



# CAMERAS 4 CHANGE

Changing the World Through Photographic Education and Creative Opportunity

*An interview with Cate Cameron (founder of Cameras 4 Change)*

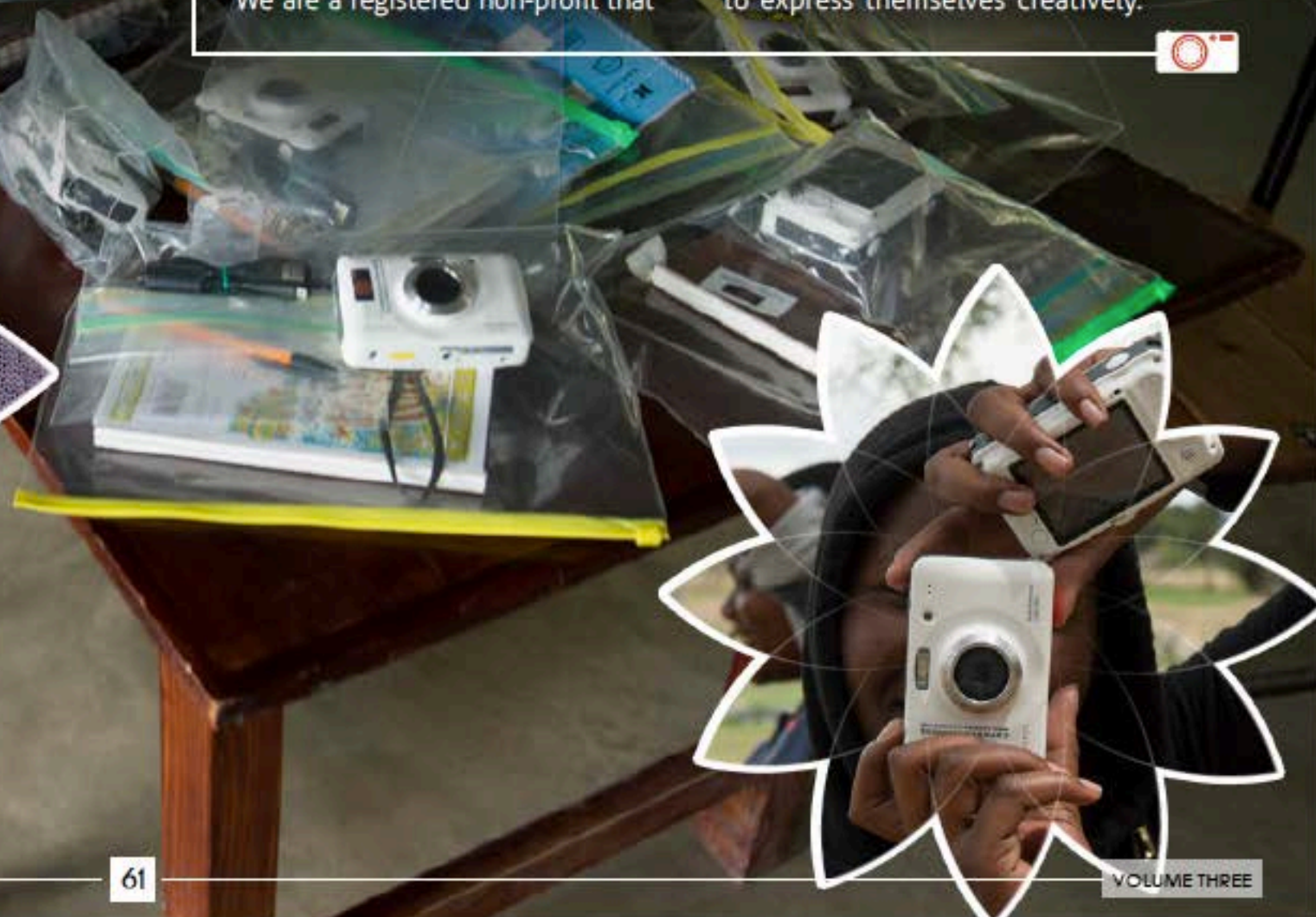


# Welcome Cate! Tell us about yourself! What is Cameras 4 Change?



I am a photographer who wanted to connect on a much deeper level with my world. I love what I do, as a set still photographer, but I had already decided earlier on that I also wanted to photograph with meaning. I founded Cameras 4 Change a few years ago as a way to give back to different communities. We are a registered non-profit that

works both locally here in Canada (Vancouver, and soon Calgary) as well as internationally by offering at-risk / marginalized individuals the chance to experience cameras and photography. We not only offer skill education, but equally as important, we offer the opportunity for these individuals to express themselves creatively.



# So where did this idea come from, and how did Cameras 4 Change evolve out of it?

I had been working on a large-scale community engagement project for a water NGO (non-governmental-organizations) that was funded through CIDA (the then Canadian International Development Agency) and the Rotarians. It involved traveling extensively to Zambia, Southern India, and Haiti to tell the story of lives affected by lack of access to clean water, and how it makes a difference. During the Haiti portion, I was asked to create a small program for youth displaced after the earthquake. I jumped at the chance, as I knew it would be an amazing experience. I loved it and saw all kinds of amazing things happen during the process of simply "connecting with these youth through photography." I wanted to replicate it and that is how the idea came to mind - to partner with other NGO's that were already working on the ground and go in to run a Camera Project.



People are always interested in it as I think photography holds a special place in our lives; we all love it and have access to it here in our world. Just think how iPhone cameras have shaped so much of our life experience. When we work with people that do not have access to cameras and photography, and give them that chance, they just want to take photos of themselves, their friends, their homes etc. It holds so much importance for them. It is like architecting your own visual history.

On a personal level, I have been profoundly impacted by so many experiences and encounters through my work with Cameras 4 Change. Overall, it is the realization that we can make a difference, not always through money, water wells, health, education etc. (although these are obviously important); but simply through creating a human connection. That is the real game changer.

# How can photographers (i.e. the folks reading this right now) make a difference?

encounter so many photographers, both professional and hobbyists, that are equally passionate about photography that want to know how they can do this. I think it is up to individuals to seek out where they can connect and where they can help. The one thing I feel is important to taking great photographs is to have that human connection. You cannot always get it by simply "being there." I think you have a better chance of making photos that really work when you really work at it. This means that you talk to your subjects, get to know them, develop a genuine trust, and understand them. That is really what it takes to "make a difference." From that, all kinds of things will happen. It is through really hearing people's stories that I have gone on to do many things that have made a difference. This could be as simple as gifting someone with your time, a photo, sponsoring a student in school, or providing a community with cameras and a creative experience for a few days. There are many other projects out there that work with kids and cameras. Or if participation isn't an option, you could always help through **donations** that go towards running projects.



# What are your future plans for Cameras 4 Change? What initiatives do you see Cameras 4 Change becoming a part of in the future, and how can others get involved?



We are a very small non-profit run by a board of 6 volunteers. In other words, we do this in our spare time. I do have a vision for C4C, but we would need to get some major funding in order to be able to take things to the next level. We do need volunteers for various functions and to help grow the organization. I would love to see us out in the world in a much larger way as a template that other photographers could utilize to run their own projects, as well as an online component that would be a much better platform for sharing for previous participants around the world.

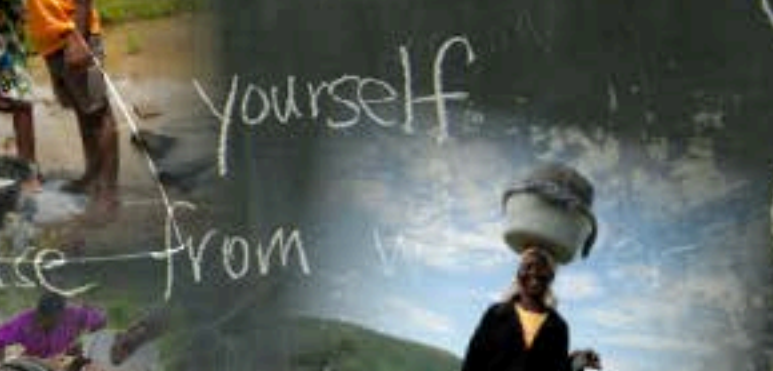
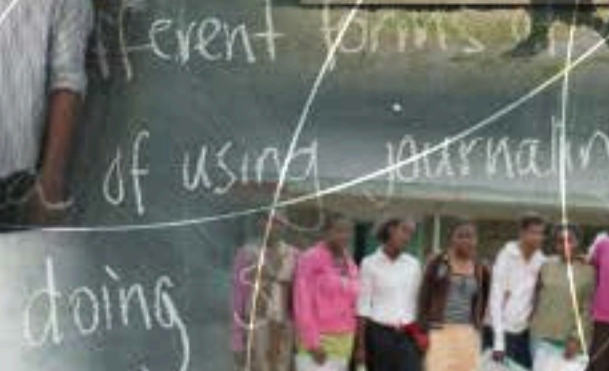
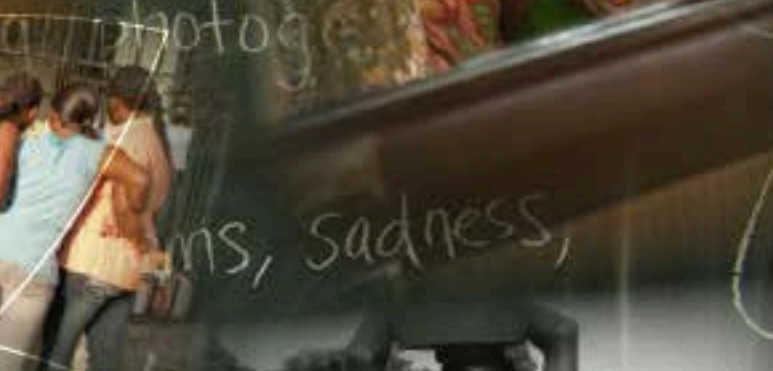
We are currently receiving support from

Nikon Canada, who provides digital cameras for our workshop participants. Naturally, this was a very exciting step for us as the cameras are a big part of our workshop budgets. So I see us as very grassroots at this point, and that is fine. We are learning as we grow and still managing to do some work with some incredible organizations around the world. We worked in Kenya last year, and this spring we are looking forward to working in Mexico.

For more information on Cameras 4 Change, including ways that you can become involved in making a difference through photography, visit the Cameras 4 Change website at:

[www.cameras-4-change.org](http://www.cameras-4-change.org)





The arts (writing, journaling, poetry, drawing, painting, photography) can be healing.

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you have talked

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yourself

introduce the idea of using journaling and photography to

doing ... can be a release from

experiencing