

UK Educational and Cultural programs in Africa

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In modern economy, income related to education, culture, science, and innovation is becoming more important. Attracting talented scientific personnel, improving the reputation of national education, exporting cultural and informational products and services, and developing tourism are crucial for increasing a country's prosperity. To achieve these goals, "soft power" methods are used, with the UK being the leader in their application. Although the physical territory of modern Britain has decreased compared to the British Empire, its symbolic, cultural, educational, and political-psychological influence remains significant [1]. The study analyzes the UK's educational and cultural programs in Africa and answers the question: "What is the main goal of the UK's educational programs in Africa?"

Currently, various programs are being implemented in Africa by government bodies, non-governmental actors, charity organizations with an unclear organizational structure like The British Council [3]. The main goal of these programs is working with youth. In the National Security Potential Review, it is stated: "Our attention to Africa will change and expand to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the rapidly growing population across the continent" [2].

The basis of Britain's strategy in Africa is the Commonwealth, which includes 19 African states. Most are former colonies, protectorates, dominions, and mandated territories. However, Mozambique, Gabon, and Rwanda, which are part of the Commonwealth, were never connected to Britain through colonial history. The organizational structure of the Commonwealth includes the Commonwealth of Learning, responsible for developing educational programs and promoting a grant system among the most vulnerable members of the Commonwealth [4].

Another organization, which officially belongs to the British Government but actually realizes independent policy, the British Council, implements scholarship programs, international conferences, the cultural project "Weeks of Europe and Africa," and the youth program "English Connects." Its aim is to connect 2.5 million young Africans and future leaders from Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Angola, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, DR Congo, Niger through the English language. The focus is on urban youth aged 18-35: young entrepreneurs, teachers, and students. The British Council also operates in 19 African countries, implementing educational programs, such as the "Chevening" program [6].

Chevening Scholarship is an international scholarship system that allows students with leadership qualities from around the world to study at British universities. It is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and partner organizations. The program started in 1983, with the stated goal of creating a network of friends of Britain who will become future leaders in their countries. Recipients include citizens of Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, and Kenya. The goal of the British Council and scholarship programs is to influence the value orientation of African youth early, ensuring loyal attitudes toward Britain for several generations of future leaders [5].

Additionally, the UK's Foreign Office finances educational projects, creates job programs for youth, and invests in youth startups in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt.

Non-governmental organizations conducting educational and cultural programs in Africa include the Community of British and Overseas Schools and the Waterloo Foundation. The former funds educational projects in Malawi, Kenya, and Uganda, while the latter supports initiatives in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, and Tanzania [2].

Africa is an important intersection of interests for different players, and the UK's involvement in African affairs inevitably increases its authority and importance in international relations. The UK is proud to allocate 0.5% of its gross national income to African educational programs, as this solves their image-related tasks [7]. Moreover, the UK redirects the most talented leaders of these countries toward its side. Through their educational programs, promising and gifted individuals from "former colonies" gain the opportunity to relocate, develop careers in controlled territories, or provide education for their children in British colleges and universities, integrating into a strong system enriching the United Kingdom at the expense of other countries. A similar path was followed by the parents of the current UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak – Indian migrants born in British protectorates in Africa.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom is interested in Africa and African people. African population will be 33% of the global population by 2050 [7], and it is significant for Britain to capture the minds of people on the fastest growing continent without using military power.

The scientific work was carried out under the supervision of the Candidate of Cultural Studies Kuznetsova N.V.

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