Russian universities strengthen their position in Africa: RAFU members RUDN and SPbPU are key participants in the international seminar "Russian Language for Africa – 2025"

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From November 23 to 29, 2025, Nigeria and Senegal hosted an international seminar entitled "Russian Language for Africa — 2025," organized by the World of Russian Textbooks Center with the support of the Russkiy Mir Foundation, the Zlatoust Training Center, and the Consortium of the Russian-African Network University (RAFU), namely the Patrice Lumumba University of Friendship of Peoples (RUDN) and Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (SPbPU). The project became one of the largest events of the year aimed at promoting the Russian language and Russian education in West Africa.



The first stage of the seminar took place in Nigeria, where more than 30 teachers from Nigeria, Ghana, DR Congo, Niger, and Madagascar, as well as hundreds of students and schoolchildren, gathered at the Federal University of Yakubu Gowon, Cherryfield College, and the University of Lagos. The second stage took place in Senegal at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and brought together more than 70 Russian language teachers from eight cities across the country, as well as representatives from Mali, Niger, Benin, and Burkina Faso.



The Russian University of People's Friendship played a significant role in the methodological content of the program. Vasily Pavlovich Mashenkin, senior lecturer at the Department of Russian Studies, ethno-oriented pedagogy, and digital didactics, gave a series of lectures and practical classes on the specifics of teaching Russian to African schoolchildren and students, typical mistakes made by teachers, and teaching methods without an intermediary language. Participants were particularly interested in information about the new RUDN scientific journal Education in Russia and Africa, which has become an important platform for academic exchange.



SPbPU was responsible for coordinating key discussions and presenting the opportunities offered by Russian higher education. Alla Mazina, Deputy Head of the International Education Department at SPbPU and Secretary of the Presidium of RAFU, moderated round tables in Nigeria and Senegal, and also presented the university's educational programs for high school and university students. Presentations by Russian universities, including RUDN, SPbPU, and Voronezh State University, attracted great interest among young people: more than 350 students learned about opportunities for higher education in Russia, admission requirements, and grant support.



African participants noted the continuing difficulties in developing Russian language teaching in the region: a shortage of staff, limited access to modern teaching materials, and difficulties in finding employment for graduates of Russian language programs. Russian teachers emphasized that students in West Africa are highly motivated and successful in learning Russian thanks to their multilingualism, respect for teachers, and positive attitude toward Russia.



As a result of the project, educational institutions in Nigeria and Senegal received 500 sets of the new Khorovod educational complex, published in Nigeria with the participation of the Zlatoust Training Center, as well as other educational literature. All participants were awarded certificates.



The rector of Dakar University, Professor Alioune Badar, noted that the seminar was an important step in strengthening Russian-African relations amid a changing model of international cooperation. The organizers expressed their gratitude to the Russian diplomatic missions in Nigeria and Senegal, the Trade Representation of the Russian Federation in Nigeria, the Source of Initiatives organization in Abuja, Yakubu Gowon University, Lagos University, and Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar.



The participants expressed their hope that the project would continue in 2026 and emphasized the need for further coordination of Russian educational initiatives in Africa with the active participation of leading universities that are members of RAFU, primarily RUDN and SPbPU.