

《南非政府计划在500所中小学开设汉语课》

导读:近日，南非基础教育部长宣布，政府计划将汉语作为学校里第二外语的选修课。



African countries are now starting to see the increasing value of learning Chinese.

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Recently, the South African basic education minister announced the government's plans to introduce Chinese as an optional third language in its schools.

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They hope to have 500 schools offering Chinese over the next five years.

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China is now South Africa's largest trading partner.

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The plan to introduce Chinese in schools is already in motion, with two teachers from China having already arrived in the country.

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Every year, for the next five years, 100 teachers will be trained to teach the Chinese language. In a country where there are 11 official languages, English remains the most common language of instruction in South African schools.

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Naturally then, the announcement of the introduction of Chinese at schools has been met with resistance from some quarters who are still demanding that all children be taught in their mother tongue.

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Confucius Institutes are already well-established at five top South African universities to promote the language and culture.

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Learning Chinese could open job opportunities for South Africans in China, while school leaders could choose to create more programs for Chinese studies at universities, they say.

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The South African government believes the introduction of Chinese in its schools will strengthen economic ties.

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During my time in Beijing, I attended a basic Chinese class once a week for about three months. In that time, I learned very little other than basic greetings, taxi directions and food-related vocabulary. Learning to count proved the most useful.

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When I chose my university subjects, I opted to continue studying German which I had learned at school as a third language.

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In those years it was natural for students at South African universities to study another European language over an indigenous language, because of the belief that it would open international doors.

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As the Chinese economy continues to grow and strengthen, the world's most-spoken language is gaining in currency too.

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South Africa, the third largest economy in Africa, is taking note.

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