

# SHE-CAN Scholarship Proposal

## **SHE-CAN Overview**

SHE-CAN transforms young women from disadvantaged backgrounds into confident leaders and change-agents in their home countries. We identify low-income, high-potential students in post-conflict countries; we pair the aspiring students with teams of mentors who work to help them win full-ride scholarships to top U.S. colleges and universities. Once students graduate, they return home with an inspired education, new skills and confidence, and a strong network of mentors and colleagues that foster future successes. Since 2011, our collaboration has begun to build a new generation of female leaders in Rwanda, Cambodia and Afghanistan.

As of 2016, with the support of 100+ U.S. mentors, SHE-CAN has a total of 27 scholars who have either graduated, are thriving in school, or are headed to the US this fall to attend schools like Harvard, Smith, Bucknell and U.C. Berkeley. Connected by our powerful mentor networks and bolstered with a top-notch education, our scholars are attaining coveted internships and leadership opportunities within influential organizations, including Women for Women, Partners in Health, and U.S. congressional offices.

This year, SHE-CAN will have 13 scholars from Rwanda and Cambodia applying at schools who have joined the SHE-CAN scholarship program.

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## **SHE-CAN's Expertise: Scholar Selection, Financial Support, and Mentoring**

SHE-CAN manages the outreach, recruitment, screening, and selection of high-potential, low-income female undergraduate scholars in post-conflict countries. Since 2011, SHE-CAN has developed a democratic application process that allows us to identify the brightest students who have potential to thrive on US campuses, but who lack finances and knowledge of the scholarship application process.

SHE-CAN funds the expenses that prohibit these scholars from considering applying: we provide ACT/SAT and IELTS/TOEFL preparation, and cover non-scholarship costs which include entrance tests, flights, computers, clothes and dorm supplies.

We engage highly professional U.S. women who, in mentor teams of five or six, are matched to each scholar to guide her through the application process for available scholarships. Once our young women win scholarships, mentor teams act as support systems and role models. Our mentor network specializes in providing crucial personal emotional support, leadership training, and experiential learning opportunities so that our scholars make successful social and academic transitions to life in the United States. Over the college years SHE-CAN mentors and scholars build lifelong bonds that continue throughout scholars' transitions from graduation into leadership careers and beyond.

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## **SHE-CAN Scholarship Opportunity**

In 2016, SHE-CAN is scaling up our program to an even more impactful level because we are increasing the number of young women we serve. Last year, we created the **SHE-CAN** opportunity—**Supporting Her Education Changes A Nation**—that asks top U.S. schools to commit to awarding a 4-year scholarship to one SHE-CAN scholar each year for the next five years. SHE-CAN is a need-based scholarship and mentorship program that we offer to the brightest young women from five post-conflict countries. Through the SHE-CAN scholarship opportunity, SHE-CAN partner universities and colleges will realize the following benefits:

### **Increase Scholarship's Impact**

By joining us as a SHE-CAN partner school, a university contributes to a collective effort to change the leadership trajectory of post-conflict countries rather than diluting efforts across many nations. Together the core schools educate enough leaders to form cohorts of concentrated leadership with the combined power to become influential catalysts for equality, peace, and economic prosperity. Over time, the collective power of these graduates becomes exponential and will influence millions. Within five years, 50 participating universities will be sending 50 SHE-CAN scholars home each year, 10 per country.

### **Empower Women's Leadership Globally**

Supporting SHE-CAN scholars enables schools to foster equality for all by providing women pathways to leadership in the places that need it most. With the combined support of schools and mentors, scholars are able to step out of their traditional cultures to a more progressive society in order to gain a wider perspective and a highly sought after degree. Through their relationships with their mentors, they find their personal power and voice as potential leaders ready to challenge engrained gender barriers.

### **Bridge the Income Divide**

SHE-CAN allows colleges and universities to push scholarship funds down the socio-economic pyramid. By working with international and local organizations in our target countries, we find high-potential leaders who have meager financial backgrounds and have suffered the atrocities of conflict in their countries. Our program includes many orphans, refugees, and girls treated as house-slaves; these young women are often outside the radar of colleges and universities because the students lack resources and knowledge to navigate the application process on their own. Our experience shows that scholars who have persevered through unimaginable tragedies in their lives are often the people most motivated to return home to usher in change for those who suffer similar plights.

### **Encourage and Retain Diversity**

Our commitment is to provide participating schools with one qualified scholar a year. Once SHE-CAN is fully scaled to five countries, we will be able to provide each participating school with a scholar from a different country each year. Long-term partners will only need to accept scholars from duplicate countries once every five years.

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## **Core Partnerships**

### **In-Country Agency Roles**

SHE-CAN has a track record of partnering with the most impactful women's education agencies in Rwanda, including The Rwanda Girls Initiative/Gashora Academy, FAWE Rwanda, First Lady Jeannette Kagame's Imbutu Foundation, the Ministry of Education and several Parliamentarians. To support our work in Afghanistan, we have an established partnership with Afghan Women's Funding Network (AGFAF) and the Feminist Majority. In 2014, we established relationships and cooperative agreements with the following organizations in Cambodia: Women For Prosperity, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Women's Affairs, USAID Cambodia, Cambodian Children's Fund, the Harpswell Foundation, Jay Pritzker Academy, and several Parliamentarians. We are poised to develop connections in three more post-conflict nations.

### **International Development Roles**

We are working with Congresswoman (MN) Betty McCollum who, with our assistance, has been introducing legislation to gain State Department support for a program to fund women's education and leadership initiatives in post-conflict countries. Other key development partners include International Institute of Education (IIE), American Councils, Vital Voices, Global Fund for Women, and Roots of Peace.

### **University Roles**

We have a growing network of partner universities who currently support one or more of our scholars. Our partner universities are: Arizona State University, Bennington College, Boston University, Bucknell University (3 scholars), Gettysburg College, Harvard University, Haverford College, Lehigh University (2 scholars), Lafayette College (3 scholars), Michigan State University (2 scholars), Muhlenberg College (3 scholars), Oberlin College, Scripps College, Smith College, Tufts University, U.C. Berkeley, Whitman (2 scholars).

Those who have officially joined the SHE-CAN consortium by accepting a SHE-CAN scholar in 2016 include: Bennington College, Bucknell University, Gettysburg College, Lafayette College, Muhlenberg College, and Scripps College. Several of these schools have signed long-term contracts with SHE-CAN.

### **Corporate Roles**

Our intent is to engage corporations in growing robust in-country internship and job placement programs.

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## **BECOME A SHE-CAN PARTNER!**

Join us and leverage your scholarship investment for greater impact.

If you think your school is a good candidate to sponsor a SHE-CAN scholar, please contact **Barbara Bylenga**: [bbylenga@shecan.global](mailto:bbylenga@shecan.global).