Our mission:
The Impact Young Lives Foundation identifies exceptional young leaders amongst previously disadvantaged South African high school students and transforms them into globally-minded citizens by providing both scholarships and exposure to a well-established civil society in action.

Working in partnership with a network of youth-oriented leadership groups in both South Africa and the United States, IYL exposes and prepares these students for other exemplary programs to assist with their continued development and ultimately their nation’s success. IYL is a 501 (C)(3) organization in the U.S. and Section 21 in South Africa.

Our history:
In August 2000, eight young African-American professionals led by Dr. Christopher B. Howard created the Impact Young Lives Foundation. Cognizant of the influence that a good education coupled with exposure to different cultures and a robust professional network had on their own success, the eight decided that extending these opportunities to previously disadvantaged students in South Africa would be a worthy undertaking.

IYL launched its first essay contest at East Rand High School near Johannesburg, South Africa, where members of the foundation challenged the 300-plus 11th grade students to write an essay about four areas that would inevitably dominate their country’s livelihood during the post-apartheid era: business, technology, government and education. A distinguished selection committee selected two winners: Daniel Mokoena and Claudia Jansen, who traveled to the United States in June 2001 to visit sites representing the four areas they discussed in their essay. In addition, Claudia and Daniel received scholarships for tuition and books. Since 2001, IYL has continued to expand and transform more South African students into global-minded citizens.

Our future:
IYL Foundation believes that South Africa’s prosperity is absolutely critical to the preservation of the entire continent. South Africa’s youth will create this prosperity for the future. In order to succeed, however, South Africa’s young adults must leverage human, financial and social capital beyond the boundaries of the continent’s borders. In order to assist South Africa’s burgeoning civil society of color, the IYL Foundation identifies exceptional students who possess the potential to lead their nation in the near future and helps them develop their capabilities.
Our process:
Each year, IYL accepts nominations from partner organizations in South Africa for IYL Scholars. These university students, generally graduates from the Johannesburg area’s 466 previously disadvantaged public high schools, submit a 1,000-word essay on why they want to be an IYL Scholar. Selection committees comprised of distinguished professionals from both South Africa and the U.S. choose up to 10 winners and up to two alternates on the basis of those essays, student applications and personal interviews.

Our awards:
IYL scholars receive several awards, all of which will help transform them into globally-minded citizens and tap into their leadership potential. Their experience begins with a reception held in their honor at the U.S. embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, sponsored by the U.S. Ambassador. Next they embark on the Expose, Educate & Enlighten Experience. This experience brings students to the U.S. for a three-week trip visiting major U.S. cities — such as New York, Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago, Atlanta and Philadelphia — and engaging with leaders in government, business, science, technology, education, and media institutions. This experience is a cornerstone of their journey as an IYL Scholar.

Additionally, each IYL Scholar receives a $1,000 scholarship to the South African university or technical college of their choice and access to an international network of mentors, supporters, friends, and programs to assist them with their leadership development and career goals. After the Expose, Educate & Enlighten Experience, IYL Scholars participate in workshops every other month led by mid-career South African professionals on life’s skills, leadership and development programs available in the local area to help them continue to flourish. Scholars with exemplary grades, active civic leadership and successful internships during their time in university will receive assistance in applying for internships and additional study opportunities in the U.S.