

Panel 4: Higher education and Sino-African cooperation

Convenor: Ben Mulvey

Speakers:

- Dr. Benjamin Mulvey, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
- Siyuan Li, University of Leeds
- Vedika Kedia, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Sino-African higher education cooperation, in its various forms, has grown rapidly in recent years, and particularly after the fourth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in 2009, when various mechanisms for cooperation were established. It is now an important facet of China's engagement with the African continent: there are now 61 Confucius Institutes across Africa, mostly housed in Universities, a wide array of academic partnerships, as well as a numerous scholarship programmes which allow thousands of African students to study in China each year, and think-tank forums which bring together academic researchers, as examples.

This panel explores the role that higher education is playing in Sino-African cooperation and exchange, focusing on key policies, initiatives, and their wider implications. In particular we focus on the outcomes of scholarship programmes, University partnerships and collaborations, and think-tank forums.

The panel offers an analysis of how these initiatives contribute to China's diplomatic agenda: higher education cooperation is often framed by the Chinese state in explicitly political terms, as a means of increasing positive sentiment about China and contributing to Chinese influence across the continent. We focus in particular on how these initiatives contribute to 'relational power building', thereby emphasising the interdependent nature of power. We also highlight how these forms of cooperation are likely to contribute to shifting patterns of global knowledge production.