



# African Link Initiative (ALI)



PARTNERSHIP  
INCENTIVES

# Why ALI Works

## The challenge

We've all been there. For most of us, our teenage years bring about the first time we consider our individual identities and how that may affect our future in life -- we begin to ask who we are and why. Teens in America get bombarded with countless data points, "factoids," and "big personalities" that influence how they view their world and themselves in it, which affects their perceived value (self-worth). Their perceived value directly impacts the quality of the decisions they make about their life and future. At the same time, teens can experience an increased awareness of how others may perceive them, which may then manifest as self-consciousness, experimentation, and even rebellion.

For Black youth, questions about identity are compounded by issues related to race and ethnicity. Most descendants of enslaved people have little or no connection to their ancestral heritage before the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

## Why identity matters

Identity describes one's sense of self and how one defines themselves in terms of values, beliefs, and role in the world. Our self-identity in adolescence forms the basis of our self-esteem later in life. Though teenagers have some control over their identity development, their identities are also influenced by external factors including peers, family, school, ethnic identity, media, and other social environments.

Studies have shown that programs for Black students that teach Black culture and instill cultural pride yield promising outcomes. Stanford University researchers studied a special class for Black teenage boys in Oakland, California called the Manhood Development Program. They reported that Black boys were less likely to drop out of high school if the class was offered at their school. In a high school with 60 Black boys in ninth grade, on average only three students dropped out as opposed to five students in schools that did not provide the course. Between the graduating classes of 2010 and 2018, the high school graduation rate for Black boys in Oakland schools increased from 46% to 69%.

**In 2010, Oakland, California schools implemented a culturally specific program for Black boys. The program helped increase the high school graduation rate for Black boys from 46% in 2010 to 69% in 2018.**



# Why ALI Works

continued...

## How ALI cultivates identity

ALI transforms how Black youth experience their world by first transforming how they experience themselves. ALI's evidence-based three-part program supports teen identity development by helping them explore three questions that are critical to identity formation:



### Part 1:

Where do I come from?



### Part 2:

Where am I now?



### Part 3:

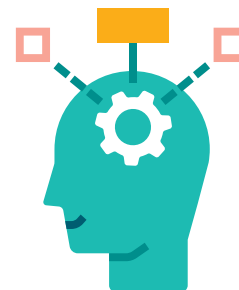
Where can I grow from here?

## How ALI works

In **Part 1 of ALI: Where Do I Come From?** Teens begin the journey of self-discovery by taking an **African Ancestry DNA test**, learning about Africans and the continent of Africa, and hypothesizing what their ancestral DNA results will be. Teens may also participate in an overnight educational trip to Washington, D.C.\* with guided tours of Howard University, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Teens may also participate in a unique critical thinking experience called Egypt on the Potomac. ALI includes curriculum from IKG's Cultural Imperative Program (CIP), co-founded by renowned author, publisher, cultural historian, and educational consultant, Anthony Browder.



While their African Ancestry DNA results are being analyzed, ALI Scholars will begin **Part 2 of ALI: Influencer Academy™** where Financial Literacy and Economic Inclusion are top priorities. Teens learn to connect their economy with our ecology as global citizens. They also learn a reflective practice to foster self-awareness, critical thinking, and relationship skill building during a Crucial Conversations workshop.



\*Specific activities will depend on the status of COVID-19 at the time



# Why ALI Works

continued...

Influencer Academy is followed by **Part 3 of ALI: Teen Summit**. Teens will continue to explore their individual and collective identities through a series of facilitated conversations that help them unpack individual, social, and cultural constructs. Teens will explore the ideas they are most passionate about and present their very own TED-Ed Talk on an idea that inspires them. The curriculum applies internationally recognized standards for public speaking and presentation literacy, listening, giving & receiving feedback, cultural & global awareness, perspective taking, and research. ALI scholars learn by doing – thinking critically, exercising curiosity, journaling, and challenging their own paradigms, biases, assumptions, and stereotypes.

**ALI culminates with a birthright trip to Ghana\*** to experience African culture first-hand and visit historical sites of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This 14-day experience starts in Washington, D.C. with a diplomatic VIP sendoff at the Embassy of Ghana. In Ghana, teens will meet with their Ghanaian peers, take part in a youth-led community service project, a tribal naming ceremony, and so much more.

Each night, teens will spend time reflecting and journaling about their experiences and sharing their thoughts and feelings. This homecoming trip provides authentic, direct experiences to help heal the divide between African Americans and Africans, and helping African American youth heal the divide within themselves.



## Sources

- [Evidence supporting teaching Black culture to Black students](#)
- [Aspiro Adventure - Why is teen identity development so important?](#)
- [The Cultural Imperative Program](#)

\*Specific activities will depend on the status of COVID-19 at the time





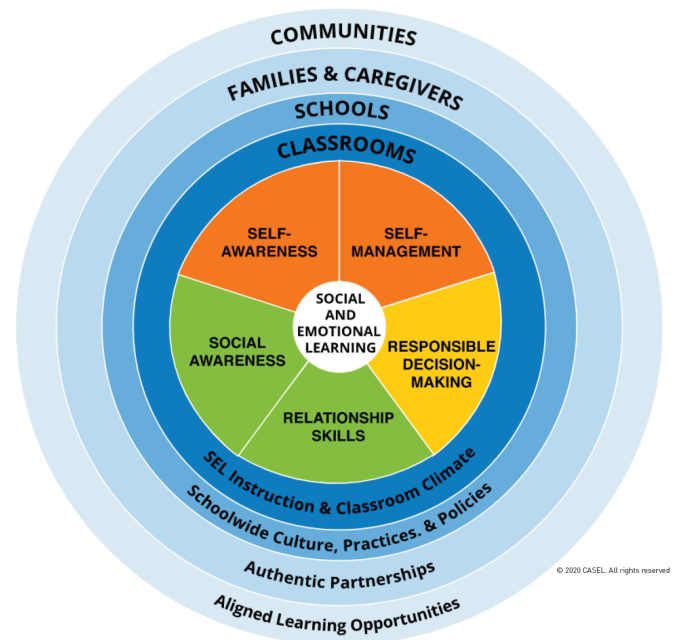
# The Evidence

ALI is tackling a big issue that will impact a vulnerable and impressionable population -- Black teenagers. To ensure our program gets it right the first time, every component of our program is rooted in proven techniques that have been shown to improve outcomes among historically disadvantaged or underserved groups.

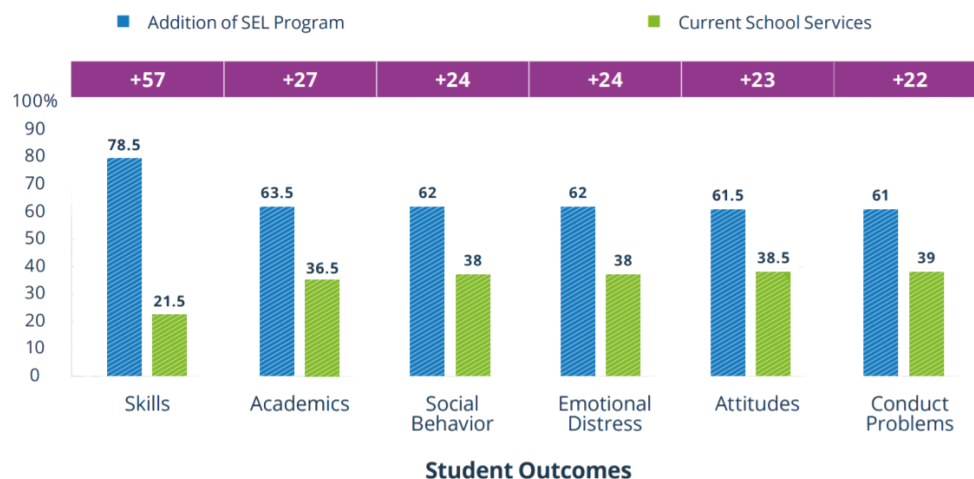
## Social and emotional learning (SEL)

At the core of our approach is social emotional learning (SEL), a framework through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. Source: [CASEL](#)



**Percentage of Students Who Improve with the Addition of an SEL Program**



# The Evidence

continued...

ALI operationalizes proven and promising links between social and emotional learning (SEL), culturally responsive education, identity development, and improved life outcomes for Black youth.

In October 2020, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) updated its definition of SEL to include identity development, which is the heart and soul of ALI.

A Stanford University study found, [this program](#), which focused on cultural pride for Black youth, yielded a

**50%  
increase**

in the Black male  
graduation rate

**Cultural pride improves  
outcomes, including GPA,  
for Black students**

[Source: Hechinger Report 2019 & Cultural Imperative Program](#)

**300+  
Fortune 500  
Companies**

use Crucial Conversations™, a core  
component of the ALI curriculum

Programs that offer social and  
emotional learning strategies  
yield an

**11:1  
Return on  
Investment**

[Source: Columbia University 2015](#)

# Founder Biography

**Shazel Muhammad**

**Founder**

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Shazel is a TEDx speaker, international keynote, managing director at Eunoia Global, and founder of African Link Initiative (ALI), a 501(c)(3). Shazel is committed to building human capacity around the globe and her work has been featured on BBC News, ESSENCE, and local news and media. As a professional facilitator, speaker, coach, trainer, and mentor, Shazel has reached more than 10,000 adult learners, over 3,000 students in the U.S., and over one thousand more in rural communities on the continent of Africa, helping them develop a sense of belonging, identity, resiliency, critical thinking, public speaking, and leadership skills.

Shazel is a highly requested coach and trainer known for stretching leaders to ask the right questions, seek-out alternate perspectives, clarify purpose, align systems, and achieve their mission. Her story began as a motivational speaker at 14 years old, and trainer for a Fortune 500 at 19 years old. Her leadership and influence in corporate-America successfully shaped culture and talent development, helping individuals and teams improve communication, build trust, and influencing learning experiences for thousands globally.

Shazel's life mission is to connect with the people that God puts on her path and with them, cultivate the best in humanity by first cultivating the best in themselves. Shazel believes that self-cultivated individuals nurture stronger families and more resilient communities that collaborate, innovate, and resolve conflict, to become and shape the excellence that is our global humanity.

Shazel was born and raised on her family's farm in NJ and continued her love of farming throughout her life and career, leading workshops on food justice, farming while Black, and creating equity in outdoor spaces. Shazel founded African Link Initiative (ALI), an evidence-based identity development initiative to transform how youth of African descent see their world and their possibilities by first transforming how they see themselves past, present, and future, and the continent of Africa. ALI has three-parts and culminates in a service-learning birthright trip to Ghana. Shazel's work includes amplifying youth voices through public speaking training. Five of her students are now published TEDx (TED-Ed) speakers. She supports students in Kenya, and The Republic of Sierra Leone, where she enjoys dual citizenship.





# Founder Biography

continued...

Shazel also worked with the Global Peace Foundation, an international peace building organization, to conduct workshops on community resilience and anti-radicalization. Her work focused on empowering communities to build an internal network of trusted resources to help recognize individuals who may need help and support.

Some of Shazel's partners include The Boys & Girls Club, United Way, and she is training youth financial literacy with the Newark YMCA afterschool program.

She serves on several boards and as Debate Judge with the DC Urban Debate League and did also for The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation's Great Communicator Debate Series. Shazel served as a team partner for K.I.N.D. (Kids in Need of Defense) to protect unaccompanied children who enter the U.S. immigration system alone.



*ALI Founder, Shazel Muhammad delivering a training on building community resilience*



# Meet our Partners

## Curriculum Partners

### Anthony Browder (IKG Cultural Resource Center)

**Anthony Browder** is a renowned author, publisher, cultural historian, artist and educational consultant and has lectured extensively throughout the USA, Africa, the Caribbean, Mexico, Japan and Europe, on issues related to African and African American history and culture.

Mr. Browder is the founder and director of IKG Cultural Resource Center. He has traveled to Egypt 54 times since 1980 and is currently director of the ASA Restoration Project, which is funding the excavation and restoration of the 25th dynasty tomb of Karakhamun in Luxor, Egypt. Browder is the first African American to fund and coordinate an archeological dig in Egypt and has conducted 23 archeological missions to Egypt since 2009. All of his publications are currently being used in classrooms around the world.



### Crucial Learning (formerly Vital Smarts)

**Crucial Learning** is an award winning learning and development organization whose training programs have been used by more than two million people and over 300 of the Fortune 500 companies to improve productivity, relationships, and overall performance. The behaviors that are taught help people to engage in healthy and beneficial dialogue around risky topics that often lead to unhealthy and/or damaged relationships, poor and non-productive outcomes, or even worse, violent outcomes.

When Crucial Conversations skills are learned and implemented, dialogue becomes compassionate yet honest; wherein mutual purpose and mutual respect are found and created, and outcomes are healthy and productive.



**crucial**  
conversations®





# Meet our Partners

continued...

## Programmatic Partners

### African Ancestry, Inc.

**African Ancestry, Inc.** (AfricanAncestry.com) is the pioneer of genetic ancestry tracing for Black people around the world. They utilize the largest database of African lineages in the world to accurately assess present-day African countries of origin and tribes for people of African descent.

African Ancestry is a Black owned company and employs Black scientists, geneticists, and staff. Their work has impacted the lives of more than 1,000,000 people including consumers, communities, and renown notables to help them connect with the roots of their family tree. African Ancestry does not research, sell, or share DNA results or any customer information, period. All samples are destroyed at the lab following analysis. African Ancestry has the largest and most comprehensive database of over 30,000 indigenous African DNA samples and determines specific countries and specific ethnic groups (tribes) of your origin.



**Dr. Gina Paige**  
Co-founder and President  
African Ancestry

"Partnering with ALI is fundamental to our mission of transforming the way that Black people view themselves by understanding the roots of their family trees. We look forward to contributing to the transformative effect that the ALI program will have on the young people who participate." - Dr. Gina Paige, President and Cofounder

### Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County, NJ

**Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County** has been making a positive impact on Mercer County youth for more than 80 years. Their programs focus on overall youth development in building youth's "40 developmental assets" to help them make the successful transition into adulthood. The Club utilizes evidence-based and best practice programs to reach these outcomes.

To this end, Club members are more likely to graduate from high school and enter into college, volunteer for community service, and perform better in school. Club members refer to the Club as their second home, and count Club staff as key influencers in their lives.

Today, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County serves more than 2,600 youth each year.



# Meet our Partners

continued...

## Programmatic Partners

### United Way of Greater Mercer County

#### **United Way of Greater Mercer County**

(UWGMCC)'s mission is to connect people with resources propelling individuals and families to reach their fullest potential creating a thriving community. In order to achieve our mission, we invest in programs, community partnerships, and volunteer engagement in youth and family success, economic vitality and health and wellness.

United Way has deep roots in the community with volunteer leadership on the ground, but we also have the broad reach that allows us to roll out good ideas across the nation and around the world. This lets us take the most successful strategies to scale and leverage resources for maximum impact.



**United Way  
of Greater Mercer County**

### Global Connections Foundation

#### **Global Connections Foundation (GCF) NJ Corp's**

mission is to foster global citizenship by advancing educational diplomacy through reflection and ethical action in local, national, and international communities.

Since 2007 GCF's sister organization, Global Connections Kenya has been linking teens across the globe with enrichment and community service trips between the U.S. and Kenya.

Global Connections Foundation earned GuideStar's 2020 Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar, the world's largest source of nonprofit information.



# Brand Imagery

## Sankofa



The concept of "Sankofa" is derived from King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Africa. "Sankofa" is expressed in the Akan language as "se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki." This translates to "it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot."

Sankofa dictates that we must revisit and understand our roots in order to move forward powerfully. This aligns with Eunoia Global's vision for ALI. By revisiting and exploring our collective and individual histories, we can grow together and shape the future.

## Shazel Muhammad, Founder



*ALI Founder, Shazel Muhammad*



*ALI Founder, Shazel Muhammad, with Kenyan Ambassador to the U.S. Robinson Njeru Githae*





# Brand Imagery

continued...



*ALI Founder, Shazel Muhammad after BBC interview with Hudheifa Aden of BBC Africa*



*ALI Founder, Shazel Muhammad, delivering remarks in Kenya at the 6th Annual Kenya Diaspora Alliance Homecoming Convention*



# Partnership Packages

## Why you should become an ALI partner

The primary benefit of an ALI partnership package is the satisfaction you'll gain from being a driver in the global shift towards ensuring equity through education. African Link Initiative is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) registered in the State of New Jersey. Your contribution is tax deductible as allowed by law.

By supporting ALI, you will:

- Help operationalize the link between cultural pride and improved life outcomes for Black youth,
- Be part of an innovative initiative that cultivates a sense of belonging and enables self-determination from the inside out, and
- Make a profound impact in the Black community.

**Game changer**  
\$25,000 per year

**Platinum**  
\$12,000 per year

**Gold**  
\$6,000 per year

**Silver**  
\$3,000 per year

**Bronze**  
\$1,000 per year

**Honorable Mention**  
\$500 per year

## How to become an ALI partner

The ALI team is thrilled to partner with you and grateful for your support. Contact our founder, Shazel Muhammad, to discuss partnership incentives and next steps.

📞 862-387-2877

✉️ [Shazel@AfricanLink.org](mailto:Shazel@AfricanLink.org)






































# Partnership Packages

continued...

## Partnership Incentives

	Game changer	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Honorable mention
Invitations to member only events						
Subscription to ALI's quarterly newsletter						
Listing on ALI's digital recognition wall						
Name or brand featured on the ALI website						
Name or brand featured on ALI social media						
ALI scholars volunteer with your organization						
Opportunity to network with other partners						
Logo featured on ALI merchandise						
Interview feature						

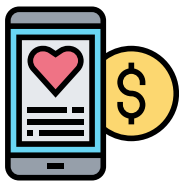


# Support ALI Today



## Become an ALI Partner

Email [Shazel@AfricanLink.org](mailto:Shazel@AfricanLink.org) to become an official ALI partner. Partnership packages range from \$500 - \$25,000 and offer excellent incentives.



## Donate

Visit [www.AfricanLink.org/Donate](http://www.AfricanLink.org/Donate) to make your tax-deductible\* donation. It takes less than five minutes to complete.



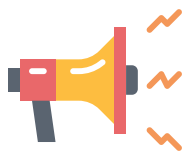
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Follow us on Instagram ([@AfricanLinkInitiative](https://www.instagram.com/AfricanLinkInitiative)) and Facebook ([@AfricanLinkInitiative](https://www.facebook.com/AfricanLinkInitiative)) to stay in touch with ALI. Share your favorite post(s) from our feed with five of your friends -- invite them to follow us too.



## Subscribe to our email list

Visit [www.AfricanLink.org](http://www.AfricanLink.org) and enter your email address when prompted.



## Tell five friends about ALI

Tell five people about ALI and encourage them to support. Consider starting with these: (1) a childhood friend; (2) a close coworker or colleague; (3) a family member; (4) a friend from college; (5) a member of your religious community.

\*Tax-deductible as allowed by law



# Contact Information



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## LinkedIn

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