because of this topic, my focus has been on women, or girls, the girls. Because I want them to have a strong voice. (...) When it has to do with gender balance, I believe all are equal, so if I'm very emotional and very passionate about this project, especially this theme, or this topic, because I believe that we, as teaching artists, must do all that we can to use the performing and the visual arts to protect the girl child's education worldwide.

And to do that, I believe that this conference is — that's why Madeleine, I give you the terms of all other teaching countries here. Because we are not here to give lectures, we are here to listen to one another and to borrow ideas. And my intent is that I believe that at the end of this conference is going to be an ongoing conference - ongoing learning process. So we need to learn from one another, you know? I borrow ideas that can help us promote this very project. At the moment, my mentorship program, so I've just ended up starting a new one. The idea is to collaborate with some other NGOs and some government bodies so that they can come together for us to use the arts to propagate this very topic. And that is what we're going to kick start in February coming. And I will expect each one of you to freely. I mean, fetch me ideas that can help me in awakening this massive project. (...)

Guest 3:

(...) My mission is always to create that safe space as an artist, whatever gender. But, for working with girls specifically, where they physically - where they feel mentally and physically safe to tell their story? (...) I don't pretend to know how to do that exactly. It's a learning process, as I guess as a male?

(Murmured Agreement)

Guest 3:

You know what I mean?

(Murmured Agreement)

Guest 3:

But, it's important for girls to see a male artist, I think, acknowledging them as well, you know. So, it's a unique situation for me. I have two daughters so they've been teaching me well.

Peter:

Wow.

Guest 3:

Yeah, I think a lot of it has to do with that sense of a safe space to for them to do their art.

Guest 4:

I'm curious. (...) When we do stories with young people, especially young girls, a lot of stuff comes up. Has anyone else been partnering with any social workers or therapists while they're making their space or finding that need? Because we have.

Guest 3:

In my situation, it's kind of unique. We have social emotional learning. On top of teaching my art form, I have to go through a program (...) helping to deal with emotional issues, whatever gender that is. But I think that's kind of crucial. Or at least, if I can't do it, being able to take them or guide them to a situation where they can get that help.

Guest 4:

Because at the settlement house, we had access to a social worker, but that's not always the case when I'm a visiting teacher.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure. Peter, how does it work for you guys when you're dealing with young women who've been out of education or living in difficult circumstances? Do you have any contact with social workers or any kind of emotional support? [Do you do that alongside the art form] or how does that work?

Peter:

Yeah, you know, it's not easy working with girls. Never easy. It's very complicated because if you don't take care, [there are issues] around it. So, sometimes, I'm able to get at least two social workers or psychologists; people who come in once in a while, not all the time anyway, to counsel me as to how to go about it.

The fact that you are dealing with the arts, it doesn't mean me, as a man, I know everything. So I try to get people who do understand them well, and for me to work with them. My recent

project, like I told you, I was working with the ladies [and I got] to be in the house with them. apset said he was there. You know,

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yeah, yeah.

Peter:

I can tell you some of the things that we go through. It's not easy because you are a male, and they are females. All over you and you need someone who can really understand them well, so you don't find yourself in trouble. So I do make sure I get one or two people with me who are able to guide me - I mean to coach me (...) about ladies - girls. I do. Sediname, want to touch on that?

Sediname:

Yeah. (...) It's something else when it comes to girls, and especially girls from the African setting. There are a lot of things that we take for granted. We don't really care about a lot of things unlike (girls) in the European country, so it's a bit difficult. But, one thing I was happy about was that, in as much as they were all in house, they have a resource person who visits them once in a while to talk to them. I think there was a medical doctor that was in the house to talk to them on how to keep (...) there are health issues.

And then there was another one and some phones offices, I think it was worth it because a lot of things were touched on. And I was there to talk to them personally myself. Because (...) I've been, I've been through it before and I've even gone to the higher level so I was sharing my experience with them. And I was telling them that, with my foundation, I have an objective that I embark on. And then there was one of them I was supposed to reach out to others in society to use their stories to empower other women out there. So, I actually did a documentary on a 27 year old mother of one who was into shoe-making, and then night after (...). Sometimes we think we are limited, but I (...) I always say it all takes determination. If you really want to do something, then you have to start it now because "hoping for a better tomorrow"? It's just a saying. It's an active participant that must go with. If I want flowers in the future then the planting must be done now. Yeah. So, that was a bit difficult but I think through it all it was worth it. We might have planned some things in the next time; we'll know where to go and where to redress (...).

Peter:

So, Madeleine, it's always a learning experience. You know, working in Ghana is different from working in Scotland. Dude, I've not been there before, but far, far different. You guys? You have a kind of freedom, you know? Here, you need to invest enough time to do orientation. You

really, really need more time to give orientation and even to the parents of the participants.
Because in the project -

Sedname:

Madeleine?

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yes!

Sedname:

Okay, Madeleine. I would like to say that, you know, unlike your culture where children are - you are comforted, like, you can just ask questions if you're not okay with something: "Daddy, what is this? Why this? Why that?" In my setting, we are not allowed to ask questions. Our culture doesn't allow that you do. So, to hide (...), we felt intimidated and we cannot speak out or express our views -

Peter:

Easily.

Sedname:

- easily. Even if something is bothering you because you will be scared that an elderly or someone will shout at you or will rebuke you, you just keep everything to yourself. So, you know we have that loss of esteem. And the worst of it all - the worst of it all is that girls, they don't have a say in society like it has always been (...) men make stuff. And it's now that the girls? We are trying to use a lot of models and to give them to exposure to be able to express themselves because, honestly, a lot of them have low self esteem. You can ask Peter: when he was instructing them, some were even scared to come out with whatever they want to say. And it was so bad! I was like, "Ah, you asked to do this for free", but they are kind of scared or shy or cannot express themselves because they are feeling... I don't know, like it's a whole issue on its own. Yeah.

(Various people trying to speak.)

Guest 3:

If I may share?

Peter:

Go ahead, go ahead.

Guest 3:

One thing that (...) I found myself in a somewhat same situation. So, I introduced journaling, like anonymous journaling for my introverts in my class, where if they had trouble expressing verbally, that they were able to at least write it down. And when they wrote it down that day, I invited them to imagine if (they) were telling a story. So, it was a way for them to write their feelings in an imaginary story. And that kind of helped them express themselves.

Peter:

Okay.

Sediname:

That's nice, yeah.

(Various people trying to speak.)

Precious:

If I may come in? Like Sediname said in parts of the world - in Ghana, she said all the things that are happening (...) gradually changing. When I say just like mine, we are into training, advocacy, sensitization, mentorship, and counseling. What we seek to do is to empower these girls (...) to be emotionally strong, in order to be (...) - in order to come out and share what they have inside. But that's where their family unit - the family unit must know that they have a right and they are children.

Peter:

Sure.

Precious:

(...) allow them to express their rights from the beginning when they get to know that this is what they...

(Recording interruption.)

By doing this, the work becomes a bit easier for people like Peter who are working with them. They just need to be psyched up in order to give what is within them. I always think it starts from the family unit. So, this is why we also have to contribute: to synthesize, to train to mentor and to counsel families...

(Recording interruption.)

Precious:

The children on the streets - they need a lot of mentorship. They need a lot of counseling. They need emotional empowerment. It is very, very imperative for us to keep forging ahead and power (...) in order to make the work easy and make our world a better place.

Peter:

Good. That's a big one, Precious.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yes, welcome, Precious. I think you joined us a little bit later. So, I'm not sure (...), you want to say hello to everyone. But, Precious has now joined us - also from Ghana, I think?

Peter:

Yeah, from Ghana. Yeah. So, you see like Precious added to what Sedi said. You know, if you don't want girls to be intimidated, you bring them to the drama program where they can verbally and emotionally express themselves. Dance classes are also there and various art forms are there for them. That's what we are doing here in Ghana, but we are supposed to learn more. And that's why I said, I'm so happy we are connecting with you, Madeleine, and everybody out there to learn from you and as we share (...) put it down certain experiences from you guys that we can work on.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Thank you. I'm conscious of time and this was originally built as one hour. It looks like we may go a little over, but if anyone needs to leave at the one hour mark, and has a question for any of our colleagues here, feel free to ask the question now if you've got something burning in your mind that you'd like to say. Okay, I have a question. My question has to do with - Sediname, you said something about the fear that people have when they first come to the art because you're brought up in a different culture to do with not expressing those feelings. And so, I wondered in getting people to sign up to the projects in the first place, how do you get over that initial fear of joining in or fear of even coming into the art classroom or coming into the theater say?

Sediname:

Oh, (...) I think we need to create the awareness. Maybe, we have to go call for meetings or some gatherings and talk to them about the benefits they can get as far as the act is concerned. Because I believe the arts can instill some sort of self bright and then the arts increase opportunity for you to express yourself the way you want it. And then they develop real life skills. In the same that, when you become a performer, a lot of the stories that we actually put on stage for everybody to see are things that happen around us. So, through that they become enlightened. And I think the exposure will help them enough to even talk to other girls. And I think it's all about creating

awareness. (...) Basically we need to create awareness. If you have to go and do door to door or gathering them and talking to them, I think it's - for me, I think is the the way out as it stands now. Yeah.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure, thank you. Does anyone else have any (...). You all have come to this call with what you may like to learn or get out of it? Or hope to contribute. So, I wonder if any of you would like to offer up some of what you hoped that you would learn and how do you feel now or something you still need clarity on?

Guest 3:

Well, you know what - what this confirms is? (...) I think wherever we're from, we need to empower girls, and how do we go about doing that? And so, I'm glad that I have a colleague that I can go to that are experiencing from what I am. And it's just a learning process.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Sure.

Peter:

Sure.

Sediname:

Okay, Alex, Alex.

Guest 3:

Yes.

Sediname:

Alex, I have a question for you. When we talked about our girls getting intimidated and having low self esteem, I think you came up with an idea. You said you use some model for them to write their feelings or they will be asked to write it down. (...) I think you if you can go through that once more, again for me to really get what we mean by that, because I think you have a good idea in there.

Guest 3:

In my program, the youth voice is very important. So -

Sediname:

Okay. (Continues to voice her understanding and agreement throughout.)

Guest 3:

I am more of a person that tries to get into getting them from point A to point B, not telling them but just kind of guiding them. And one way to do that is storytelling is - it's not intimidating. They could just use their imagination. I give them what if questions? "What if this? What if there was this girl that was in this situation in the story? How do you think she can accomplish things or overcome things?"

And so it doesn't become really a direct question. It's sort of an indirect question, but that they feel comfortable enough. It's like, "Oh, well just imagine this girl had a problem at home with her parents (...)" It sort of like an opportunity for self-reflection too when they're writing these stories. So, it's just a way for them to express themselves in a safe space.

Peter:

Thank you.

Sedname:

Okay. So they don't necessarily have to voice it out. By the end of it they write it down for you.

Guest 3:

Correct! Correct. So then, what happens is, I'll just ask, "Hey, anybody got a good story?" And then people will raise, you know, girls will raise their hand. "Oh, I have a good story!" So that's sort of a safe way of doing it.

Guest 1:

Can I add?

Guest 4:

Oh, sorry. I have to leave now that it's 11. But thank you so much for having me in here for a little while. It's great to talk with all of you.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Thank you, Lindsay. I will email afterwards with links to everything that we discussed. So, thank you for joining us.

Guest 4:

Great, thank you.

Guest 1:

Can I add on a bit to the conversation that was just happening? A couple of variations have been (...) just to take moments in the arts instruction, where there is a time for an anonymous question, and the only rule is that everyone must write something, even if they write pass. No one is singled out for having asked a question. So, everyone puts a piece of paper in, even if it says nothing. And then there's an opportunity that slowly over time, they can build a chance to express something they're curious about.

Another one that I have used in a similar way is to distance a slight bit from the personal is to - the thing we just did together. If you were to give advice to someone - a new person who had never done it before, what advice would you give them and kind of getting the idea starting that they have now experienced they can pass on. And it also gives me, a leader, a little bit of a sense of where they were struggling and maybe I do not see.

Sedname:

Oh, okay. Okay.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Alex, you also mentioned journaling. And for our non-American colleagues, writing in a diary, your thoughts at the end of the day, correct?

Guest 3:

Correct.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yes. And doing that anonymously for yourself or for a teacher?

Guest 3:

Correct. And then there's other forms of attacks. I tell them, why don't you draw your story. Some visual storytelling is very powerful. So, even if they're like stick figures, but you know, essentially creating, you know, story through drawing - through art. So, I always make sure I have plenty of paper and pens and markers and colors all around me so that they're constantly doodling or those kinds of things.

Precious:

If I may come into to talk about journaling. Journaling is a very powerful tool that helps the girls or anyone that does it to express their true feelings. Once the true feeling is expressed, they can see it - read it - begin to imagine it. If we have to put into drawing that is the visual art. I think that it is a way also to empower them, when they are able to transfer their thoughts even (...) appreciated.

It's a plus because they get empowered: "I have created something on paper, and it has been appreciated." And so it boosts their self esteem. It makes them feel that they have something to offer. So it's like a building block. That's (...) them to start (...) get an empowered start for themselves and the fact that they have a right. (...) Visual arts is equal importance to the journaling transfer it if possible onto a paper, let it be appreciated.

Peter:

(...) Precious. So, Madeleine, a lot has been (...) within an hour.

Madeleine, ITAC Staff:

Yes. So, that's I think us coming to the end of the session now. [...] I'll leave it to you, Peter, to close the session with your colleagues. Thank you very much from ITAC's perspective because it's always an interesting chat when people get together so thank you all.

Peter:

Yeah, yeah, I'm so grateful. Madeleine, and everybody. (...), thank you so much for joining me. Thank you so much, Precious, for making time. And thank you all for making these possibilities (...) it's been wonderful.

Times up, Madeleine. Keep up the good work.

(Words of farewell and appreciation from the group.)