

EDUCATION IS POWER

WHO TEACHES AFRICAN LEADERS



Chapter from Africa 2025: Prospects and Challenges
Handbook by the HSE University Center for African Studies
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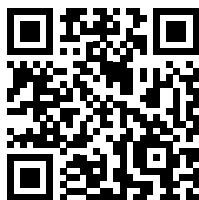
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The chapter **Education is power: who teaches African leaders** presents a detailed analysis of the current state of the education sector and the problems facing African countries, and its prospects. The chapter examines in detail the influence of external actors on education, and the link between foreign educational assistance and the migration of highly qualified professionals out of Africa. It includes research on the budgets of leading African universities and the educational backgrounds and languages spoken by high-level public officials and statesmen. The chapter serves as an integral part of the handbook *Africa 2025: Prospects and Challenges* prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies.

Africa 2025: Prospects and Challenges is to serve as a handbook on Africa's development, challenges and prospects. Its target audience is government officials, businessmen, scholars and experts. The handbook aims to provide alternative positive vision on some issues that Africa faces, among them being the fight for food and energy sovereignty, debt crisis, digital transformation, rapid urbanisation and population growth.

The book was prepared by the team of experts and scholars coordinated by HSE University Center for African Studies (Moscow, Russia).

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of the Handbook
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Table of Contents

The main challenges of education in Africa	3
Migration and education	5
Higher education in Africa	8
External influence on education in Africa	11
European states	12
USA	14
China	15
Japan	17
Türkiye	17
Russia	19
Languages and the education of the African leadership	20
Where have the African leaders of today been educated?	20
Key findings	21
Who is going to teach next generation of African leaders?	26

Education is power: who teaches African leaders

The main challenges of education in Africa

During the 37th African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2024, the countries of the continent, at the proposal of AU Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, chose “Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century” as the key theme for 2024.^{1 2}

Some of the most important goals set for 2025 and announced at the summit were to reduce the out-of-school rate to 11% for primary schools and to achieve a 46% reading proficiency rate by the end of primary school. African Union countries committed to training 79% of teachers at the pre-primary level and 85% at the primary level.

These promising targets are generally achievable for African countries, as they have already made notable efforts in the 21st century to implement education programmes and address the challenges facing education, showing marked and sustained growth in key indicators. However, even today the situation requires attention of those responsible for developing education policy on the continent.

According to UNESCO, the current primary school enrolment rate in Africa averages over 80%, with the continent experiencing one of the largest increases in primary school enrolment in the world over the last few decades (up 18 percentage points since 2000).³

More children in Africa are now in school than ever before⁴

The proportion of children of lower secondary school age who are out of school has fallen from 43% to 33% over the past two decades, while for upper secondary school children it has fallen from 63% to 53%.

In Africa, the rate of out-of-school children fell from 35% in 2000 to 18% in 2020, but **Sub-Saharan Africa still has the lowest enrolment rates in the world**. In 2022, about 100 million primary and secondary school-age children in Africa were out of school, representing 40.5% of the global total.⁵ Only 41% of pupils who start school complete their primary education and 23% complete secondary education.

This is because in many parts of the continent, especially in fragile and conflict-prone regions, social barriers remain, keeping many children out of school and preventing them (especially girls) from getting an education and becoming active members of society.

Equality of opportunity remains an important challenge. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, some 9 million girls are not receiving any education (compared to 6 million boys).⁶ Gender inequality starts early, with 23% of girls already out of primary school compared to 19% of boys. By adolescence, these proportions increase to 36% for girls and 32% for boys.

1 Theme of The Year 2024: “Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century” URL: <https://au.int/en/theme/2024/educate-african-fit-21st-century>

2 In previous years, the themes of the year for African Union have not been education-related, in 2021 – “The AU Year of the Arts, Culture And Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want”, in 2022 – “Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent”, and in 2023 – “Acceleration of the AfCFTA implementation”.

3 UNESCO Institute for Statistics URL: <https://data.uis.unesco.org/>

4 Musau Z. Africa grapples with huge disparities in education URL: <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2017-march-2018/africa-grapples-huge-disparities-education>

5 UNESCO. Out-of-school numbers are growing in Sub-Saharan Africa URL: <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/2022-out-school>

6 UNESCO Institute for Statistics URL: <https://data.uis.unesco.org/>

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the largest numbers of primary school-age children out of school in 2020-2021 were in Ethiopia (3.8 million, 22% of all children of this age in the country), Niger (1.8 million, 41%), Tanzania (1.8 million, 15%), South Africa (0.92 million, 12%), Burkina Faso (0.88 million, 25%), Senegal (0.8 million, 27%), Chad (0.6 million, 22%).

The largest number of secondary school-age children out of school in 2020-2021 was in Niger (3 million, 78% of all children of this age in the country), Cameroon (2.3 million, 56%), Côte d'Ivoire (1.9 million, 46%), Burkina Faso (1.9 million, 55%), Chad (1.8 million, 66%), Mozambique (1.7 million, 44%), Guinea (1.3 million, 62%), Benin (0.9 million, 47%).

According to the UNDP education index, which is a part of the Multidimensional Poverty Index for October 2022,⁷ Niger, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Djibouti and Sudan are among those lagging behind in terms of the quality of education. Leading states on the continent include Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, Egypt, Tunisia.

This is underscored by the huge gaps in educational performance between the richest and poorest segments of the population in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 13% of children from the poorest households complete secondary school, compared to 66% of children from the richest households.

African countries still lack qualified teachers. According to UNICEF 2020 data, the average ratio of qualified teachers per country in Sub-Saharan Africa was 89% at the primary level and only 80% at the secondary level. Experts estimate that 15 million new teachers will be needed to meet the demand for schooling in Africa by 2030.

The persistently low remuneration of teachers in most African countries constitutes a significant impediment to resolving this issue. In addition, educators frequently operate under challenging conditions, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teaching resources. These adverse factors further undermine the appeal of the profession, thereby exacerbating existing teacher shortages.

At the same time, the problem remains complex. Without solving the issues of security, infrastructure

development, development of road links, investments in connectivity, and the need to improve the quality of life, it is impossible to fully solve the problem of education.

In this context, urbanisation is playing a pivotal role in the African continent, influencing not only economic development, but also education. Urbanisation has led to increased learning opportunities for African youth by providing easier access to schools.⁸ Moreover, according to researches, living in an urban environment improves literacy rates by 4-5%, emphasising that longer schooling leads to better learning outcomes also.⁹

But still low levels of attainment mean that children in Africa are less prepared for future work than their counterparts in the rest of the world. The labour market mismatch could become even more serious in the near future, as according to the World Bank, **more than 230 million jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa are expected to require digital skills by 2030.**¹⁰

The development of digital skills Africa is severely hindered by the limited availability of appropriate educational programmes and high-quality training, despite the growing demand for and significance

7 2022 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index URL: <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2022-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi#/indicies/MPI>

8 van Maarseveen, R. (2021). Urbanization and educational attainment: evidence from Africa. Available at SSRN 3836097.

9 Bold, T., Filmer, D., Martin, G., Molina, E., Stacy, B., Rockmore, C., ... & Wane, W. (2017). Enrollment without learning: Teacher effort, knowledge, and skill in primary schools in Africa. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(4), 185-204.

10 Digital Skills in Sub-Saharan Africa Spotlight on Ghana URL: <https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/digital-skills-final-web-5-7-19.pdf>

of such competencies. According to UNICEF, approximately 121 million students—nearly half of all learners in the region—have been entirely excluded from digital distance learning due to inadequate infrastructure and the absence of supportive national policies.

The transition to digitalisation necessitates the acquisition of relevant technological knowledge and competencies. While digitalisation has the potential to enhance the inclusivity and accessibility of education by addressing disparities in access to learning resources, this potential remains largely unrealised. Efforts to leverage digital tools in education continue to be undermined by the broader systemic challenges affecting the education of children across the continent.

In addition, one of the most important challenges for education in Africa is its inefficiency and inability of graduates to take up jobs in the labour market. The World Economic Forum estimates that at the current level of educational development, only 52% of the continent's working-age population will be able to complete secondary education by 2030.¹¹ According to the latest data from the UNESCO, the literacy rate among young people (aged 15-24) in Sub-Saharan Africa averages about 77%, which is the lowest in the world.¹²

This is explained by the persistence of poor infrastructure, social, economic and cultural factors that significantly reduce not only the number of students but also their ability to effectively study. In general, African countries with the exception of Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and the sparsely populated island states face similar problems.

Given that school education is considered the most important factor in shaping the rest of a person's life, the situation in Africa remains extremely challenging.

Improving the quality and accessibility of education will determine Africa's participation in the process of restructuring the global division of labour that has already begun.

According to expert estimates, by 2030, China could lose 85-100 million jobs in labour-intensive industrial sectors by 2030, and a significant proportion of these jobs could be shifted to Africa.¹³

The current demographic patterns also present an opportunity for countries of the continent to leverage soon, as this high proportion of young population will not last forever. While 60% of Africa's population was under the age of 25 in 2020, by 2050 around 50% of Africans will belong to this age group. UNICEF estimates that by 2050, the number of people under 18 in Africa will reach 1 billion, representing 40% of all children and adolescents in the world.¹⁴

However, in order to harness this potential, quality education and job creation for young people must be ensured so that they can successfully adapt to the labour market and contribute to the African economy.

On the one hand, the growing population makes Africa attractive as a potential destination for a number of industries, but imbalances, including in education, can lead to the opposite effect: not industries will be attracted to the growing and educated population within Africa, but educated Africans will be attracted to other regions to work for these industries.

Migration and education

Moreover, the complex nature of the problem of education is not merely a question of access.

Perhaps even more important is the provision of opportunities for students and graduates to further apply their knowledge in practice

11 The Future of Jobs and Skills in Africa URL: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_EGW_FOJ_Africa.pdf

12 UNESCO Institute for Statistics URL: <https://data.uis.unesco.org/>

13 Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages URL: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages>

14 TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN AFRICA URL: <https://www.unicef.org/media/106691/file/Transforming%20Education%20in%20Africa.pdf>

In this situation, possible points of growth are people for growing sectors of the economy who will be able to apply their knowledge effectively for the benefit of their countries. For example, technical education and training in agriculture is one of the key factors for effective economic and social development in African countries.

Studies confirm that educational programmes for retraining farmers, how to efficiently use technological innovations such as adapted crop seeds, fertilisers, irrigation technologies, have a positive impact on productivity and propensity to innovate.¹⁵ In particular, the FAO implements farmer field schools in Africa, which are institutionalised in the national policies and extension systems of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda with the participation of local universities.¹⁶ Such programmes require both training existing workers and placing greater emphasis on agricultural training programmes at partner institutions.

This is why the 'brain drain', where educated African youth leave their countries in search of jobs that match their skill set, is still a major problem.

African migrants play an increasing role in the economies and politics of Europe. Demographic decline, aging populations and a shrinking number of young people are reducing the number of workers in European economies (expected to fall by 44 million by 2050). This reduction is expected to be replaced by, inter alia, African migrants.¹⁷ The Centre for Global Development predicts that around 24.5 million migrants will add to Europe's working-age population between 2015 and 2050, of which more than 7 million will be from Africa.¹⁸

It is through this framework that European countries' investments in education programmes in Africa should be perceived. Supporting school and university education becomes an opportunity for them to 'offshore' personnel training for their own economies. As European populations age and the cost of labour rises, it is worth waiting for this cooperation to grow further. For example, since 2021, the Talent Partnerships initiative is being implemented, which aims to provide financial support to stimulate "mutually beneficial" international mobility based on matching labour market needs and skills between the EU and partner countries.

EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ilva Johansson said in June 2021: "We need legal migration: the working age population in Europe is shrinking and many key sectors are facing skills shortages, such as health and agriculture. Talent Partnerships will help match the skills of candidates for jobs in Europe with the needs of the labour market".¹⁹

Pilot projects on legal migration funded by the European Commission and the Migration Partnership Fund (MPF) have been running since 2016. The MPF has channeled EUR 30 million to more than 40 projects in 15 EU member states and 12 partner countries (mainly Northern Africa). In this model, the migration destination country agrees to provide technology and funding to train potential migrants in targeted skills in the country of origin before they move and receives workers with the skills they need to integrate and contribute to the economy.

While the programme's organisers claim that the country of origin can receive support to train the population and increase human capital, the nature of the programme itself targeted at participants who are motivated to emigrate, so it is unlikely that many of its participants will stay in their home country.

15 Kirui, O. (2019). The complementarity of education and use of productive inputs among smallholder farmers in Africa. ZEF-Discussion Papers on Development Policy, (277).

16 A paradigm shift in Farmer Field Schools methodology in Eastern Africa URL: <https://www.fao.org/news/countries-good-practices/article/en/c/1382854/>

17 Kenny C., Yang G. Can Africa Help Europe Avoid Its Looming Aging Crisis? URL: <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/can-africa-help-europe-avoid-looming-aging-crisis>

18 Kenny C. Good News: Africa Needs More Jobs While Europe Needs More Workers URL: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/good-news-africa-needs-more-jobs-while-europe-needs-more-workers>

19 Talent Partnerships: Commission launches new initiative to address EU skills shortages and improve migration cooperation with partner countries URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2921

At the same time, migration may also be beneficial to African countries, as even workers who leave the country often provide a major boost to the economy of the sending country by remitting a significant portion of their foreign earnings back home (15 to 20%), which becomes a crucial factor in the foreign exchange of African countries.²⁰ Overall, this is a 'human capital dilemma': every dollar transferred from Europe or the Middle East means more systemic losses for the country in the long run - shortages of skilled labour, changes in demographics, culture, etc. In any case, migration policies on the part of African governments need to be calibrated more carefully.

This is even more relevant considering that the majority of migrants leaving Africa are economically active, hardworking and ambitious.

Thus, about 80% of African migrants are in search of better economic prospects; moreover, only 7.2% of African migrants in EU countries are refugees.²¹ A 2019 study by the United Nations

Development Programme reports that African migrants are often more educated than their peers who stayed in their home countries.²² Those who travelled to Europe had, on average, received three more years of education compared to their peers of the same age in the countries they left. According to the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) study, Africans with higher education are more likely to migrate to Europe.²³

Some researchers (e.g. Dustmann C., Theodoropoulos N.) have noted that children of African migrants are more successful in education than their peers in the local population.²⁴ However, it is still noted that employment of African skilled professionals is often below their skill level upon arrival in Europe.²⁵

African migrants were much more likely to be in skilled employment if they had studied in Europe rather than arriving after holding a skilled occupation in Africa

At the same time, the gradual increase in the number of African descendants living permanently

Illustrative cases include the Prime Minister of Wales (March 2024 to August 2024), Zambian-born Humphrey Won ap David Gething (Welsh father, Zambian mother), who has held ministerial positions in the cabinet since 2016. The parents of former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, similarly migrated to the island from Eastern Africa where they were born. France's youngest prime minister, Gabriel Attal, was born in France but has Tunisian ancestry through his grandfather.

Belgian ex-Foreign Minister (July 2022 – November 2024) and current European Commissioner for Preparedness, Crisis Management and Equality Hadja Lahbib was born to migrant parents from Algeria. Bundestag MP Karamba Diaby, born and raised in Senegal, moved to Germany for education and stayed on, becoming one of the first two African MPs in 2013, resigned at the beginning of 2025.

Kemi Badenoch, who has served as Leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Opposition in the United Kingdom since November 2024, was born in the UK to a Nigerian mother, raised in Lagos, and returned to the UK at the age of 16.

20 Africa and Europe Facts and Figures on African Migrations URL: <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/our-research/data-stories/aef-african-migrations>

21 Africa and Europe Facts and Figures on African Migrations URL: https://www.friendsofeurope.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/AEF_Summit_African-Migrations.pdf

22 Scaling Fences URL: <https://www.undp.org/publications/scaling-fences>

23 Final Report Summary - MAFE (Migration between Africa and Europe) URL: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/217206/reporting>

24 Dustmann C., Theodoropoulos N. Ethnic minority immigrants and their children in Britain // Oxford Economic Papers, New Series. April, 2010. Vol. 62. №2. P. 209-235.

25 Final Report Summary - MAFE (Migration between Africa and Europe) URL: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/217206/reporting>

in Europe has led to an increasing number of African descendants, or their children, taking up high positions in private companies and public institutions in European countries. Children of African migrants of the first generation who were able to get a quality education in Europe and find a qualified job are successful. For example, in the UK, the Nigerian community is distinguished by a high level of education, and as a consequence, there are many businessmen, scientists and media workers with Nigerian roots in the country.²⁶

The number of African migrants is high in such areas as health care and construction. Thus, **in France, about one-half of migrant doctors came from Africa**, mainly North Africa (the figure exceeded 7 thousand people). **In Germany, Italy and the UK every sixth migrant doctor is from Africa**, but if their number in the first two countries is about 2,000, in Great Britain it exceeds 15,000 doctors.²⁷ Thus, it can be noted that some areas of the European labour market are becoming increasingly influenced by African descendants.

In an increasing number of European countries, African descendants are occupying important positions at the political level, including in the cabinet of ministers, and this trend is likely to increase. According to the authors' analysis of European governments for 2024, African descendants are represented in the cabinets of the UK, France and Belgium, as well as in the parliaments of these countries. African descendants are also present in the parliaments (at national and regional levels) of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland.

The greater number of African descendants in important public positions in the three countries (the UK, France, Belgium) is not only due to a long colonial history, but also to a lesser language barrier that reduces the difficulty of assimilation for Africans in these countries. This trend underscores the fact that people from Africa are playing an increasing role in the political life of European countries, meaning that the opportunity to play such a role in their home country was not available to them for various reasons.

Higher education in Africa

However, the challenges faced by education in Africa are not limited to primary and secondary education. Higher education on the continent also faces serious difficulties.

Adopted by the African Union in 2015 Africa Agenda 2063 and **the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025** place higher education and research at the centre of Africa's growth and development. This is particularly important in the context of the 21st century, where science and technology are the foundation of a knowledge-based economy.

Despite the growing number of African universities, which increased from 784 in 2000 to 1,700 in 2021, there is a serious shortage of places for all school graduates. Between 2011 and 2021, university enrolment increased from 5% to 11%. The number of Africans in tertiary education is rising – the figure has increased by more than 30% in the past decade to 16.1 million (14.1% of the tertiary-age population, 121 million in 2020), outpacing the rate of population growth (+18% over the same period). However, this is still not enough.

Higher education enrolment in Africa represents only 3% of enrolments at all levels of education on the continent and 4% of all students globally. In terms of the number of students, the leading countries in Africa are Egypt (2.4 million, 28% of the tertiary age population), Nigeria (1.8 million, no data), Algeria (1.6 million, 53%), South Africa (1.2 million, 25%), Morocco (1.1 million, 39%) and Kenya (0.6 million, 11%).²⁸

In this context, Africa accounts for 9.2% of the world's universities, about 1% of the world's R&D expenditure, 2.5% of the world's researchers and scientists, and 3.5% of academic publications throughout the world.

The continent is characterised by a high concentration of universities in a few countries

26 Карпов, Г. А. (2016). У Великобритании-африканское будущее? Азия и Африка сегодня, (1), 59-64.

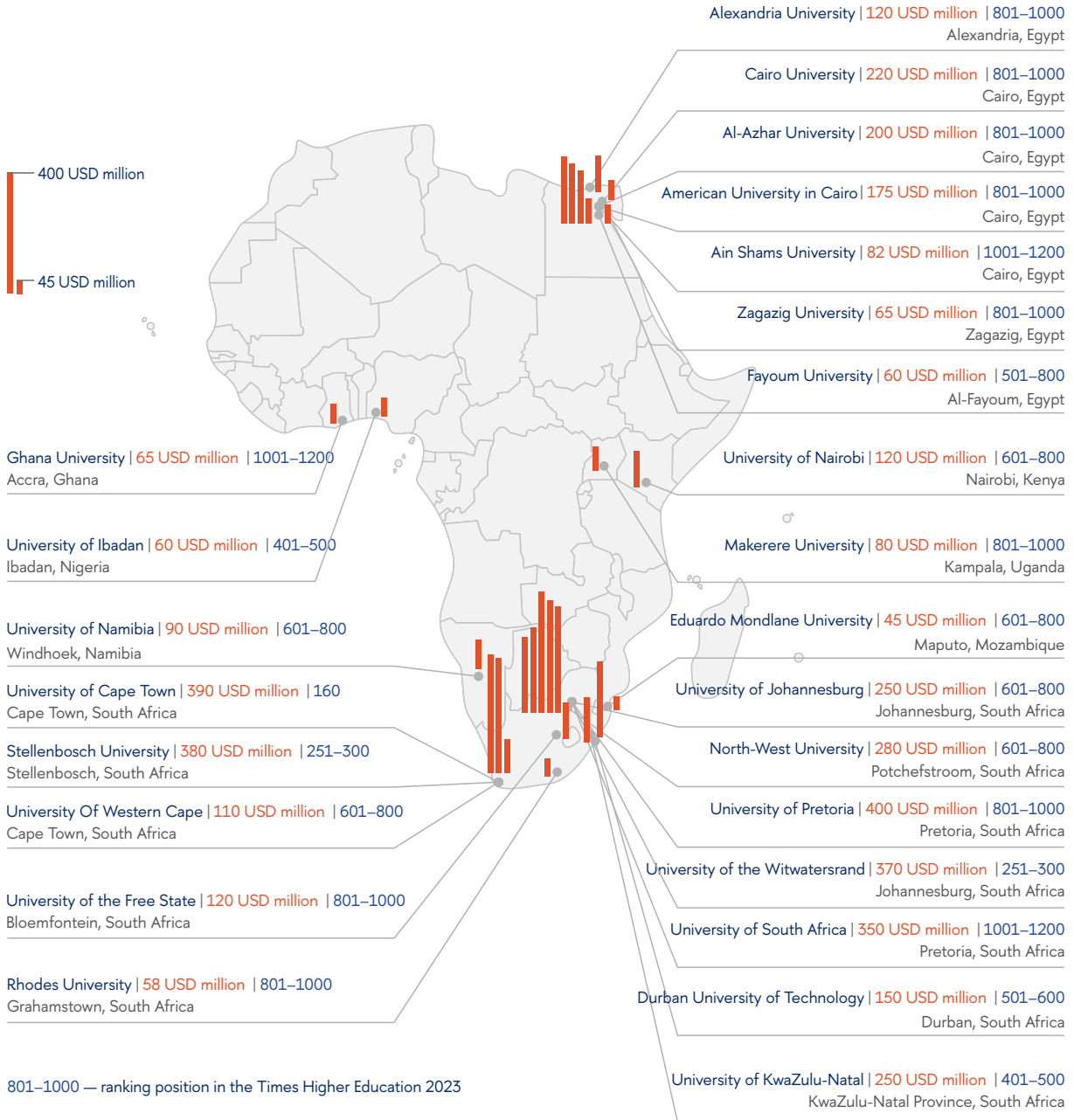
27 Кузнецов, А. В. (2020). Экономическая деятельность выходцев из Африки в крупных странах ЕС: новые подходы. Контуры глобальных трансформаций: политика, экономика, право, 13(1), 6-27.

28 Sub-Saharan Africa: Tertiary Education URL: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/908af3404023a2c31ef34853bba4fe60-0200022022/original/One-Africa-TE-and-COVID-19-11102021.pdf>

with a developed academic tradition, which is illustrated by Africa’s position in international university rankings, in which Egypt and South Africa traditionally lead by a significant margin.

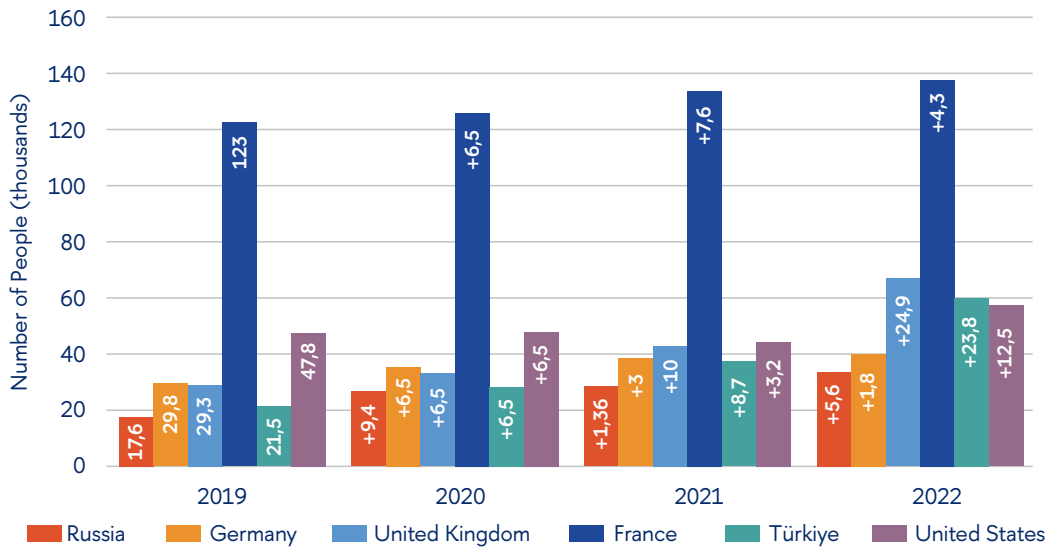
For example, in the **QS World University Rankings 2025**, which compiles a list of the world’s top 1,500 universities, Africa is represented by 40 universities (the year before there were 41, and in 2023

Leading universities in Africa by revenue from all sources



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on data from the media, UNESCO Institute for Statistics and foreign ministries of the relevant countries.

African students around the world



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on data from the media, UNESCO institute for Statistics and foreign ministries of the relevant countries.

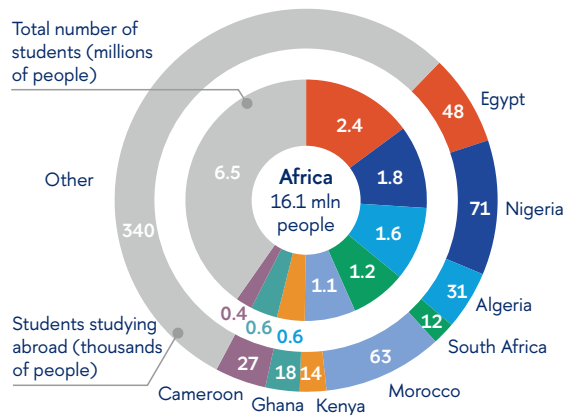
only 32): 15 from Egypt (two in the top 500), 11 from South Africa (of which five in the top 500), four from Tunisia, two from Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, as well as one each from Morocco, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda.

This is also reflected in the issue of funding of major universities. Our study reveals that South African and Egyptian universities lead the list of the most well-funded universities.²⁹ Public universities in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana are also on the list of the most financially endowed universities. More importantly, South African universities lead in terms of spending per student, which compares favourably with other universities on the continent.

At the same time, even Africa's largest universities face funding challenges, pushing them to actively seek external funding

According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for USD 3.8 billion in educational aid

African countries by number of students 2020 (inside and outside Africa)



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

(39% of all funds allocated to higher education) from 2015 to 2020. There is a notable lack of funding from within Africa, apart from small salaries secured by the government and fee-paying students, there are still no visible initiatives from foundations and philanthropists.

29 Маслов А. А. и др. Африка 2023. Возможности и риски. – 2023

Universities' financial constraints are leading to increased outward mobility from Africa. According to UNESCO, **Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's second highest outbound student mobility rate** (4.78), behind Central Asia (16.3), while the rate in Northern Africa is close to the world average (2.7) at 2.6.

Africa is one of the largest importers in the higher education market. The total number of African students studying abroad in 2020, according to UNESCO, is 624,000 (135,000 of which are in other African countries) or 10 % of the world total. The value of higher education services for African students studying outside the continent exceeded USD 13 billion.

In total, the number of students studying abroad more than doubled between 2000 and 2022. The leading countries in admitting African students outside the continent are France (138,000), China (more than 80,000), the UK (68,000), Türkiye (61,000), and the US (57,500); within Africa those are South Africa (30,000), Morocco (20,000) and Senegal (15,000).

At the turn of the century, calls for the improvement of African universities and the need to link higher education to development were increasingly voiced internationally and at the African level. In early 2000, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that "The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century".³⁰

With knowledge playing an increasingly important role in development, universities are seen as a critical link in national development as they are institutions that can provide an adequate foundation for the emerging knowledge economy in Africa by providing skills, competencies and knowledge that are oriented towards direct application by public institutions and influencing policies.³¹

University-based centres of competence, technology transfer centres are increasingly being established in Africa, and universities are developing and commercialising software, technology and their own expertise. Universities' development efforts

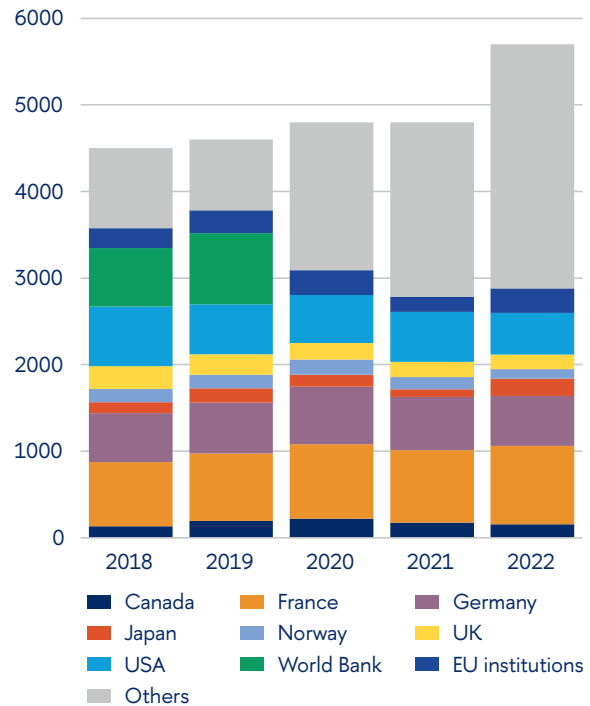
also focus on helping to reduce poverty and health problems, improve agricultural production and support business development, mainly through advising public institutions.

External influence on education in Africa

A review of the current challenges facing education in Africa reveals that lack of funding remains a critical challenge, so the continent continues to rely on external support for development programmes and education financing.

While aid still accounts for about 5% of total education spending in Africa, its importance cannot be overestimated. According to the OECD, growth

Foreign aid to education in Africa (USD million)



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on OECD data.

30 Cloette N. Universities and Economic Development in Africa. URL: <https://www.aau.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/04/Universities-and-Economic-Development-in-Africa.pdf>

31 Cloete N., Bunting I., van Schalkwyk F. Research Universities in Africa. URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/27492>

in aid to education in Africa slowed in 2021 to USD 4.8 billion, the same as in 2020. The coronavirus pandemic contributed to this, but in 2022 there was a marked increase in aid to USD 5.7 billion.³²

The majority of aid is concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa (83%), while Northern Africa has a less significant share (17%). Regarding the distribution of funds among other regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Africa (35.5 % of all aid to Africa), Western Africa (32%), Central Africa (13%) and Southern Africa (1.5%) receive the largest amount of aid.

The World Bank is the largest donor, averaging around USD 1 billion annually, but in 2022 the amount reached a record high of USD 1.9 billion, focusing entirely on Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2022, Eastern Africa accounted for 44.6% (USD 867 million), Western Africa 38.7% (USD 752 million), Central Africa 16.4% (USD 319 million) and Southern Africa only 0.3% (USD 5.8 million).

While traditional external influences on education have centred on the financing of projects on the ground as well as the infrastructure, in recent years there has been increasing cooperation at institutional level, including collaboration between universities and university associations, the growing provision of educational scholarships, training, promotion and foreign language teaching. If we assume that the **main objective of aid is to secure the flow of migration and improve its quality**, the shift in priorities is well explained.

European states

Western countries have long had the greatest influence on education in Africa, which can be explained by their historical ties and the European role in establishing academic institutions in Africa. When African countries gained independence, they mainly adopted the education systems of the former colonial powers.

The high level of European influence on education in Africa remains relevant today. European states are still the most popular destinations for African students.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, more than 320,000 Africans are studying in European countries in 2022, which corresponds to about 50% of all African students studying abroad. The largest number of students study in France (138,000), the United Kingdom (68,000) and Germany (41,000).

In addition to the **World Bank and the US**, the list of the largest donors of foreign aid to education in Africa includes **France, Germany, the EU (as an institution) and the UK**. According to the OECD, these actors account for about 75% of external aid to education in Africa.

According to European Union data for the period 2014-2020, the EU has allocated more than EUR 1.5 billion to support education in Africa. This assistance is not limited to basic education, but also includes significant cooperation in higher education, to which European countries pay particular attention. Such funding for universities provides both access to human resources and to sites for joint research, which is also important for data collection.

According to reports from the European Union's Erasmus+ academic exchange and mobility programme: funding allocated under the programme for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2021-2027 was EUR 570 million, compared to only EUR 120 million from 2014 to 2020. The funding for 2021-2027 will account for more than 25% of the programme's overall total, highlighting the continent's increasing importance. The aim of the programme is to increase annual mobility between Europe and Africa from around 16,000 in 2021 to 105,000 by 2027. Given the interest of European countries in skilled labour, it can be noted that the focus of aid in education remains the selection of future migrants.

The importance of the educational sphere in cooperation with the countries of the continent is emphasised at the highest political level. Thus, at the end of the summit of the European and African Unions in February 2022, a final declaration was adopted,³³ which stressed that higher education

³² OECD Data Explorer URL: <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

³³ 6th European Union - African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030 URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final_declaration-en.pdf

and research are areas of joint action (where the long-term beneficiary is likely to remain the EU) within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. The declaration referred to the need to promote vocational education and training in Africa.

An investment package was also announced to support the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063, including education, with a focus on enhancing student mobility and employability, improving quality and increasing access to the digital and information economy. The EU has allocated EUR 970 million for this purpose. Other notable initiatives include the EU's EUR 100 million allocation for teacher training for Africa, as well as the Skills and Vocational Education Training Initiative with over EUR 500 million in funding.

The EU is also actively involved in other projects, notably **the Global Partnership for Education organised by the World Bank**. In 2021, ahead of the G7 summit, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the EU will allocate EUR 700 million to support GPE projects. In 2023, former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete was appointed as the first African president of the GPE Board of Directors, highlighting the continent's importance in the organisation's activities.

EU countries are the GPE's largest donors after the UK (15%) and the US (8.2%): the European Commission (12.33%), the Netherlands (8.3%), Denmark (6.8%), France (6.3%).

Africa is the largest recipient of financial support from the GPE. Almost all countries in Africa (except South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Gambia, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Libya) are partner countries and recipients of GPE support. Ethiopia, DRC, Uganda, Nigeria, Mozambique, Tanzania, Niger, Somalia are among the largest recipients of partnership funding (USD 2.7 billion from 2003 to June 2024), receiving about 30% of all aid.³⁴

Despite large amounts of aid, it often does not reach desired results, keeping local levels of undereducation high.

Big African businesses have not yet realised the strategic importance of local universities as a potential infrastructure for expert, human resources and GR support for their business and therefore have limited investment in the universities' development. Moreover, it has been argued that, due to over-reliance on external aid, many African governments are neither leading nor fully committed to the reform process itself.³⁵ This illustrates that funding and external aid are no guarantee of effectively overcoming the challenges facing education in Africa.

European countries are also implementing projects at bilateral level. France, for example, has been implementing campus programmes in Africa since 2017, with two pilot projects launched in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, offering programmes, often in partnership with local universities, allowing students to obtain a degree while continuing their studies in Africa. French universities are increasing their collaboration with African universities and opening branches in Africa, with École Centrale de Lyon establishing branches in Morocco and Mauritius.

Since 2021, France has been implementing the Partnerships with African Higher Education programme through the French Development Agency (AFD). The second phase of the programme runs from 2023 involving 14 higher education institutions from Africa and 35 from France. Providing a network of partner courses via the programme costs EUR 20 million.

Germany through the German Agency for Development Cooperation and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) promotes programmes for higher education and supports centres of excellence. For example, since 2012 DAAD, together with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, has been supporting the Next Einstein Initiative. African master's students study applied mathematics at The Africa Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) centres in South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Ghana. Non-surprisingly, the geography of this initiative partly coincides with the archipelago of the former German colonies in Africa.

³⁴ GPE Partner countries URL: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/partner-countries>

³⁵ Woldegiorgis ET, Jonck P, Goujou A (2015) Regional HE reform initiatives in Africa: A comparative analysis with the BP. *International Journal of HE* 4(1): 224–253.

In July 2024, Germany with the World Bank, agreed on a joint initiative to support education and skills development in Sahel region through the centres of excellence in the region.

The UK is implementing development programmes through the DFID (Department for International Development), the British Council and UK Research and Innovation both at primary education level and also developing collaboration with the network of universities in Africa.

For example, in 2023, the University of Nottingham signed a relationship development agreement with the Association of African Universities (AAU) to support research, mobility and academic collaboration between the parties. The British Council has launched Innovation for African Universities (IAU), a learning and collaboration platform that brings together UK and African universities to engage and collaborate, creating centres of excellence with one UK and one African university (specifically Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa).

The initiative to deliver UK Transnational Education (TNE) through the formation of overseas campuses and joint programmes with overseas universities is seen as an important part of the impact.³⁶ In 2022, over 550,000 people were studying in UK degree programme outside the UK. Similar opportunities are present in several countries in Africa, such as Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana. These initiatives also have a business component, acting as an important revenue stream: presenting migration opportunities and well-known brands in a comfortable English-speaking environment, without there necessarily being any guarantee of quality.

USA

In contrast to European countries, the United States is much more focused on investment in supporting primary and basic education.

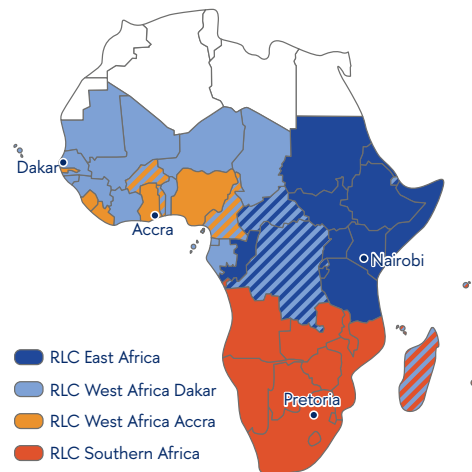
The main actor in this process is the development agency USAID, which in 2021-2023 provided

Map of recipients of the US education aid in 2023



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based data from USAID.

Map of YALI regional centres



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on official data.

nearly USD 1 billion in foreign aid to Sub-Saharan Africa in the field of education. This includes USD 240 million in 2021, USD 255 million in 2022, USD 391 million in 2023 (and over USD 145 million as of July 2024).³⁷

³⁶ Developing equitable TNE partnerships: where to begin URL: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-insights/developing-equitable-tne-partnerships>

³⁷ Foreign Assistance URL: <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/>

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is the most notable educational programme implemented by the United States on the continent.³⁸ This initiative was launched in 2010 under the Obama administration. The programme includes the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a six-week training course in the US. The programme provides leadership training courses for young people between the ages of 18 and 35. Since its launch, **more than 28,000 people have participated in the programme**. In 2023, 700 scholarships have been awarded. Participants receive online and face-to-face training and professional development opportunities in business, civil society and public policy management, and governance.

The US has opened four regional centres in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa, which are also responsible for interaction with neighboring countries. Moreover, as of 2019, these centres have begun to jointly coordinate and collaborate under YALI Africa, a body that brings the centres together and serves as a central point for mobilising resources and 'maintaining a unified vision and development.'

At the same time, there is less interaction at the higher education level. At the end of the US-Africa Leaders Summit 2022 in December 2022 in Washington, DC, the topic of education was not prioritised.

Among the most notable initiatives implemented in recent years is **the University Partnership Initiative**, mainly implemented with universities in South Africa with the prospect of expanding to other African countries. The US State Department-funded initiative is aimed at exchanges of scientists and students between the parties. Since 2016, Michigan State University has been implementing an initiative called the Alliance for African Partnerships (AAP) with ten leading African universities and a network of African research institutes.

There are several campuses and joint programmes of American universities operating in Africa. In particular, Carnegie Mellon University's Rwanda campus, the first US university to offer master's degrees on the continent, has been open since 2019.

In May 2024, the US entered into a framework cooperation agreement with the Kenyan government to support university-industry partnerships to foster innovation, research and job growth in STEM-related fields.

China

At the same time, it is not only Western countries that are focusing on education to expand their influence. At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2012, it was made clear that greater emphasis would be placed on education.

Back in 2010, China launched **the China-Africa University Cooperation Plan 20+20 partnership**, bringing together the interaction of 20 Chinese universities with 20 African universities from 17 countries. This partnership was subsequently expanded. In 2023, a new format was launched: the **China-Africa 100 University Cooperation Program**.

In August 2023, at the BRICS Summit in South Africa, China launched the China-Africa Talent Development Cooperation Plan, aimed at training 500 principals and highly qualified vocational college teachers each year, as well as 10,000 technicians with Chinese language and professional skills and internships for African civil servants in China.

China is rapidly expanding its network of Confucius Institutes, offering language and cultural courses for Africans. 66 Confucius Institutes have been established in 46 African countries. The first was launched in Nairobi, Kenya in 2004, and South Africa hosts the most

38 Young African Leaders Initiative URL: <https://www.usaid.gov/yali>

Confucius Institutes on the continent (7). Although exact statistics are not available, many students who have received language training at the institutes later continue their studies at universities in China, becoming an important area of educational cooperation.

New institutional forms are being established to systematise cooperation between countries. At the first Joint Conference of Confucius Institutes in Africa held in Kenya in May 2024, 16 Institutes from 9 East African countries established the East African Confucius Institute Alliance.

In this context, **16 countries in Africa have incorporated Chinese into their national education systems**, and about 30 universities now offer degree programmes specialising in Chinese.

African students have been studying in China since the 1960s, but their numbers have increased in recent years, reaching 80,000 in 2018. In 2018, the Chinese government, as part of FOCAC, pledged to provide 50,000 scholarships for African students to pursue higher education in China over the next three years.

Chinese Confucius institutes in Africa



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on official data.

China also is implementing education and training programmes within the political sphere by building party schools in Africa: the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Leadership School in Tanzania in February 2022 and the renovation of the Herbert Chitepo School of Ideology in Zimbabwe for the ruling ZANU-PF party in 2023.

Burundi, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, Uganda, Kenya have also expressed interest for similar projects. In addition, in 2019, China launched the China-Africa Institute, which is based in Addis Ababa and aimed at training African party and government leaders.³⁹

China also runs training programmes for African parties and government officials, both in Africa and in China. These programmes are aimed at promoting the Chinese model of development and strengthening friendly ties between states. China is expected to receive more than 50 such delegations over 2024.⁴⁰

Japan

Japan is also in the race to influence and support the education sector in Africa. According to the OECD, Tokyo provides more than USD 196 million in educational aid to Africa in 2022.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been implementing the School for All programme to strengthen education in Africa since 2004. As of 2023, the project has been implemented in 53,000 schools in eight African countries (Niger, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Djibouti and Ghana). A feature of Japanese involvement was the use of outsourcing practices: JICA worked with government agencies to develop a tailored strategy for the local environment, providing advice and expertise rather than doing everything itself.⁴¹

From June 2020, JICA is implementing the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN project, which aims to transform partner institutions on the continent into leading regional centres for science, technology and innovation. The project is being implemented at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Kenya and the Pan African University Institute for Basic Science, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI), based at JKUAT. Projects are being implemented in applied areas important for the continent's development: agriculture, engineering and ICTs.⁴²

Türkiye

The influence of non-Western actors has been increasing in Africa in recent years, with Türkiye being one of the most active contributors. Ankara's most visible presence in Africa are the **Turkish Maarif Foundation schools**. As of 2024, more than 17,500 students are in Turkish Maarif Foundation schools in 26 African countries.⁴³

The number of schools in Africa has increased sharply in recent years, from 18 in 2016 to 125 in 2024. More than half of the schools (63) are located in the ECOWAS region.

Maarif schools offer a curriculum with elements of Turkish, including science, coding and IT classes, and classes on local culture. This strategy and affordable price allows the foundation to compete with other international schools in each country where it operates. Maarif Foundation schools also play a key role in attracting students to Turkish universities.

But the presence is not limited to schools. There are 14 **Turkish language centres of Emre Yunus Institute**, and the stated goal is to open another 11.

Ankara is increasingly offering scholarships for education in Türkiye. According to the country's

39 Nantulya P. China Escalates Its Political Party Training in Africa YRL: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/china-escalates-its-political-party-training-in-africa/>

40 China's Political Schools: Expanding Influence in Africa URL: <https://www.riotimesonline.com/chinas-political-schools-expanding-influence-in-africa/>

41 School for All is a key part of Japan's educational support of Africa URL: https://japanupclose.web-japan.org/policy/p20221014_1.html

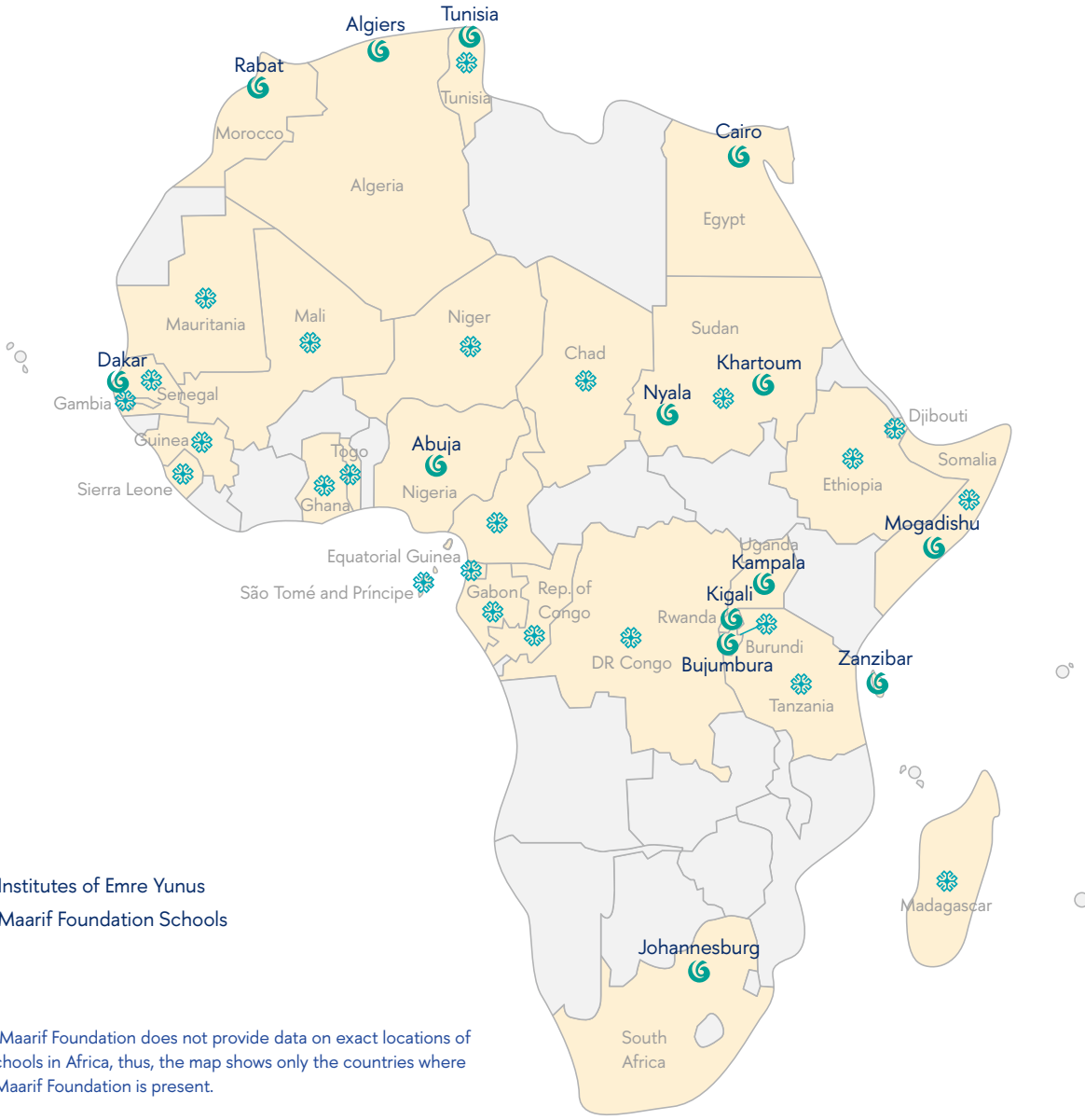
42 Waruru M. Japan-backed science hub to involve 10 African universities URL: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20240331163854340>

43 Turkey's Maarif schools educate over 17,000 students in Africa URL: <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-maarif-schools-educate-over-17000-students-in-africa>

foreign minister, the number of African students studying at colleges and universities in Türkiye rose

to 61,000 in 2023 (of which more than 14,000 are scholarship students).⁴⁴

Turkish institutes of Emre Yunus and Maarif Foundation Schools in Africa



- Institutes of Emre Yunus
- Maarif Foundation Schools

The Maarif Foundation does not provide data on exact locations of its schools in Africa, thus, the map shows only the countries where the Maarif Foundation is present.

Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on official data.

Education is power: who teaches African leaders

44 Waruru M. Scholarships attracting African students to Turkey URL: <https://thepienews.com/turkey-african-student-numbers-grow/>

Russia

Russia is also regaining its educational influence in Africa. In the days of the Soviet Union, Moscow was actively involved in building educational infrastructure in Africa, establishing universities, schools and colleges. In recent years, Russia has focused on institutional cooperation.

During the Soviet period, more than 70,000 specialists from African countries were trained. These people returned to their countries and held important positions in the economy and public service. For example, according to the Russian Embassy in Nairobi, in Kenya every tenth doctor was educated in Russia (USSR).⁴⁵

Today, there are a large number of Africans studying in Russia, a number that has already exceeded the Soviet level, and the number of scholarships awarded is increasing. In 2023/2024, **more than 34,000 Africans studied in Russia** and the number of state scholarships totalled 4,700 (2,300 in the 2022/2023 academic year).

African students traditionally choose the following programmes of study: medical (up to 30% of Africans students in Russia medical specialties), engineering and technology (about 20%), as well as management, finance and economics, which are specialisations with practical relevance to the development of countries on the continent.

Russian companies operating in Africa are involved in supporting practical education for African students with subsequent employment as a strategy for the future (Rosatom, RUSAL in Guinea).

Having significantly increased its quantitative presence in the African market (more African students now study in Russia than studied in the USSR), Russia began to offer executive education courses focusing on public administration.

The first notable example here – outside of defense and security sectors – was the Winter e-Governance

Knowledge Sharing Week held in December 2023 in the HSE University with the support of the Russian Ministry of Finance. More than 40 African senior civil servants from 23 countries came to Moscow for training. The programme will be continued in 2024 and 2025.

Other Russian organisations have also started to participate in similar initiatives. For example, the Agency for Strategic Initiatives together with the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration is developing a training programme for African managerial personnel.

Other Russian universities are also implementing initiatives in Africa. For example, In August 2021, **the Russian-African Network University (RAFU)** consortium was established, bringing together 12 Russian universities and research centres. The RAFU educational model works as a single pool of courses and disciplines available to consortium members in Russian, English and French. In 2024, the number of Russian RAFU member universities increased to 63 and the number of African universities reached 31.

The oldest Russian technical university, **St. Petersburg Mining University**, which is one of the leaders in the number of educated Africans in St. Petersburg in July 2023 signed an agreement with universities from nine African countries to create a professional community of universities Subsoil of Africa, developed for the mineral complex and aimed at improving the effectiveness of technical education in these countries. In December 2023, branches of **Kazan Federal University and St. Petersburg State University** started operating in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

Russian universities open their representative offices in African countries on the basis of local universities, which carry out preparatory work and provide opportunities for learning Russian language. As of 2023, such centres have been opened and are operating in Cameroon, Madagascar, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Uganda, Seychelles. There are plans to open similar centres in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Mali.

45 Интервью Посла России в Кении в преддверии Дня дипломатического работника агентству Россия Сегодня URL: <https://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/ke/1426523/>

To sum up, we can note that Russian educational initiatives in Africa are becoming more quality-oriented, advanced and flexible.

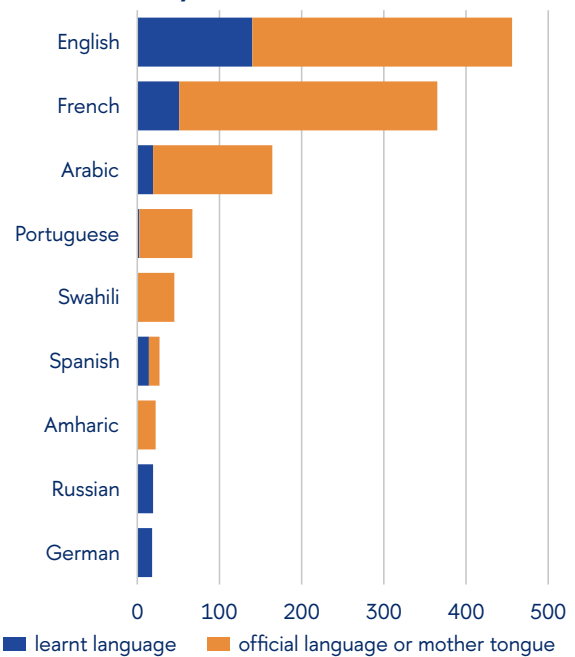
Languages and the education of the African leadership

Investing in higher education has long been one of the best ways to influence and indirectly control decision-making at various levels. Africa has never been an exception. Moreover, Africa has welcomed foreign influence through education, which has become a key competitive tool for former metropolises and their rivals.

Metropolises invested in the education of the local elites with the aim of shaping the ruling class of Africans who would serve as a link between colonial power and the local population.

The first generation of postcolonial leaders in Africa also grew up with European education (e.g. Leopold Sedar Senghor was educated in France, Patrice Lumumba was educated as an *évolué*).

Most widespread languages spoken by African officials



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on official data.

Nowadays the quality of education in Africa is gradually increasing, African 'forges of talent' are being formed, so the share of leaders educated in their own countries is steadily growing. The 'educational sovereignty' may become a trend for the next generations of political leaders

Where have the African leaders of today been educated?

The conducted research involved all 54 countries on the continent. Given the heterogeneity of cabinet compositions, the following key ministerial portfolios and government positions were selected for analysis: presidents (kings), prime ministers, speakers of parliament (in the case of the bicameral system, speakers of the lower houses were selected for accuracy), foreign ministers, finance ministers, defense ministers, interior ministers, energy ministers, higher education ministers, health ministers, agriculture ministers, mineral resources ministers, ICT ministers

and chief justices of the Supreme Courts. 719 African statesmen in cabinet and key government positions as of September 2024 made up the group we researched.

Primary information was collected on the country of tertiary education (or other forms of education if

spending more than one year in the country) and the languages spoken. Information was primarily collected from official sources, including government websites, official biographies, social media profiles and their own interviews. Often, it was possible to find and confirm information in local media. Finding information on proficiency in African languages proved more difficult, so they were taken into account to a lesser extent in the analysis. In our further assessments and interpretation of the data, we will say that a certain language is spoken by "at least X" statesmen, as there is a possibility that other public figures may also speak the language, about which there is no available information in the public domain.

Key findings

English and French remain the dominant languages spoken by government officials and statesmen in Africa

This is easily explained by the official status of these languages in most African countries. French is the official language in 26 African countries, and in seven is administrative or de facto official language, English is the official language in 21 African countries. **English** is spoken by at least 456 decision-makers considered in the study (approximately 63%), while **French** is spoken by at least 365 (approximately 50%).

This is followed by **Arabic**, spoken by at least 164 (22%) and it is the official language in 12 African countries. **Portuguese** is spoken by at least 67 (9%) and is an official language in five African countries. At least 45 speak **Swahili** (6%), the official language in three African countries. At least 27 speak **Spanish** (3.7%) – the official language in one African country, at least 22 – **Amharic** (3%) – the official language in one country. At least 19 speak **Russian** (2.6%) and at least 18 speak **German** (2.5%).

In terms of languages which are not official in the country of origin, it is noteworthy that both **English and French remain the most widely learnt languages among African statesmen**, English is learnt as a second or third language by at least 140 African statesmen and French by at least 51 statesmen.

This is followed by Russian with at least 19 of the group, Arabic also learnt by at least 19 and German is familiar for 18. Spanish has been learnt by at least 14 and at least eight have learnt Dutch as a second foreign language. At least three of the group speak Japanese, at least three speak Chinese and at least 2 speak Swedish.

The situation regarding the country of tertiary education presents a broadly similar picture.

Of the 719 government ministers, heads of state, judges and speakers of parliament covered in this study, not less than 114 were educated at **French universities**. In second place is the rest of

Africa, with at least 109 African statesmen having studied in other African countries. Next is predictably **the United Kingdom**, with 94 leaders having studied there. Meanwhile, in third place

among the countries are **the USA**, with 78 leaders educated in the US universities. No fewer than 41 of them were educated in **Portugal**, and if in the first three countries these are representatives of various states, not always reflecting the colonial past, then in Portugal are mainly educated representatives of Portuguese-speaking Cabo Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe.

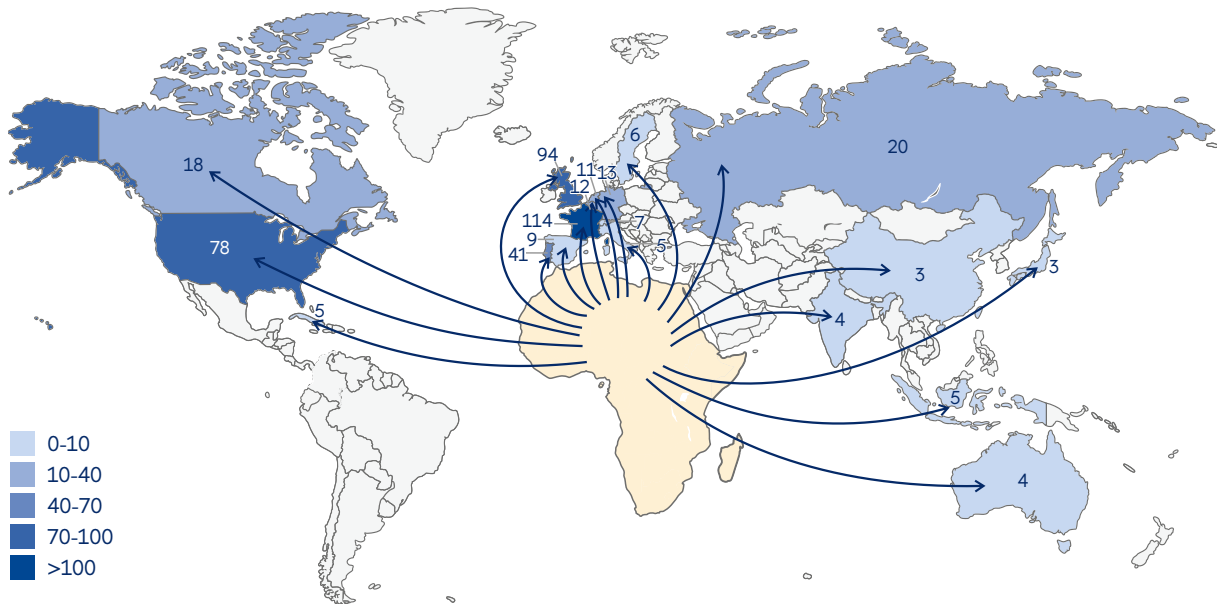
The next most popular destination for education was the first African country on the list, **South Africa**, where 39 statesmen were educated (12 national, and 27 from other states). This reflects the high level of local higher education and universities from South Africa also top the list of the most endowed universities in Africa. South Africa as an educational destination has gained the greatest popularity with neighbouring countries: Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Botswana, but also with Kenya and Tanzania.

No less than 21 received their higher education in **Cameroon**, (12 from Cameroon, nine from other countries) it is a popular destination with Francophone leaders from Chad, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo. **Kenya** is similarly popular, with no fewer than 21 leaders (13 Kenyans, eight from other countries) educated in Kenya, ranging from regional neighbours Uganda, Sudan and Somalia, to Liberia and Malawi.

Ethiopia and Egypt, recorded the same score of 21 leaders each. In the case of Ethiopia, the number includes mostly Ethiopians (14), but also representatives of neighbouring Eritrea (6), who were educated when the countries were part of the same state. In Egypt, on the other hand, the geography is more diverse, with representatives from Arab countries: Sudan, Mauritania, Libya and Djibouti.

17 leaders studied in **Uganda** (13 national and four from Rwanda and South Sudan); **Morocco hosted**

Foreign countries and regions of tertiary education of the African political leaders and ministers



Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on collected data.

education of 15 leaders, eight of them from abroad, mainly neighbors (Mauritania, Senegal, Comoros).

Russia (USSR) was also among the top ten most popular destinations, with 20 statesmen having been educated there. Russia as a destination was popular with leaders from Angola, Namibia, Mali, Mozambique and the Republic of Congo, countries that maintained a trusting dialogue with the Soviet Union.

It is followed by **Canada**, where at least 18 statesmen from Africa (mainly from Francophone Guinea, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Burundi) studied, **Germany** with 13 (statesmen from different African regions), **Belgium** with 12 (from Rwanda, DRC, Burkina Faso, Burundi), **Netherlands** with 11 (from Egypt, Namibia, Ghana), **Spain** with nine (mainly from Equatorial Guinea).

Five leaders each studied in **Malaysia, Italy** and **Cuba** (mainly representatives of Portuguese-speaking Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau).

It is noteworthy that a relatively low representation of the group studied were educated in **Australia** (4),

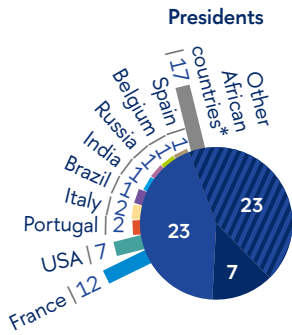
India (4), **China** (3), **Japan** (3). It can be assumed that in the coming years, given the large number of scholarships provided by these countries, people who studied there may become more represented.

In the following, we propose to examine the main ministerial posts and government positions to identify where the leaders responsible for the most important areas of state development in Africa have been educated.

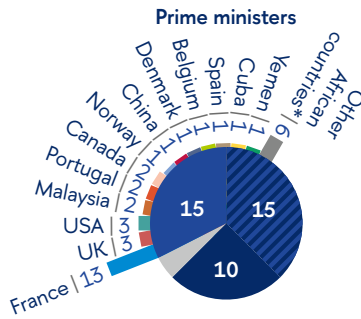
In most African states, presidents (kings) represent full-fledged heads of state. Thus, most African heads of state to date have received part or all of their education outside their home countries (46 statesmen). A significant number of African leaders (43%) were educated in the former colonial powers, and the absolute minority strictly in their home country (13%), while as many as 17 heads of state were educated in other African countries, which is also a significant indicator (32%).

Among African heads of government (prime ministers) who studied abroad we can note

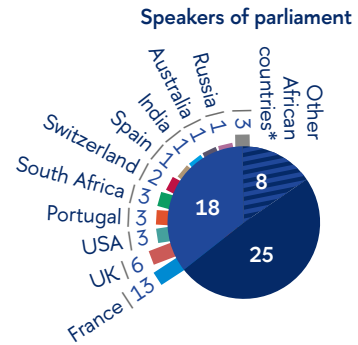
Where African officials have studied



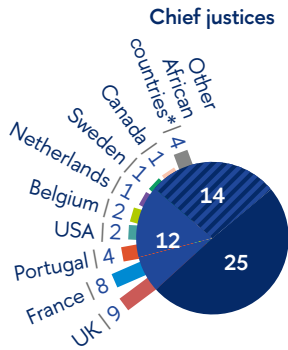
*Morocco (3), South Africa (2), Uganda (2), Algeria (2), Egypt (2), Tanzania, Sudan, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Cameroon



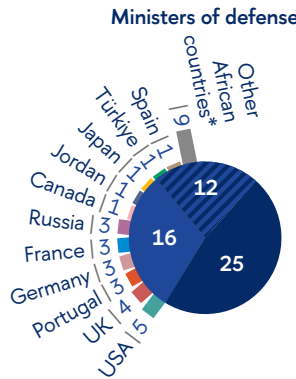
*Cameroon (2), South Africa, Togo, Morocco, Benin



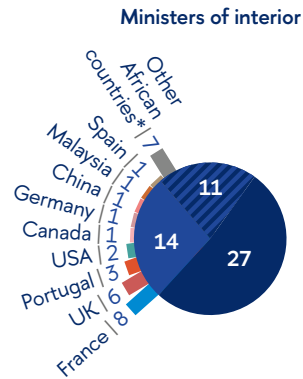
*Tanzania, Sudan, Namibia



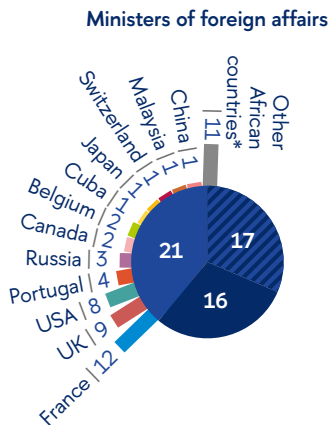
*South Africa, Togo, Mauritius, Zambia



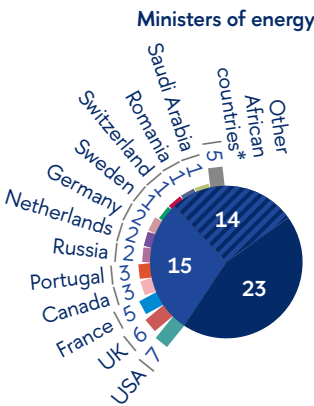
*Morocco (2), South Africa (2), Kenya, Mauritius, Madagascar, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana



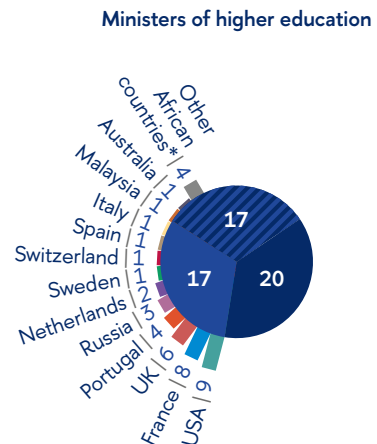
*Burkina Faso, Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Madagascar



*Egypt (2), Sudan, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Cameroon, DRC, Botswana, Benin, Algeria, Tunisia



*South Africa (4), Guinea



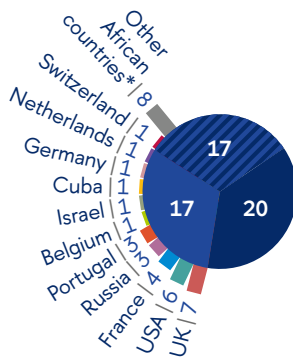
*Sudan, Cameroon, Guinea, Madagascar

- Foreign country
- Home country
- Foreign and home country
- No tertiary education

As of September 2024

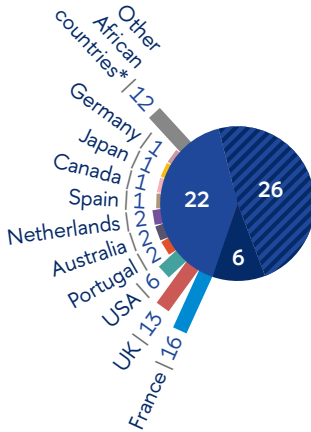
Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on data from the media, UNESCO institute for Statistics and foreign ministers of the relevant countries.

Ministers of health



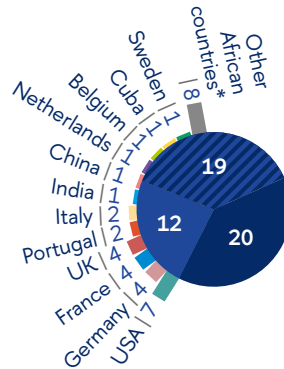
*Kenya (2), South Africa (2), Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Madagascar, Egypt

Ministers of finance



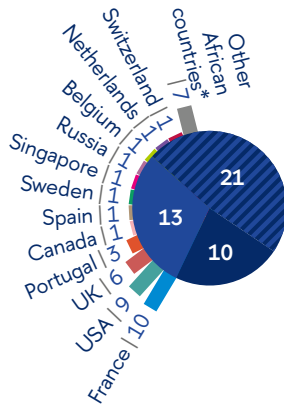
*South Africa (3), Kenya (2), Cameroon (2), Uganda, Ethiopia, Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire, Botswana

Ministers of agriculture



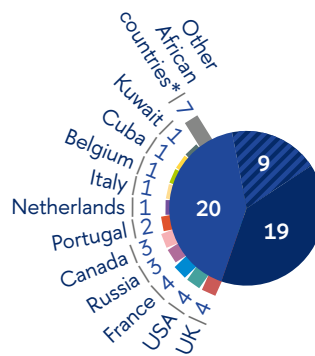
*South Africa (6), Madagascar, Senegal

Ministers of ICT



*Cameroon (2), Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal

Ministers of mineral resources



*South Africa (3), Egypt, Algeria, Uganda, Kenya

● Foreign country ● Home country
 ● Foreign and home country

As of September 2024

Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on data from the media, UNESCO institute for Statistics and foreign ministers of the relevant countries.

the dominant position of France (13), where representatives of francophone and Portuguese-speaking countries (Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe) were educated, and the fact that among the heads of government only six (15%) were trained in other African countries (South Africa, Togo, Cameroon, Benin, Morocco).

The majority of security-linked ministers studied in their home countries. 40% of them were educated strictly in their home countries. This may be due to the fact that most of them come from military backgrounds, which traditionally are more likely to be trained in their home countries and further received supplementary training abroad.

37 ministers of defence in Africa were educated in their home country (at least partly), while only 16 African ministers of defence were educated strictly outside their home countries. 38 African ministers of the interior were educated in their home countries (at least partly), while only 14 of them strictly abroad.

The judicial systems of countries are also mostly headed by people who have been domestically educated: 39 African chief justices (76%) were educated in their home countries (at least partly), while 12 of them studied only abroad (24%). The same situation with the speakers of parliament in African countries, where 33 statesmen were educated in their home countries (65%), while 18 (35%) were educated strictly abroad.

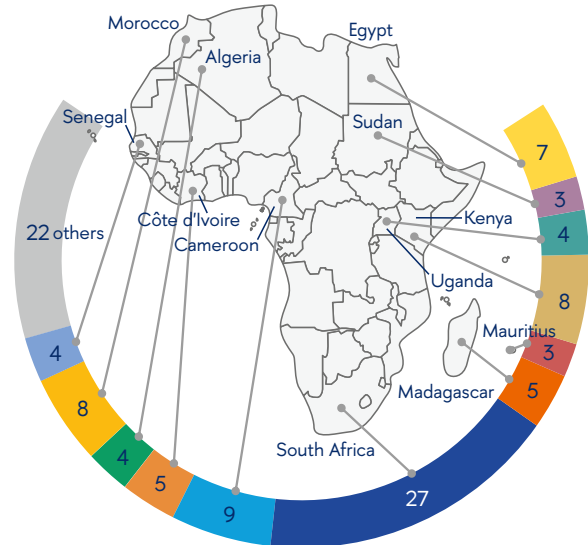
Interestingly, it is the finance and economics sector in Africa that appears to be most influenced by studying abroad (89%). The majority of finance ministers were educated abroad – 48 ministers, with only six of them (11%) being educated only in their home country. This emphasises that most professionals in this field had to seek more opportunities for education outside their home country. Similar situation with African foreign ministers, mostly educated outside their home countries – 38 ministers, with 16 of them studying only in their home country (29%).

Based on the data collected, it can be noted that the vast majority of ministries and countries are headed by highly educated professionals who have received higher education both at home and abroad

Only ten of the statesmen considered in the study do not have tertiary education or the fact that they have it is disputed; yet, these statesmen have gained significant experience that they employ as part of their public service.

While 472 of 719 leaders considered in the study had obtained one of their degrees in their home country, at least 223 of them had also studied abroad. 249 of them received their education

Destinations for tertiary education among African statesmen inside Africa



As of September 2024

Source: prepared by the HSE University Center for African Studies based on collected data.

only in their home country without studying abroad, while 237 received their education only abroad.

Several major conclusions can be drawn from the findings.

Firstly, at the level of African leaders and leading African government ministers, the key roles are played by people educated in the former metropolises who speak English and French. This is also due to the fact that current political elites are on average over 55 years old, but these trends may begin to change in the coming years, given the rise of non-Western states in Africa as well as intra-African student mobility.

Secondly, a notable number of individuals in African leadership received their education in other African countries, which is also a notable factor in education that will also increase in importance with the further development of higher education in the continent.

Thirdly, it can be noted that in many areas, there is a notable importance of local education, which in one way or the other was received by about 2/3 of the group considered in the study.

Fourth, the higher the level of local education in a country, the more often national leadership is educated in their own country without travelling abroad (e.g. South Africa, Cameroon).

This emphasises the need for further investment and development of higher education in African countries in order to strengthen their own sovereignty and create effective governance solutions

Who is going to teach next generation of African leaders?

Education continues to be a significant challenge and a space of opportunities for African states. The future of the continent's economic, political and social development lies in successfully overcoming the challenges facing Africa in education.

Transformations in the ICT sector offer new opportunities to address the challenges of education in Africa. It is directly linked to solving the continent's infrastructure problems, developing digital technologies, increasing access to such services for the local population and the growing number of African youth.

What is required is continued and sustained investment in infrastructure, support for initiatives aimed at building the necessary competences, sustainable formats of interaction and ensuring the effective functioning of local institutions, and the development of educational policies that support these changes.

At the same time, Africa's growing and highly promising higher education sector remains underinvested, both by governments and local big business.

While most of South Africa's leading universities still exist in isolation from the rest of Africa and are closely tied to the former metropolises, the research shows that universities in the rest of Africa remain vastly underfunded even in terms of the purchasing power of the population – most universities in other countries (Nigeria, as an example) have a huge potential for growth.

In the field of education at all levels, deeper strategic planning is needed, including identifying priority areas consistent with national strategic goals. Such areas could include agriculture, medicine, engineering and programming, STEM. It is the mismatch between

the level and quality of education and the needs of the labour market that leads to the outflow of the most promising personnel outside Africa.

External involvement in supporting educational programmes within Africa also needs to be more carefully monitored to ensure that this deep integration into the educational process does not become a stimulus for brain drain, but only complements the needs of African countries themselves.

African countries need to invest more in educational sovereignty. Despite widespread international support, most external actors are ultimately interested in obtaining skilled workers for their own countries, which contributes to 'brain drain' and increased migration from Africa. The opportunities for African countries and entrepreneurs are growing and external assistance needs to be managed, which can be an important part of educational sovereignty and have a positive impact on the development of the entire continent.

Given the continued high level of external influence on key education processes in Africa, initiatives aimed at strengthening domestic African solutions to emerging challenges should be supported.



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