

UK Scholarships Unit Head meets Ugandan partners on scholarship cooperation

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Dr Emma Hennessey met government and education partners in Uganda to discuss co-operation on the Chevening and Commonwealth Scholarship programmes.

Uganda is one of the UK's strongest and fastest-growing scholarship partners. Chevening applications from Uganda reached a record 2,600 in 2025, more than double the usual annual average of 1,200. Uganda also has one of the most established Commonwealth alumni communities in Africa, with more than 1,700 Ugandans having taken part in the programme since the 1960s.

During her visit, Dr Hennessey met senior officials at the Ministry of Education and Sports to discuss expanding opportunities for postgraduate study, strengthening links between institutions, and widening access to UK scholarship schemes.

She also met representatives from the Chevening Alumni Association of Uganda and Commonwealth alumni groups. Alumni described how they are using skills gained in the UK to support work in areas such as inclusive education, refugee training in Kampala, waste management and leadership development.

A key part of the visit included engaging nominating partners for the Commonwealth Scholarship and exploring potential new partnerships for Chevening to widen pathways to UK postgraduate education.

Dr Hennessey also toured high-impact projects led by alumni working in inclusive education and health. These initiatives showcased the real-world leadership that UK scholarships are cultivating leaders who return to Uganda with global perspectives and the skills to drive national development.

The visit culminated in the Welcome Back Reception for the 2024 cohort of returning Chevening and Commonwealth Scholars. This group includes 17 Chevening Scholars and 25 Commonwealth Scholars who have completed master's and doctoral studies at UK universities. They now join a wider network of Ugandans working across government, the judiciary, media, civil society, science and the private sector.

H.E. Lisa Chesney MBE, British High Commissioner to Uganda, said:

Ugandan Chevening and Commonwealth Scholars consistently stand out for their leadership during their time in the UK and upon return. Their work is helping shape better public services, stronger institutions and more resilient communities. This visit reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting Uganda's next generation of leaders.

Dr Emma Hennessey, Head of the UK Scholarships Unit, said:

Uganda's scholars and alumni are among the most dynamic in our global community. Their innovation and commitment to positive change are inspiring. UK scholarships aim to support leaders who will contribute to their societies, and Uganda continues to

produce strong talent. We look forward to continuing our partnerships and supporting more Ugandans in the years ahead.

Dr. Emma Hennessey takes a closer look at a collaborative art piece developed by partners from Sheffield together with clients at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital.

Further information

Uganda has been a Chevening partner country since 1983 and now boasts a thriving network of over 350 alumni across fields including law, medicine, engineering, journalism, finance, and climate change. Chevening applications reached a historic 2,600 in 2025, reflecting growing demand for UK postgraduate study. Annual scholar numbers have ranged widely, peaking at 25 scholars in 2023, with 17 scholars selected in 2024.

The Chevening Alumni Association of Uganda (CAAU), established in 2019, has built a strong community that drives impact through inclusive education programmes, refugee upskilling initiatives, school waste management activities, and leadership training.

Chevening alumni in Uganda

Uganda's Chevening alumni hold roles across government, justice, media and civil society, including:

- Former Minister of Ethics and Integrity – Miria Matembe
- Head of the Public Service and Secretary to the Cabinet – Lucy Nakyobe Mbonye
- Judge, UN Dispute Tribunal – Justice Margaret Tibulya
- UN Independent Expert on International Order – Livingstone Sewanyana
- Africa Editor, Global Investigative Journalism Network – Benon Oluka

Commonwealth Scholarship

The Commonwealth Scholarship is one of the UK's longest-running development scholarship programmes. More than 1,700 Ugandans have taken part since the 1960s. Many alumni now work in health, education, governance, environmental protection, technology, media and public administration.

The welcome-back engagements reflect the programme's principle of "return and contribute," supporting scholars to apply their UK training in Uganda.

Commonwealth alumni in Uganda

Uganda's Commonwealth alumni also hold senior roles, including:

- Vice-Chancellor, Kyambogo University; Chair, National Council for Higher Education – Prof Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya
- Executive Director, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) – Dr Chris Ndatira Mukiza
- Former Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Makerere University; Chair, Busitema University Council – Prof William Bazeyo
- Former Deputy Governor, Bank of Uganda – Dr Louis Kasekende
- Former Supreme Court Justice (passed on) – Justice George Kanyeihamba

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-scholarships-unit-head-meets-ugandan-partners-on-scholarship-cooperation>