

# Women Everywhere Can Lead NEWSLETTER



WE CAN LEAD



## ISHA SESAY

*Founder & President, We Can Lead  
CNN Anchor  
Global Education Advocate*

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**They need you.  
We need you.**

#### STAY CONNECTED.

For more information, please visit [www.We-CanLead.org](http://www.We-CanLead.org).

 <http://bit.ly/WECanLead>

 @WECanLead1

## Dear Team Members,

First, I want to say a huge thanks to each and every one of you for agreeing to be part of W.E. Can Lead's journey. Your heartfelt support will immeasurably increase the impact of our work on the ground in Africa, and in the lives of many. This newsletter is the first of many and will be sent out regularly to keep you up to speed on the current status of our efforts.

*Lots of news to catch you up on...*

**Here at home** – Sharon DeBary, who was integral in building out our curriculum and organizational structure, has agreed to take on the role of Interim Executive Director through January 2016. Sharon is just back from Freetown - more details of her trip later.

**Staying on the traveling front** – I have moved to Los Angeles to

launch a new CNN show. But, thanks to the joys of technology, remain as accessible to you as ever.

**Moving forward** – In the next couple of weeks we will begin the selection process of mentors and our young leaders. We are thrilled to find out who will be shaping a better world for future generations.

There is still much to be done, but with the enthusiasm and vigor of teammates like you, there is only optimism for all that lies ahead. I have no doubt we are going to achieve great things together!

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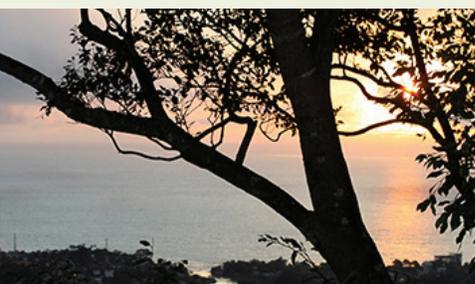


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## Partners As Leaders

### *Goldman Sachs*

We were blessed this summer with the opportunity to share our vision for young girls with the Goldman Sachs leadership team. In late July, Isha attended their annual Philanthropy Day in Hong Kong and was able to share her vision for W.E. Can Lead. She also met individually with GS partners to share her personal story and the passion she has for young girls in Sierra Leone and across West Africa. W.E. Can Lead has been approved as a nonprofit recipient for annual partners gifts as well as GS Gives, the charitable giving platform for all Goldman Sachs employees. Isha's investment has already begun paying off, as we have received several large donations from Goldman Sachs partners. We are looking forward to being a featured organization for Goldman Sachs Dress Down For A Cause Day later this Fall.





## Heading to Freetown!

The time has finally come! Travel restrictions and the local impact of the Ebola epidemic frustrated our efforts, but on-the-ground operations in Freetown have begun.

On September 12, I arrived in Freetown tired and sleep deprived, but thrilled to be there! I was not prepared for the beauty that awaited me, both in the landscape and the people. A coastal city nestled among the hills, Freetown boasts spectacular views and spectacular people. I have never met a more open, welcoming, hospitable and proud group! I was treated like a rock star; not because of anything I brought to the table, but because the people of Sierra Leone were so proud to show off their country to this first time visitor.

We were able to accomplish most of the goals we had for the trip:

- We finalized the certification process with the government and are now a fully recognized NGO operating in Sierra Leone.
- We opened our local bank account.
- We met with other NGOs serving young girls in Freetown and the surrounding areas.
- We met with and interviewed local school girls and captured their stories to share with you and our supporting partners.

Overall, it was a very productive week, including a defining moment for me personally. On Wednesday, we visited

five schools to interview students and staff. As is normal during the rainy season, the morning began with gray skies and a steady drizzle. As we approached our second stop, the drizzle intensified and turned into a downpour. Young girls crossed the school courtyard in ankle-deep water. We never made it to our third stop. The rain grew stronger and the water raced down the hillsides into the city center, flooding the poorest areas of Freetown. The raging waters caused the deaths of several residents, and displaced thousands more. For our group, it was an afternoon of frustration as we sat in traffic for nearly four hours. For others less fortunate, it was an afternoon of tragedy, less than two miles from where we sat in the safety of our car. The resolve of the Freetown community in the face of this was inspirational.

As you will soon see, the girls are amazing! Their passion and potential, if harnessed, can truly be the catalyst for change in the country. I could not be more impressed, humbled and excited to walk alongside you as we serve these young girls.



**SHARON DEBARY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR