

Stories • Voices • Art • Connection • Impact





ZAMBEZI MEETUP RESIDENCY

COEXISTENCE

A Journey of Creativity, Culture, Connection and Shared Experiences

SPECIAL FEATURE • 2026

EXPLORING HOW WE LIVE, CREATE, LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER

An in-depth story of the people, conversations, creative expressions, cultural exchange and experiences that shaped the Zambezi Meetup Residency

CREATIVITY • CULTURE • COMMUNITY • COEXISTENCE



The Zambezi Meetup Residency brought together six young female creatives—three from Zambia and three from Zimbabwe under the theme “Coexistence.”

The residency created a space for the participants to connect across borders, share their stories, exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Although they came from different countries and backgrounds, they discovered common ground through creativity, culture and conversation.

Coexistence became more than just a theme. It became an experience—one that encouraged understanding, respect, collaboration and appreciation for different perspectives.

Through the residency, the six participants had an opportunity to explore their creativity, build meaningful connections and experience the strength that comes from bringing different voices together.

**Six girls. Two countries. One shared journey. One powerful theme:
Coexistence**



THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

The Zambezi Meetup Residency began with a simple but meaningful idea: to bring young female creatives from Zambia and Zimbabwe together in one space where they could connect, learn, create and explore the meaning of coexistence.

Taking place from 22 to 26, the four-day residency brought together six young women; three from Zambia and three from Zimbabwe. Each participant arrived with her own experiences, creative interests, personality and story. Although they came from different backgrounds and across national borders, they were brought together by a shared interest in creativity and the desire to learn from one another.

The choice of participants made the residency a special meeting point between two neighboring countries. Zambia and Zimbabwe share many cultural and historical connections, but each also has its own traditions, experiences and ways of seeing the world. Bringing the six participants together created an opportunity to explore these similarities and differences through personal interaction and creative expression.

From the beginning, there was a sense of excitement and curiosity. The participants were meeting people they had not known before, entering a new environment and preparing to spend several days learning and experiencing things together. There were questions about what the days ahead would bring, what new friendships would develop and what lessons would come from the experience.

The theme of “Coexistence” provided an important foundation for the residency. It encouraged the participants to think about how people from different backgrounds can live, work and create together while respecting each other's identities and perspectives.

Throughout the four days, coexistence was not treated simply as a word or concept. It became something the participants experienced in their daily interactions. They listened to each other's stories, exchanged ideas, shared creative experiences and learned to appreciate the different perspectives each person brought into the group.

The residency also demonstrated the value of creating spaces where young women can express themselves freely. By bringing together participants from Zambia and Zimbabwe, it allowed creativity to cross borders and gave each participant an opportunity to learn from voices outside her usual environment.

What started as a four-day gathering gradually became a shared journey of discovery. The participants were not only attending a residency; they were building connections, creating memories and becoming part of a wider conversation about creativity, culture and coexistence.

ARRIVING AT THE RESIDENCY

The arrival at the Zambezi Meetup Residency marked the beginning of a new experience for the participants. Six young women had been selected for the residency; three from Zambia and three from Zimbabwe. However, one participant was unable to attend, leaving five participants physically present. Although she could not be there in person, her presence was still felt throughout the residency. She remained part of the story and the group, reminding everyone that being part of a community is not always defined by physical presence.

For the five participants who attended, the first moments were filled with excitement, curiosity and a little nervousness. They were meeting new people, coming from different backgrounds and preparing to share several days together. As introductions were made and conversations began, the initial unfamiliarity slowly disappeared. Simple conversations opened the door to laughter, friendship and a better understanding of one another.



The absence of one participant did not take away from the spirit of the residency. Instead, it became a reminder of the importance of inclusion and connection. Her presence was felt in conversations and in the awareness that the group was originally meant to include six voices. For the five participants who attended, the evening after arrival quickly became a time to connect, create and have fun. We began our journey as artists by sharing our different creative interests, including poetry, art, singing and performance.

The evening was filled with laughter and creativity. We made fun videos together, shared ideas and began rehearsing poetry. These simple moments helped everyone become more comfortable with one another and created an atmosphere where we could express ourselves freely.



As the evening continued, the nervousness of meeting new people slowly faded. We were no longer simply participants from two different countries; we were beginning to become a creative group. Through poetry, singing, art and laughter, the first evening gave us a glimpse of what the residency would become a space where creativity brought us together.

The first evening was not just about settling in. It was the moment our journey as artists truly began.

The journey had begun with five people physically present, six voices represented, two countries connected, and one shared theme: Coexistence.

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE

As the residency continued, it became clear that there was a deeper purpose behind bringing the participants together. The Zambezi Meetup Residency was not only about creating art or spending time in a new environment. It was about using creativity to explore ideas that affect the communities and world around us.

The theme “Coexistence” became an important part of these conversations. The participants were encouraged to think about the relationship between people, wildlife, culture and the environment, particularly within the unique landscape surrounding the Zambezi River. Poetry and storytelling became ways of exploring these ideas. Through creative expression, the participants could reflect on their own experiences while also listening to different perspectives from across Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The residency also encouraged collaboration. Working together gave the participants an opportunity to combine their different artistic styles and learn from one another. Whether through writing, performance, conversations or shared activities, each experience added something new to the journey. There was also an emphasis on giving young women artists a safe and inclusive space to express themselves. The residency recognized that young women creatives deserve opportunities to showcase their work, develop their voices and connect with other artists beyond their own communities. As the days went on, the purpose of the residency became something the participants could experience rather than simply hear about. Every conversation, creative session and shared moment became part of a bigger exploration of what it means to coexist, collaborate and create together.

The residency also created an opportunity to connect creativity with the environment. Being surrounded by the Zambezi landscape encouraged the participants to observe, reflect and think about how human life is connected to nature. These experiences added a deeper meaning to the creative work being developed during the residency. By bringing together voices from Zambia and Zimbabwe, the residency showed that art can cross borders and create conversations that bring people closer. What the participants were learning was not limited to poetry or performance; they were also learning about one another, their surroundings and the different ways coexistence can be understood.

WHERE THE RIVER REMEMBERS

Day Two was a journey into the heart of the land, its people and the stories held within it. After breakfast and our wellness session, we travelled to Mpisi Homestead, where we had the opportunity to interact with Mpisi and learn through conversation, observation and experience.



The journey itself felt like part of the lesson. As we travelled through Victoria Falls, I began to notice things I might have otherwise overlooked. Small houses stood with quiet dignity, cattle moved with patient rhythm, and trees stretched their branches towards the sky. The landscape seemed to be speaking to us, reminding us that every place has a history and every community carries stories worth listening to.

At Mpisi Homestead, our interaction was more than a visit. It was an encounter with knowledge passed down through generations. We listened to stories and perspectives that connected people, culture and nature. It reminded me that learning does not always happen inside a classroom. Sometimes, the land itself becomes the classroom, and the people who have lived closely with it become our teachers.

One of the most powerful things I took from the interaction was the importance of understanding where we come from. Before modern borders divided places into countries, communities were connected through families, traditions, movement and shared spaces. The stories of the land reminded us that history existed long before the lines drawn on maps.

The experience made me think deeply about the Zambezi River. A river does not recognise the boundaries that humans create. It flows across borders, connecting communities and ecosystems. In the same way, culture, art and stories can cross boundaries and bring people together.

Later, we had a session with Bella, which gave us another opportunity to reflect on what we had experienced and turn those experiences into creative expression. The session encouraged us to look beyond simply recording what we had seen. We were challenged to feel, interpret and transform our experiences into stories, poetry and artistic ideas. For me, this became the moment where observation turned into expression. I began to understand that poetry can be a way of preserving memory. It can hold the voice of an elder, the sound of a river, the silence of a forest and the emotions of a journey. It can take something we experience for only a few hours and give it a life that can continue long after we have left.

CROSSING BORDERS, CREATING LEGACIES

Day Three came with a different feeling. We had already shared stories, explored the land, created together and built connections across borders. Now, the day gave us another opportunity to learn, explore and create memories that would remain with us long after the residency.





We began the morning with breakfast and wellness before preparing for our journey to Livingstone, Zambia. Unlike the previous day, where we learned directly from the community and the land around Victoria Falls, this day gave us an opportunity to explore history, culture and heritage through a different space.

Our first major stop was the Livingstone Museum.

Walking through the museum was like walking through layers of time. The different displays and historical materials gave us an opportunity to learn about Zambia's history, culture, people and heritage. As artists, we were not simply visitors looking at exhibits; we were observers searching for stories, details and meanings that could inspire our own creative work.

The museum made me reflect on how important it is for young people to know where they come from. History is not only something written in books. It lives in objects, photographs, traditions, memories and the stories passed from one generation to another.

As I moved through the museum, I found myself thinking about the responsibility that comes with being a storyteller. When we tell stories, we are also helping preserve memories. What we choose to remember, document and share can influence how future generations understand the past.

After exploring the museum, we had a session that allowed us to reflect on what we had seen and experienced. The conversations gave us space to connect history, culture and creativity. We shared thoughts, exchanged perspectives and continued learning from one another.

The session reminded me that art does not exist separately from society. Our experiences, our communities, our history and our environment all become part of the stories we create.

We also took photographs during the day, capturing moments of our journey together. Every photograph became more than just an image. It became a memory of people from different backgrounds coming together, learning together and creating together.

There was laughter, movement, conversation and the simple joy of being present in a place that held so much history.

From Livingstone, our journey continued towards Victoria Falls.

Returning to the Falls after everything we had experienced during the residency felt different. At the beginning of the programme, the Falls were simply a magnificent natural wonder. By this point, they had become connected to the stories, conversations and reflections we had gathered throughout the residency.

Standing before the Falls, I was reminded of the power of nature. The sound of the water, the mist in the air and the vastness of the landscape created a moment of reflection.



The Zambezi River continued to feel like one of the central characters of our journey.

It had connected places.

It had inspired conversations.

It had given us images and sounds.

And it had reminded us that nature does not recognise the borders that humans create.

At Victoria Falls, we took photographs and continued documenting our experiences. But beyond the cameras, there was something more important happening. We were creating memories together.

I looked around and realised that the residency had changed the way I saw the people around me. At the beginning, we were participants from different places. By now, we had become collaborators, friends and fellow storytellers.

The journey had taught me that crossing borders is not simply about travelling from one country to another. It is also about opening yourself to other people's experiences, cultures and ways of seeing the world.

Day Three therefore became a day of history, reflection, exploration and memory.

The Livingstone Museum connected us to the past.

Our session connected our experiences to our creative work.

The photographs captured the present.

And Victoria Falls reminded us of something that will continue long after the residency—the power of nature to bring people together.

As the day came to an end, I realised that we were not leaving with only photographs and memories. We were leaving with stories

Stories from the people we met.
Stories from the places we explored.
Stories from the river.
Stories from the Falls.
And stories from one another.
Perhaps that is what it truly means to cross borders and create legacies.

We may return to our different countries and different lives, but something from this journey will remain within each of us.

The Zambezi may continue flowing through the landscape, but its memories will now flow through our art, our words and our stories.

We came as artists from different places.
We leave as storytellers connected by one journey.

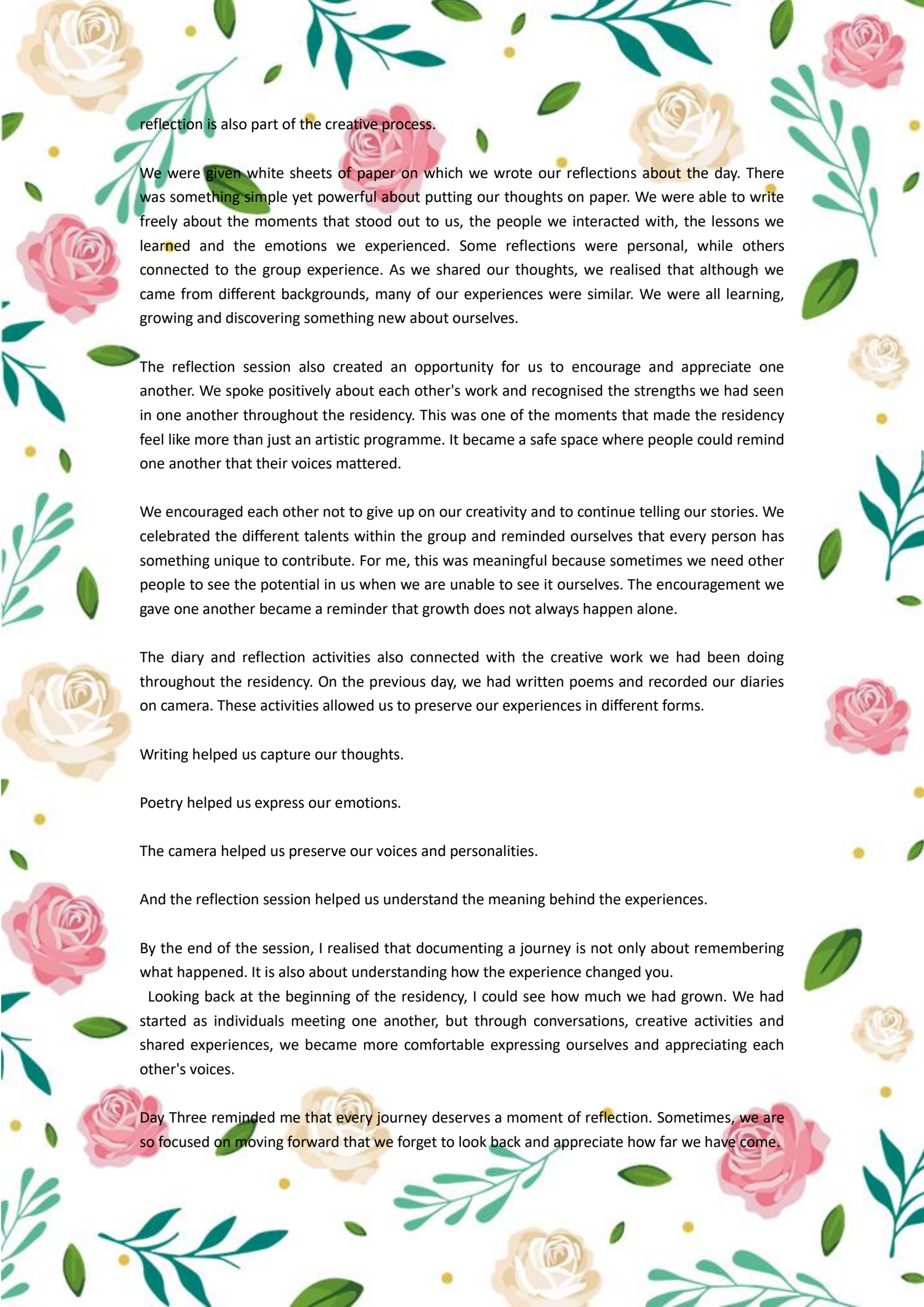


REFLECTIONS, ENCOURAGEMENT AND GROWTH

Day Three was a day of reflection, creativity and encouragement. After the experiences we had shared during the residency, we were given space to slow down, look back at the journey and think about what each day had meant to us.

One of the activities we continued with was our daily diary. We reflected on the experiences of the day and documented them in our own way. This became an important part of the residency because it allowed us to capture our thoughts while the memories were still fresh. During the sessions, we were encouraged to express ourselves honestly. We did not only focus on what happened during the day, but also on how those experiences made us feel, what we had learned and how they were changing the way we looked at ourselves and others.

The sessions were led by Thando and Musa, who created a space where everyone could participate, share and learn from one another. Their guidance helped us to understand that



reflection is also part of the creative process.

We were given white sheets of paper on which we wrote our reflections about the day. There was something simple yet powerful about putting our thoughts on paper. We were able to write freely about the moments that stood out to us, the people we interacted with, the lessons we learned and the emotions we experienced. Some reflections were personal, while others connected to the group experience. As we shared our thoughts, we realised that although we came from different backgrounds, many of our experiences were similar. We were all learning, growing and discovering something new about ourselves.

The reflection session also created an opportunity for us to encourage and appreciate one another. We spoke positively about each other's work and recognised the strengths we had seen in one another throughout the residency. This was one of the moments that made the residency feel like more than just an artistic programme. It became a safe space where people could remind one another that their voices mattered.

We encouraged each other not to give up on our creativity and to continue telling our stories. We celebrated the different talents within the group and reminded ourselves that every person has something unique to contribute. For me, this was meaningful because sometimes we need other people to see the potential in us when we are unable to see it ourselves. The encouragement we gave one another became a reminder that growth does not always happen alone.

The diary and reflection activities also connected with the creative work we had been doing throughout the residency. On the previous day, we had written poems and recorded our diaries on camera. These activities allowed us to preserve our experiences in different forms.

Writing helped us capture our thoughts.

Poetry helped us express our emotions.

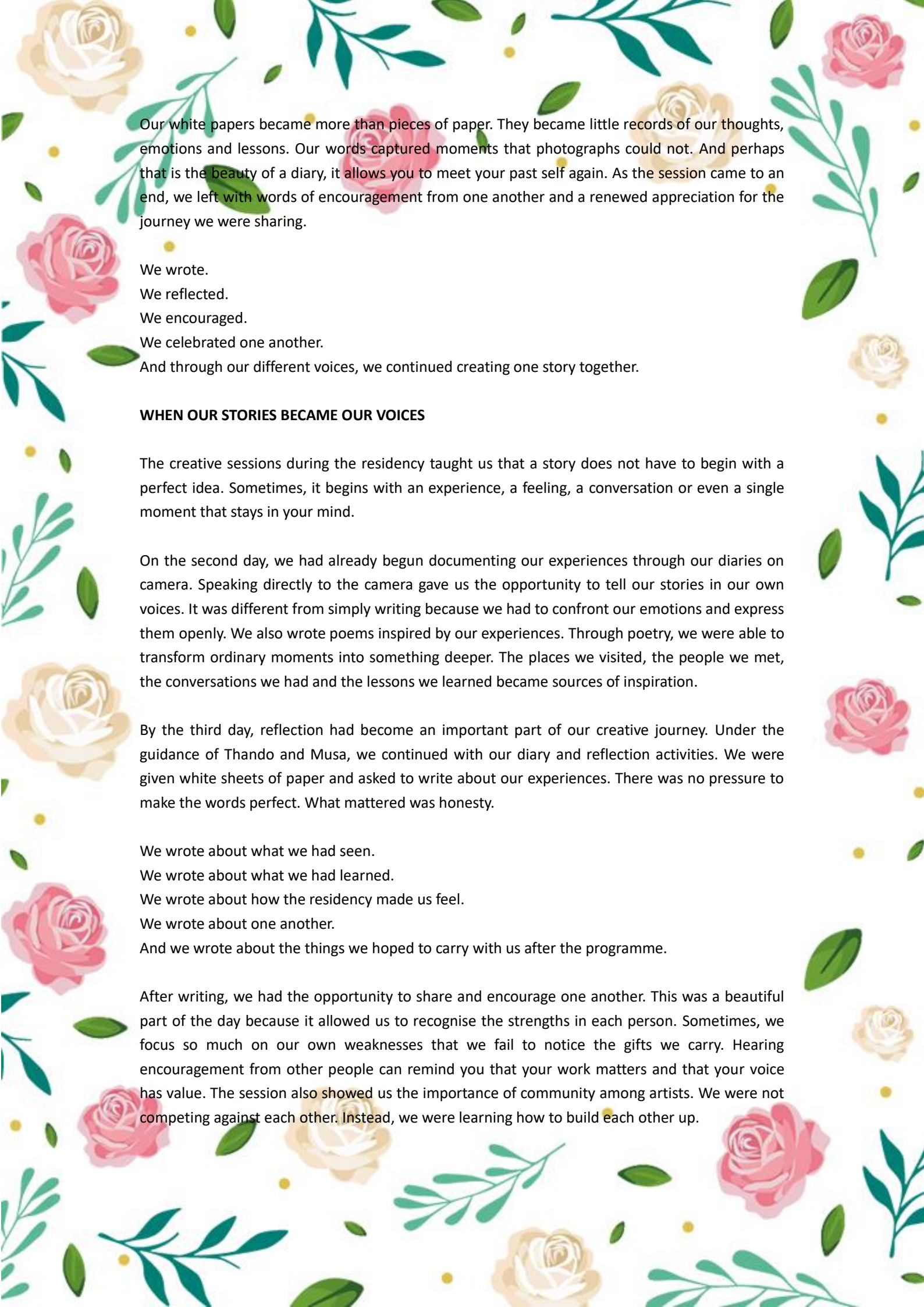
The camera helped us preserve our voices and personalities.

And the reflection session helped us understand the meaning behind the experiences.

By the end of the session, I realised that documenting a journey is not only about remembering what happened. It is also about understanding how the experience changed you.

Looking back at the beginning of the residency, I could see how much we had grown. We had started as individuals meeting one another, but through conversations, creative activities and shared experiences, we became more comfortable expressing ourselves and appreciating each other's voices.

Day Three reminded me that every journey deserves a moment of reflection. Sometimes, we are so focused on moving forward that we forget to look back and appreciate how far we have come.



Our white papers became more than pieces of paper. They became little records of our thoughts, emotions and lessons. Our words captured moments that photographs could not. And perhaps that is the beauty of a diary, it allows you to meet your past self again. As the session came to an end, we left with words of encouragement from one another and a renewed appreciation for the journey we were sharing.

We wrote.

We reflected.

We encouraged.

We celebrated one another.

And through our different voices, we continued creating one story together.

WHEN OUR STORIES BECAME OUR VOICES

The creative sessions during the residency taught us that a story does not have to begin with a perfect idea. Sometimes, it begins with an experience, a feeling, a conversation or even a single moment that stays in your mind.

On the second day, we had already begun documenting our experiences through our diaries on camera. Speaking directly to the camera gave us the opportunity to tell our stories in our own voices. It was different from simply writing because we had to confront our emotions and express them openly. We also wrote poems inspired by our experiences. Through poetry, we were able to transform ordinary moments into something deeper. The places we visited, the people we met, the conversations we had and the lessons we learned became sources of inspiration.

By the third day, reflection had become an important part of our creative journey. Under the guidance of Thando and Musa, we continued with our diary and reflection activities. We were given white sheets of paper and asked to write about our experiences. There was no pressure to make the words perfect. What mattered was honesty.

We wrote about what we had seen.

We wrote about what we had learned.

We wrote about how the residency made us feel.

We wrote about one another.

And we wrote about the things we hoped to carry with us after the programme.

After writing, we had the opportunity to share and encourage one another. This was a beautiful part of the day because it allowed us to recognise the strengths in each person. Sometimes, we focus so much on our own weaknesses that we fail to notice the gifts we carry. Hearing encouragement from other people can remind you that your work matters and that your voice has value. The session also showed us the importance of community among artists. We were not competing against each other. Instead, we were learning how to build each other up.

One person's poem could inspire another person's story.
One person's courage could give someone else confidence.
One person's idea could become the beginning of a group creation.
That is what made the residency special.

We were different, but our differences did not divide us. They gave us more perspectives, more stories and more possibilities. As I looked at the white paper in front of me, I thought about how something so simple could hold so much meaning. A blank page can be intimidating, but once you begin writing, it becomes a place where your thoughts can breathe.

The same was true of the residency.
We arrived with blank pages.
Then we filled them with experiences.
We filled them with poems.
We filled them with laughter, conversations, photographs and reflections.
Most importantly, we filled them with each other.



The sessions led by Thando and Musa reminded us that creativity is not only about producing something beautiful. It is also about being honest, listening to others and allowing experiences to change you. As the day came to an end, I felt grateful for the opportunity to document the journey while I was still living it. One day, I may look back at these reflections and remember exactly how I felt during this time.

I will remember the places.

I will remember the faces.

I will remember the poems.

I will remember the encouragement.

And I will remember that, for a few days, different stories came together and became one shared journey.

Our stories became our voices.

Our voices became our art.

And our art became a memory we could carry home.



One of the most beautiful parts of Day Three was the way we encouraged one another. After writing our reflections on the white papers, we had the opportunity to share some of our thoughts and experiences. Listening to one another made us realise that every person had a unique story, and every story deserved to be heard. We celebrated each other's creativity, courage and willingness to express ourselves. It was not about who was better than the other; it was about recognising the value that each person brought into the space.

The sessions led by Thando and Musa created an environment where we could be vulnerable, creative and honest. Their guidance encouraged us to look at our experiences from different perspectives and to understand that reflection is an important part of growth. Through our diaries, poems and written reflections, we were able to capture moments that might have otherwise been forgotten. We also learned that encouragement can be a powerful form of support. A simple word of appreciation can give someone confidence to continue pursuing their art and believing in their voice.

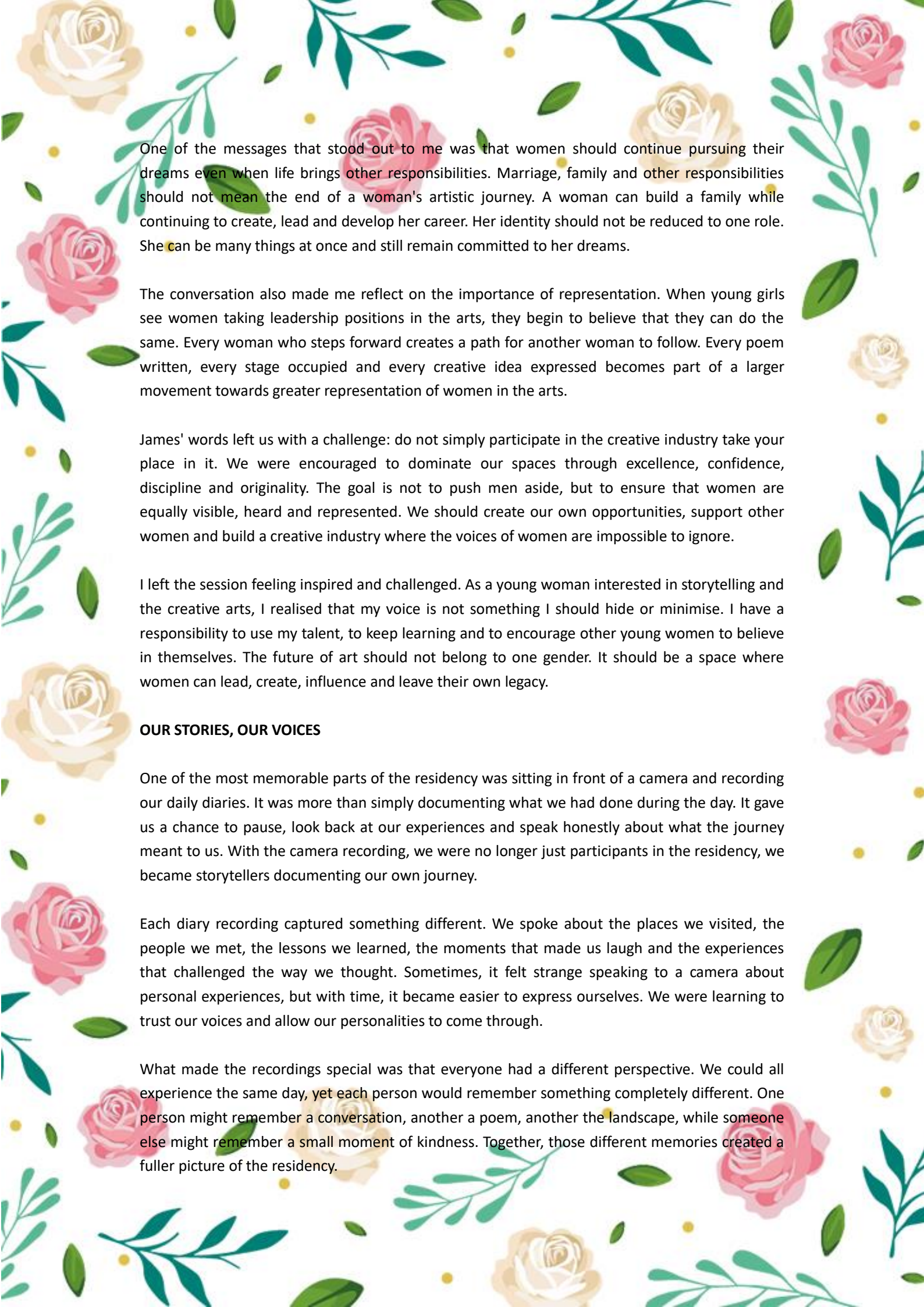


As I reflected on the day, I realised that the residency was becoming more than just a creative experience. It was becoming a community. We had started as individuals with different backgrounds, personalities and stories, but through the days we spent together, we were learning to appreciate our differences and build each other up. We left the session carrying not only our written reflections, but also the encouragement, friendships and memories we had created together. Sometimes, the greatest gift we can give another person is the reminder that their voice matters.

WOMEN TAKING THE LEAD IN ART

During our visit to the Livingstone Museum, we also had a powerful session with James, who challenged us to think differently about the position of women in the arts. He reminded us that women should not be afraid to take the lead, occupy creative spaces and make their voices heard. For generations, many areas of the creative industry, including poetry, literature, music and other forms of art, have often been dominated by men. However, he encouraged us to recognise that history does not have to determine our future. Women have the ability to change the narrative by stepping forward, creating boldly and taking ownership of their talents.

The session encouraged us to understand that being a woman should never be seen as a limitation to pursuing a creative career. Women can be poets, writers, performers, visual artists, musicians, directors, producers and leaders within the creative industry. We were reminded that our creativity is valuable and that we should not wait for permission to occupy spaces that we have the ability to transform.



One of the messages that stood out to me was that women should continue pursuing their dreams even when life brings other responsibilities. Marriage, family and other responsibilities should not mean the end of a woman's artistic journey. A woman can build a family while continuing to create, lead and develop her career. Her identity should not be reduced to one role. She can be many things at once and still remain committed to her dreams.

The conversation also made me reflect on the importance of representation. When young girls see women taking leadership positions in the arts, they begin to believe that they can do the same. Every woman who steps forward creates a path for another woman to follow. Every poem written, every stage occupied and every creative idea expressed becomes part of a larger movement towards greater representation of women in the arts.

James' words left us with a challenge: do not simply participate in the creative industry take your place in it. We were encouraged to dominate our spaces through excellence, confidence, discipline and originality. The goal is not to push men aside, but to ensure that women are equally visible, heard and represented. We should create our own opportunities, support other women and build a creative industry where the voices of women are impossible to ignore.

I left the session feeling inspired and challenged. As a young woman interested in storytelling and the creative arts, I realised that my voice is not something I should hide or minimise. I have a responsibility to use my talent, to keep learning and to encourage other young women to believe in themselves. The future of art should not belong to one gender. It should be a space where women can lead, create, influence and leave their own legacy.

OUR STORIES, OUR VOICES

One of the most memorable parts of the residency was sitting in front of a camera and recording our daily diaries. It was more than simply documenting what we had done during the day. It gave us a chance to pause, look back at our experiences and speak honestly about what the journey meant to us. With the camera recording, we were no longer just participants in the residency, we became storytellers documenting our own journey.

Each diary recording captured something different. We spoke about the places we visited, the people we met, the lessons we learned, the moments that made us laugh and the experiences that challenged the way we thought. Sometimes, it felt strange speaking to a camera about personal experiences, but with time, it became easier to express ourselves. We were learning to trust our voices and allow our personalities to come through.

What made the recordings special was that everyone had a different perspective. We could all experience the same day, yet each person would remember something completely different. One person might remember a conversation, another a poem, another the landscape, while someone else might remember a small moment of kindness. Together, those different memories created a fuller picture of the residency.



The diary recordings also became a form of self-reflection. Instead of simply saying, “This is what we did today,” we had to ask ourselves, “What did this experience do to me?” That question made the recordings deeper. We began thinking about how the residency was influencing our creativity, confidence, relationships and understanding of art.

There were moments when we laughed at ourselves, moments when we struggled to find the right words and moments when we simply spoke from the heart. Those imperfections made the recordings real. They captured us as we were not as perfect artists with perfect stories, but as young people learning, experimenting and discovering ourselves.

Looking back, I realise that the camera became almost like a silent witness to our journey. It watched us arrive as strangers, become comfortable with one another, share our stories and grow together. It captured moments that photographs alone could never explain because our voices carried the emotions behind the images. The diary recordings also reminded me of the importance of documenting our own stories. If we do not tell our stories, someone else may tell them for us, and they may not understand them in the same way. By recording our experiences in our own voices, we were preserving a part of ourselves and creating a record that we could return to in the future.

Perhaps years from now, when we watch those recordings again, we will hear more than our voices. We will hear the excitement we felt, the uncertainty we carried, the friendships we formed and the dreams we were beginning to understand. We will see who we were at that particular moment in our lives.

The diary was not just a recording of our days. It was a recording of our becoming. And that is what made it special. We were not only creating art during the residency we were creating memories, documenting our growth and leaving behind pieces of our voices that could continue speaking long after the journey ended.

WHERE IS OUR JOURNEY TAKING US?

Every journey begins with a destination, but sometimes we do not know exactly where the road will lead us. When I joined the Zambezi Meetup, I knew I was coming for a creative experience, but I did not know how deeply the journey would challenge me, inspire me and change the way I see myself as an artist. With every activity, every conversation, every poem and every new person we met, the question slowly became: Where do we go from here?

We had crossed physical spaces between Zimbabwe and Zambia, but we were also crossing personal boundaries within ourselves. We were learning to speak more confidently, to listen to different perspectives and to trust our creative voices. The journey was no longer simply about attending sessions or visiting new places. It became about discovering what we could become when we were given the opportunity to create, collaborate and be heard.

Our poems, diary recordings, photographs and reflections became pieces of a much bigger story. They captured where we had been, but they also gave us clues about where we could go next. Perhaps the true destination of this journey is not a particular city or country. Perhaps it is the person each of us is becoming—the artist who is more confident, the storyteller who is more courageous and the young person who now understands that their voice can create an impact.

As we moved closer to the end of the residency, I began to realise that leaving did not mean the journey was over. We would return to our different communities, careers, studies and creative spaces, carrying everything we had learned. The real test would be what we did with it. Would we continue writing? Would we continue collaborating? Would we support other young artists? Would we take the courage we found here and use it when we returned home?

I believe our journey lands not at an ending, but at a beginning. We land in our communities with new stories to tell and new responsibilities to carry. We land with the courage to take up space, the confidence to share our art and the understanding that creativity can connect people who might otherwise never meet. The Zambezi may have been the place that brought us together, but our work continues far beyond its banks.



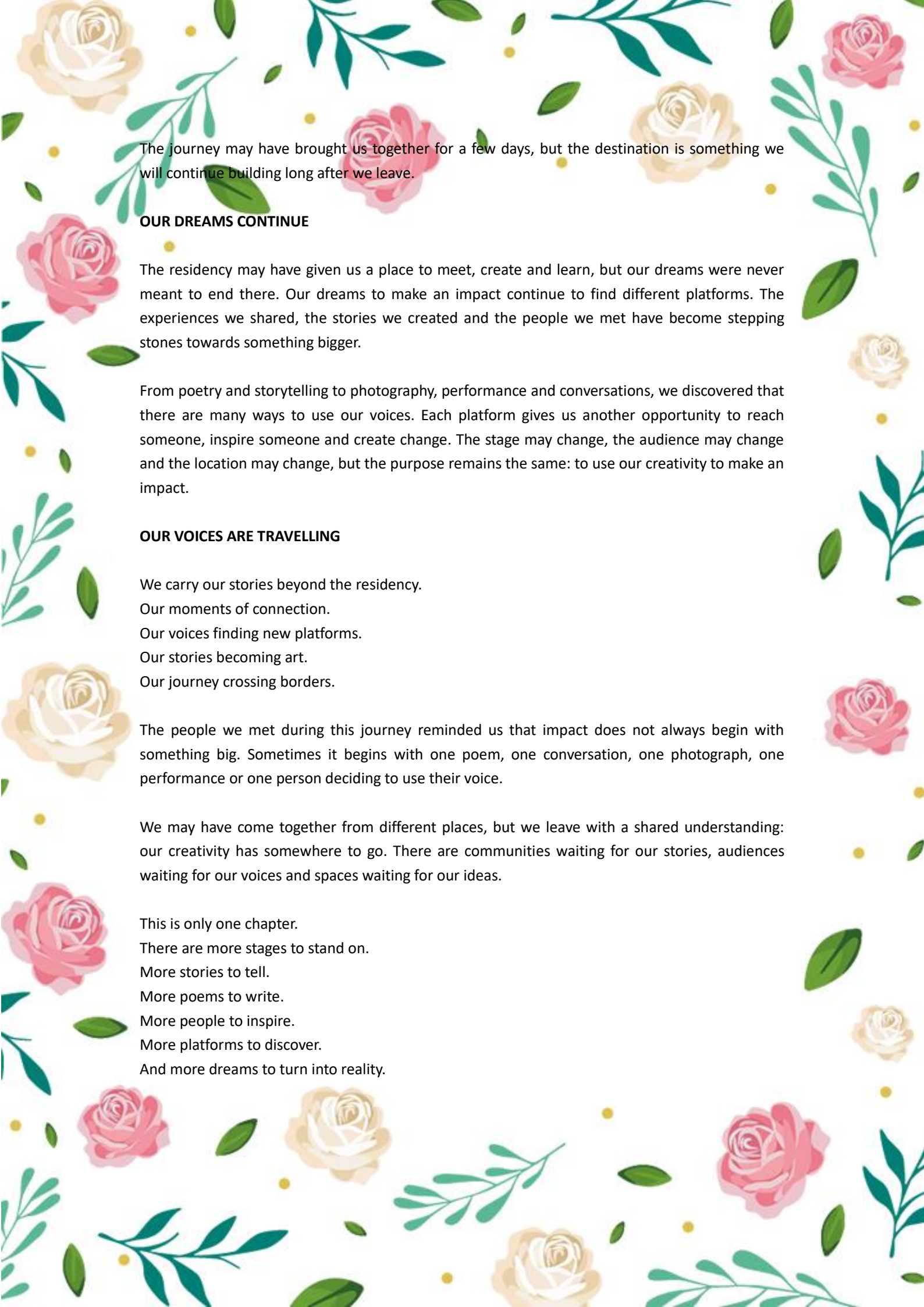
So, where do we land?

We land in possibility.

We land in purpose.

We land in new beginnings.

And perhaps, most importantly, we land in a deeper understanding of who we are and what our voices can become.



The journey may have brought us together for a few days, but the destination is something we will continue building long after we leave.

OUR DREAMS CONTINUE

The residency may have given us a place to meet, create and learn, but our dreams were never meant to end there. Our dreams to make an impact continue to find different platforms. The experiences we shared, the stories we created and the people we met have become stepping stones towards something bigger.

From poetry and storytelling to photography, performance and conversations, we discovered that there are many ways to use our voices. Each platform gives us another opportunity to reach someone, inspire someone and create change. The stage may change, the audience may change and the location may change, but the purpose remains the same: to use our creativity to make an impact.

OUR VOICES ARE TRAVELLING

We carry our stories beyond the residency.
Our moments of connection.
Our voices finding new platforms.
Our stories becoming art.
Our journey crossing borders.

The people we met during this journey reminded us that impact does not always begin with something big. Sometimes it begins with one poem, one conversation, one photograph, one performance or one person deciding to use their voice.

We may have come together from different places, but we leave with a shared understanding: our creativity has somewhere to go. There are communities waiting for our stories, audiences waiting for our voices and spaces waiting for our ideas.

This is only one chapter.
There are more stages to stand on.
More stories to tell.
More poems to write.
More people to inspire.
More platforms to discover.
And more dreams to turn into reality.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

We leave the residency,
but we do not leave the purpose.

We carry it.

We build with it.

We create with it.

And we continue to make an impact-
wherever our voices find a platform.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

As I look back on the Zambezi Meetup journey, I realise that I am leaving with much more than photographs, poems and memories. I am leaving with stories, friendships, lessons and a deeper understanding of what it means to create with purpose. From our interactions at Mpisi Homestead and our visit to the Livingstone Museum, to standing before the Victoria Falls, every experience gave us something to carry forward.

The residency reminded me that art is not only about creating something beautiful. It is about telling stories, preserving memories, questioning what we know and connecting people. Through our poems, diary recordings, reflections and conversations, we found different ways to express who we are and what we believe in. We learned from one another and discovered that our different backgrounds could become a source of strength rather than division.

I am especially grateful for the moments when we encouraged one another. The words shared by Thando, Musa and James challenged us to believe in our voices and take our place in the creative spaces we deserve. We were reminded that women, in particular, must continue to lead, create and take up space in the arts. These lessons will remain with me long after the residency.

Our journey does not end here. We return to our different communities carrying the responsibility to continue creating, collaborating and making an impact. The platforms may change, but our purpose remains. We will continue to write, perform, document, inspire and tell stories that deserve to be heard.

Perhaps this is what the Zambezi Meetup gave us most; a reminder that a journey does not have to end when we leave a place. Sometimes, leaving is simply the beginning of carrying the experience somewhere new.

We came with our stories.

We shared our voices.

We created together.

We encouraged one another.

And now, we continue the journey.

The river keeps flowing.

So do we.