Cara Syria Programme

Mid-term Evaluation, Final Report, June 2018

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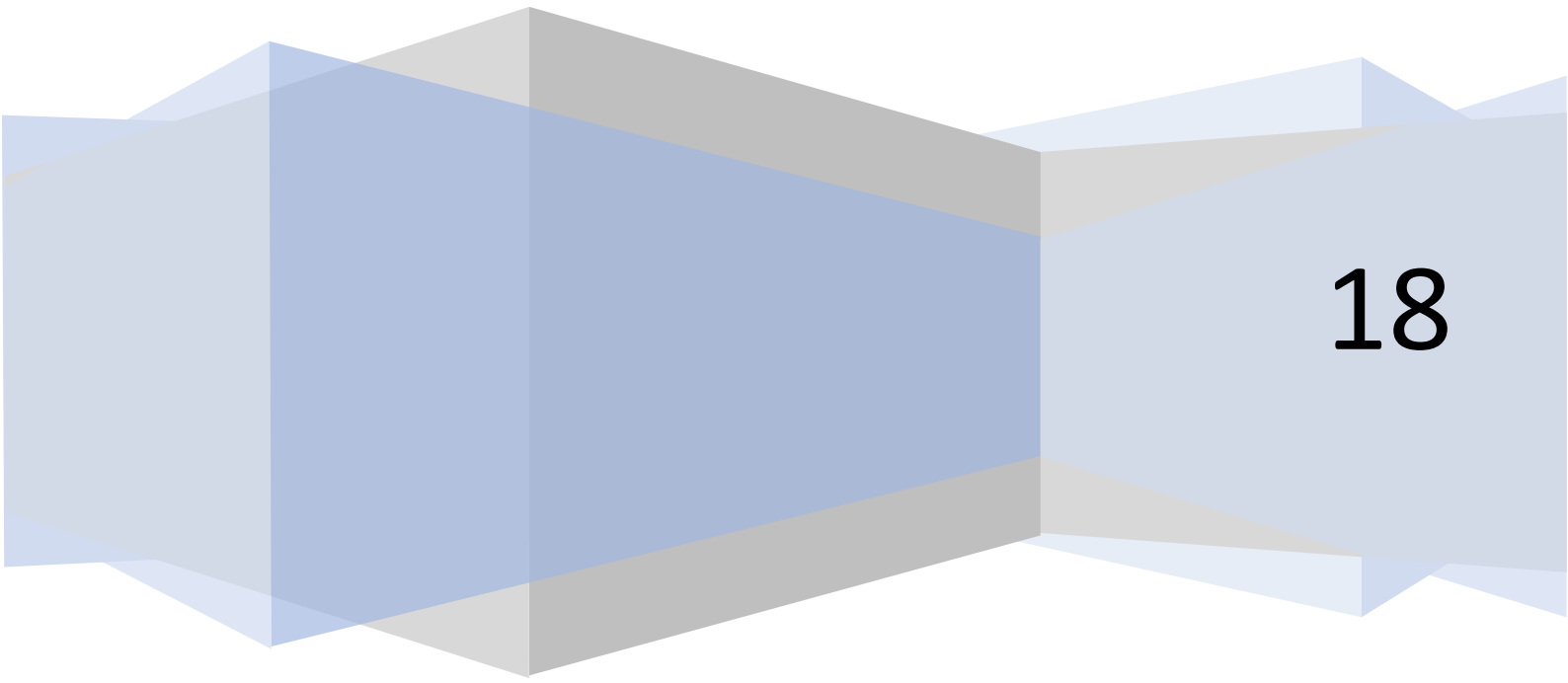

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Acronyms

ASD	Academic skills development
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
HE	Higher Education
HESP	Higher Education Support Programme
IELTS	The International English Language Testing System
OSF	Open Society Foundation
RIV	Research Incubation Visits
VfM	Value for Money

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I would like to thank the programme participants, Cara and partners for their support to this evaluation. I highly appreciated everyone's patience with questions and generosity in sharing their time and reflections. In particular, Kate Robertson's commitment, openness and support to the process during a busy time of programme implementation helped immensely. I hope the report and evaluation process are useful contributions to the ongoing development of this valuable programme for the benefit of Syrian academics and Higher Education in places affected by conflict.

Executive Summary

The Cara Syria Programme "**Investing in Syria's intellectual capital: Creating pathways to the Future" supports Syrian academics affected by conflict in exile in the region.** The programme aims to enable Syrian academics to continue academic engagement and contribution both for immediate individual and academic reasons, but also as an investment into the future development of Syria's higher education sector and broader post-conflict development. The programme began with a one-year pilot phase in October 2016 and phase two now runs up to March 2019. The programme has a combined budget and secured income so far of UK£ UK£922,869.

The programme is made up of five strands which support the development of participants' English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Academic Skills (ASD), provide support to research through linkages with mainly UK-based academics, produces independently commissioned research relevant to Syria's future and includes a Syria Research Fellowships Programme. Until May 2018 the focus of the programme has been on EAP, ASD through nine workshops, online tutorials for approximately 55 EAP participants, 18 webinars and development of a portal with online resources. The programme has also produced research on higher education in Syria with the participation of 21 Syrian academics and begun to create opportunities for participants' participation in research.

The evaluation aims to fulfil both accountability and learning functions and was carried out over April-May 2018 by an independent consultant. The methodology used a mixed methods approach and included document review, interviews and group discussions with all key stakeholders including 20 participants, partners, Cara governance and management and donors (total 33), a survey to EAP online tutors and observation of programme workshops in Istanbul.

Key findings

The Cara Syria programme is responding innovatively to a clearly identified need. The programme used innovative processes to identify English language and academic skills needs and participant priorities and has responded to these in workshop and webinar content, tutorials, and other programme strands particularly on English, research, teaching and development of research proposals. The five programme strands and cross-cutting resources are all relevant and contribute to the intended results of the programme. The five strands and resources such as the portal have evolved to become more interwoven. There is scope for even greater integration between programme strands particularly at Strand 3 (Research Incubation Visits) and Strand 5(Fellowship programme and research grants) increase in their scale; for example EAP tutorials can support participation in these new activities and tailor content to them. The area that has been least addressed so far is discipline-specific support, which is a priority for participants.

The programme has achieved significant results in a short time. These include participants' professional development in research methods, development of proposals and teaching methods, which they highly value as well as in English for Academic Purposes. It has produced innovative research on higher education in Syria. Significantly, participants emphasise that the programme has enabled some of them to reclaim their professional identity as academics and develop professional support networks. Participation levels are good, though under the ambitious targets set by the programme with approximately 55 regular participants at this point. There are up to 112 participants registered on the programme portal there is no evidence of their regular participation. The target for the programme is 120 and while recruitment is ongoing this remain an ambitious target given the capacity of the programme. for end of the programme.

The use of communication technology-based methods for learning have proven highly effective. Use of online tutoring, provision of online resources and introduction of new activities such as webinars available for live participation and via recordings are means to widen access, participation and ensure more continuous contact with participants. They are not without challenges due largely to internet connectivity, equipment capacity and expertise in their use among both participants and some partners such as the EAP online tutors.

The programme is achieving significant value for money in terms of its economy and level of outputs such as workshops, numbers participating in EAP tutoring, research reports produced for expended resources. There is close attention in the programme to optimising the use of its resources and it has successfully leveraged additional resources e.g. in volunteer time and through partnerships estimated by Cara to equal UK£300,000. But the programme has been victim to overambitious planning and under-resourcing of costs to coordinate, manage and develop the programme which exposes it now to a serious risk. Also, some items which have been under-budgeted such as Strand 4 research and its translation and others not yet budgeted or fund-raised for (though planned for) such as the communication of the Strand 4 and 5 research which will impact on their potential impact. More resources being allocated to ensure equitable access for all Syrian academics particularly women would be beneficial e.g. to understand the low participation rates better and make programme design adjustments if appropriate.

The programme model is characterised by a successful partnership approach based on important underlying principles significant to maintain for any scale up or replication. Cara has developed key partnerships with universities and in particular accessed the support and active involvement of university departments specialised in English for Academic Purposes and Academic Skills Development as well as discipline-specific links. Crucial underlying principles driving all programme strands and relationships are those of mutual respect, trust, responsiveness, voluntariness and innovation. An appropriate structure has evolved to support the programme though some gaps and strains on capacity are emerging as the programme grows and should be addressed e.g. in Strand coordination capacity. The strong partnerships nurtured in the programme and commitment of individuals involved are invaluable and driving its innovative approach and achievements to date.

The programme has to manage a number of challenging tensions. These are between: firstly, flexibility enabling responsiveness and innovation, and structure which would enable more systematic integration and advance communication about the programme content and anticipated results at different points; secondly, between the pace of the programme both in terms of skills development and provision of opportunities with participants' ambition and need for more immediate results; thirdly between scale of involvement (number of participants) and resourcing available for individual participants; fourthly between the creativity and commitment supported by the voluntary nature of partners' contributions with their time available for the programme. Occasional explicit consideration by the programme governance and management of these tensions and choices being made would be beneficial at a strategic level.

A number of areas emerge as priorities for development to support the effectiveness of the programme. These are detailed below and are based on an assumption that the programme aims to evolve beyond March 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a more inclusive and participatory structure and/or process to develop future strategy - The programme would benefit from a cross-strand strategic advisory group or forum possibly with Cara governance involvement and wider Syrian participation to inform the programme's overall strategic development and guide implementation.

2. Increase communication within the programme enable greater coherence and maximise impact - Increased communication of the whole programme to participants and partners including EAP tutors can help build everyone's understanding of the different strands, how the programme components fit together, how the programme content is evolving and a sense of progress. This will enable participants to better know the opportunities and potential benefits of participation in each opportunity and also Strand partners to tailor their content to integrate with other Strands focus.

3. Review participation targets and monitor effectiveness of different levels of participation - Targets for participation are very high and will stretch resources, capping participation in some activities. It is recommended to keep participation targets under review and monitor the effectiveness of different types of participation for results at the individual and system (programme) level.

4. Establish more systematic processes to assess and track progress- develop a more systematic approach to track progress of individual professional development and progress toward programme outcomes. This might involve and combine: the development of a set of possible pathways for individual development depending on their level of participation in different strands; integrated personal development plans bringing together participant aims e.g. in relation to academic skills development, English langue for academic purposes and what they hope this will enable; regular reflection by participants and online and workshop tutors and; more formal assessment e.g. external English language assessment or Academic skills certification.

5. Establish more shared learning processes within and between strands - develop opportunities for sharing learning and resources within and between strands e.g. through more EAP online tutor meetings; through use of the portal which can be a library resource for EAP tutors and also hold EAP and ASD workshop content; opportunities for EAP tutors, webinar facilitators and workshop tutors and facilitators to gather and share reflection and lessons. More systematic collection of feedback from participants would be useful too and its regular consideration by Cara and partners.

6. Actively plan for and resource the linkage of the programme research and programme learning to policy influencing work to benefit higher education in areas affected by conflict - - capitalise on the evidence and learning generated by the programme, as well as the networks and channels of influence of Cara and partners to develop and resource a shared strategy and plan for advocacy to influence support for higher education in places affected conflict drawing on the programme learning and research such as that on Higher Education Status in Syria.

1. Introduction

Evaluation aims and objectives.

The Cara Syria Programme "Investing in Syria's intellectual capital: Creating pathways to the Future" supports Syrian academics affected by conflict. The programme aims to enable Syrian academics to continue academic engagement both for immediate individual and academic reasons but also as an investment into the future development of Syria's higher education structure and broader post-conflict development.

The Cara Syria programme is currently in its second phase with a total income for phases one and two of UK£922,869. Phase one ran for 12 months from October 2016 with total actual expenditure of £214,504 and the second runs for 18 months from October 2017 with a current budget of UK£665,000 ending in March 2019[1]. Funding is through Open Society Foundation Higher Education Support Programme (OSF HESP), British Council, anonymous donations and grants from Reading University and Kings College. Programme reports do not show any core Cara allocation from October 2016. Other resources have been leveraged by the programme e.g. volunteer time of academics and this is discussed later in Section 5 on value for money. There were some delays in funding decisions which stalled certain programme activities start-up but the overall programme timetable for the pilot phase 1 and phase 2 have been adhered to. Implementation rates are discussed in Section 5. Details of income and expenditure are included in Annex 6.

The programme is made up of five strands. These are 1) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which provides language support through workshops and tutorials; 2) Academic Skills Development (ASD) through workshops and webinars; 3) Research Incubation Visits (2 to 8 weeks) i.e. linkages with mainly UK-based academics for professional networking and to support the development of joint research collaboration including university affiliation and access to online resources 4) Independently commissioned research relevant to Syria's future which has so far been a project mapping the state of Syria's higher education pre- and post-2011 led by Cambridge University and finally; 5) Syria Research Fellowship Programme launched in April 2018 when proposals were invited from participants for a newly introduced small grant stream (£1K-£3K). So far the programme has held nine workshops including workshops to assess EAP and ASD needs and inform the design of future activities and with some being combined EAP/ASD workshops[2].

The evaluation aims to fulfil both accountability and learning functions. It is intended to capture progress, achievements, challenges and emerging lessons to date including in relation to the evolving programme model. It focused on the benefits for the primary beneficiaries, the Syrian academic participants called participants throughout the report and also the experience of the various individuals and organisations supporting the development and delivery of the programme called partners here. It focused on activities during the pilot phase and up to end of April 2018, the first 7 months of phase two.

The programme is structured with Cara as the lead agency implementing the programme through a range of partnerships with a number of coordination and oversight structures. Cara with key donor partner OSF is the organisation responsible for the initial design, coordination and implementation of the programme.

[1] Available budget figures for actual and planned expenditure did not cover an under-spend of unrestricted funds of £43,365 in phase 1 which accounts for the difference in actual/budgeted expenditure and income raised.
[2] Number of workshops is based on their presentation in data available to the evaluation documenting participation rates in each workshop.

Cara's Middle East Programme Adviser leads the programme. The programme has developed a number of partnerships to implement the different programme strands (discussed more fully later). Some strands have steering groups (Strand 1 EAP and Strand 2 ASD) to coordinate their activities and evolution. Cara has established the Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee as a sub-committee of the Cara Finance and General Purposes Committee and which is made up of some of its members plus benefits from the participation of a number of external academic experts including two Syrian academics.

2. Methodology

The evaluation has used a mixed methods approach drawing on documentation, statistical analysis and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The evaluation included the following activities.

a) Document review –including programme proposals and reports; feedback from participants from all workshops including the transcriptions of 5 focus group discussions held in February 2018, analysis of participation in the workshops, webinars, participant learning agreements and plans; workshop content; draft research report.
b) Review of content of the programme portal.
c) Evaluator participation in a meeting of EAP level 2 tutors in April 2018 at the University of Reading where tutors shared experiences and lessons learned.
d) Observation of EAP and ASD workshops in Istanbul in April 2018.
e) Interviews with 20 participants through 13 individual interviews and one group discussion (7 participants). Interviewees were drawn from across the different EAP levels and levels of participation in the programme. All interviews except two were face to face in Istanbul in April 2018; one interview was by Skype and one interview was carried out in Jordan in October 2017.
f) 13 interviews with Cara and programme partners including i) Cara management and governance including Cara CEO , three members of the Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee and Cara Middle East Programme Adviser (managing the programme ii) EAP and ASD partners involved in the initial assessments, programme delivery (as workshop facilitators) and inputting into the evolving design of the programme as members of their respective EAP and ASD steering groups iii) Cambridge University lead of the higher education research project and iv) key funding partner Open Society Foundation (OSF). One of the 13 interviews was a written submission to interview questions.
g) Survey to EAP online tutors of all three levels which received 17 responses (nine level 1; two level 2, six level 3).

Data was analysed in relation to the evaluation matrix indicators which were developed at the inception of the evaluation (shared with Cara for comment and is in Annex 2). It articulates the evaluation questions and indicators in relation to relevance, effectiveness, value for money (including efficiency), sustainability, scalability and potentially replicability of the programme model.

Constraints and limitations

The evaluation faced a number of methodological constraints which include:

a) **Timing** –the programme was in full swing at the time of data collection with activities developing rapidly so aspects of the programme may have evolved since data collection.
b) **Workshop participant feedback** - it had been anticipated that feedback on the April 2018 workshop would be collected by the programme so the evaluation did not put in place any additional system to

collect this. However, this was not available by end of May at the time of the evaluation write up. Available feedback from other workshops was patchy.

c) **Gender balance** - the evaluation intended to balance male and female Syrian participant interviewees but initial analysis showed this was not possible due to the low number of female participants. Two female participants at the April 2018 workshop were interviewed and the only Strand 3 participant (research incubation) was interviewed who is female and based in Jordan. This issue is discussed further in Section 4.

d) **Financial data** - A full budget and recent figures of actual expenditure for the programme were not available so data used to analyse value for money was gathered from the Phase 1 report to donors and Phase 2 budget prepared for donors (OSF) (See Section 5).

e) **Fluctuating participation-** The programme has recruited participants on an ongoing basis with new participants joining up to the time of data collection (April 2018) and beyond. Not all participants take part in all Strand activities and participation has not always been consistent. This poses a challenge to assess the factors contributing to outcomes and results. The evaluation focused on participants who had regularly participated in workshops (though also interviewed new joiners) and included some who were involved in all Strands of the programme.

3. Relevance

This section of the report discusses questions of relevance through:

- consideration of the appropriateness of programme processes to assess needs and priorities;
- comparison of the programme content with identified needs and priorities; and
- consideration of programme flexibility and adaptation to new needs, challenges and learning.

These three areas are considered in turn below. The evaluation has focused on the relevance of the programme primarily to Syrian academics based in Turkey who have been the main concern of the programme up to this point (wider participation is discussed later in effectiveness).

Findings

3.1 Assessing priorities and needs

The programme undertook appropriate processes to assess priorities and needs to inform the initial content and design of the programme. These include:

a) Initial consultation with Syrian academics in Turkey through consultation meetings Istanbul in 2016.

b) A visit in 2017 by EAP coordinators and tutors to Istanbul which included meetings with participants for assessment and meetings with Turkish universities

c) Focused assessment processes in each of the EAP and ASD strands.

d) English language skills and priorities have been assessed through i) APTIS testing run twice in September 2016 and February 2018 for Syrian participants and in January 2017 for Syrians in Jordan[3]; ii) a process devised by University of Edinburgh involving online written exercises and interview which produces a rough assessment that can be aligned to APTIS results; iii) review of

[3] APTIS is a British Council-run assessment method which tests speaking, listening, reading and writing skills - not specifically for academic purposes

participants in workshops. Participants also usually make a personal learning plan which they and their tutor may use to help identify priorities.

e) ASD priorities were identified through a participatory process in a one-day workshop in Istanbul in April 2017 with the initial group of participants using Open Source Technology. This included group exercises as well as the elaboration by participants of personal development plans, which were analysed for key themes.

These innovative approaches to assessment within the EAP and ASD strands are still evolving (at least in the EAP strand) and could be useful tools for the future.

3.2 Match between identified needs with content

The programme content and design respond well to the needs and priorities identified in the assessments. The English language assessment enabled categorisation of participants into three levels and these are catered for separately in workshops as well as individually in weekly one-hour online tutorials ensuring content is appropriate to participants' individual level and priorities. The evaluation survey found online tutors put a strong emphasis on customising the tutorials to their participant's priorities. Workshop tutors reported responding to learning from each workshop to inform the next workshop's content as well as making on-the-spot adaptations at times during workshops. The ASD assessment identified five key areas that the programme could support as prioritised by participants. There were categorised as a) discipline related; b) responsibility (for the reconstruction and continued delivery of Syrian Higher Education); c) research; d) teaching and; e) collaboration through professional networks amongst Syrian academics, with colleagues in Turkey and internationally. Underlying these is a priority for Syrian academics to find ways to make a living. The assessment and evaluation data highlights participants' immediate concern regarding their very limited resources and opportunities. In response the programme has provided three ASD workshops of 2-3 days each which have had relevant content focusing on teaching, academic profiling, research design and writing proposals. The workshops have also provided an opportunity for participants to build collaborations with Syrian colleagues something that is slowly emerging and encouraged by the Cara e.g. in the small grant stream for research (Strand 5). Other strands also respond to priorities articulated by Syrian academics. Strand 4 responds to the priority of "responsibility" to Syrian higher education through its focus on the Higher Education situation pre- and post-2011 in Syria. This was also an opportunity for participants to collaborate together and with UK academics, as well as an opportunity to develop new research skills in qualitative techniques and team work. A webinar series began in late 2017 has usually one webinar each week. Webinar subjects relate to areas relevant to areas identified as priorities including optimising academic profile, teaching, higher education environment, research, publication and potentially discipline specific areas. Webinars include translation and are delivered by a growing group of volunteers drawn from UK university faculties including some Syrian academics.

The area identified in initial assessment that has been least addressed so far is in discipline-specific skills. Just three participants were able to benefit from opportunities to link with counterparts in the UK through research incubation visits or attendance at conferences in Phase 1. Two others (Manchester and UCL) were thwarted by UK visa refusals and one at Newcastle University (Professor Taylor) due to the Syrian's changed circumstance following expulsion from Turkey. The webinar series has very limited subject-specific content. Until now no subject-specific tutors have attended Istanbul workshops yet though a small number have

delivered webinars[4]. Efforts to recruit mentors for participants had limited results in 2017-18 with the learning that a more specific task is likely to be a more successful means to recruit better matches. Discipline-specific input is a priority emphasised by participants in the initial assessment and again in monitoring such as the 2017-18 focus group discussions and the evaluation interviews.

It is interesting to note the range of aims of participants in developing English language skills. While some want English to undertake research and access English language sources for their academic progress, for others the aim is to speak sufficient English to work in Turkish universities where it is often required (even though teaching is not usually in English) and particularly in private universities where participants perceived that they have more chance to secure a job. Others want to improve and progress in their work they have secured with NGOs and international organisations and for others it is for more general use in life. EAP tutors respond to these different priorities.

It is notable that for many participants their interest is less in research and more in teaching and other areas of academic skills more directly relevant to their current actual and potential job opportunities in Turkey. These skills were highlighted in the assessments, are being covered in ASD sessions and webinars, but are not highlighted so strongly in Cara's own description of the programme which focuses much more strongly on research. It is surprising given the direct relevance of teaching skills to participants' immediate needs, their prioritisation of the areas in the ASD assessment exercise (personal development plans) as well as potential to contribute to future reconstruction of higher education in Syria.

Expectation management has been a challenge for the programme. Many participants expressed disappointment that their initial expectations of more direct support to find work could not be met by Cara. Others had expected opportunities to participate in research to be provided much sooner and or links to be facilitated with Turkish universities. More intensive processes were also requested by many Level 1 and 2 EAP participants e.g. immersion language courses. Repeated explanations by Cara of the resource constraints of the programme (in money and people) have helped to build an understanding of Cara's capacity but frustrations and queries remain.

3.3 Programme flexibility and responsiveness

A distinctive feature of the Cara Syria programme is its evolutionary and fluid nature: it has been developed by Cara with partners over the course of the programme as opposed to following a blueprint or content set at the outset. While the initial design of the Syria programme drew on learning from the previous Cara programmes for Iraqi academics and in Zimbabwe, individual strands have evolved their approach and created content during the course of the programme, often in response to needs and priorities emerging in workshops. This flexibility has the benefit of being responsive to needs and opportunities but the drawback of limiting the feasibility of cooperation between strands and being able to lay out clearly to all participants the future content and benefits for them of the programme.

The Cara Syria programme has dealt well in responding to unexpected new challenges. There have been a number of unexpected changes in the external environment which affected the programme. These include: a) the attempted coup in Turkey and subsequent increased caution of Turkish Universities to undertake public, international cooperation and; b) centralisation of British visas administrative processes. The Cara

[4] A discipline-specific workshop facilitator was expected in April 2018 but had to postpone for unexpected reasons.

programme has shifted its focus from Turkish Universities in response to the sensitivities there, but Cara is now beginning to explore again the potential to access laboratory facilities for the Syrian participants.

The fluid and flexible approach of programme partners has enabled the programme to innovate. The programme has trialled a number of new initiatives and ideas during its course of implementation. Original content is being developed within workshops and also in EAP tutorials. This is a valuable resource to capture. A dedicated portal has been developed for the programme and its functionalities adapted through testing. A significant component is the development of webinars which has had the dual benefit of: a) increasing the scale of and access to ASD content for participants through webinars, webinars are also recorded and can be accessed by participants via the programme portal; b) expanding the range of UK academics involved in the programme providing a means for a larger number to become involved. Interestingly, some of the participants also consider webinars as an opportunity for developing their English language skills, as well as academic skills.

There is significant learning taking place among programme partners regarding programme design and delivery, but very few structured and shared learning opportunities. Programme partners have applied a learning approach in their development of the programme e.g. building plans for next workshops based on previous workshop experience, but interviewees reported that processes for learning have been largely informal, through individual reflection rather than collective discussion. Some feedback is collected such as in five focus group discussions and handful of interviews held in September and February 2018 but it has not been discussed collectively. Furthermore, collection of feedback has often been quite late and ad hoc. This reflects what some partners describe as "seat of the pants" approach to developing the programme, which is admirable in terms of its achievements in a short time with limited resources but has costs in terms of being able to respond fully to feedback and learning. Some learning has been captured in journal articles though these target a largely academic audience and the programme is relevant to a wider audience involved in education in crises including the humanitarian community who might be better reached through other channels.

3.4 Conclusion

The Cara Syria Programme is responding to a clearly identified need in ways that no other organisation is addressing i.e. through on-the-ground support to academics in their country of current residence (Turkey). The identification of priorities used appropriate and innovative methods. The content of the programme and the opportunities it provides respond to participant priorities and identified needs. There is some frustration among participants at the level and pace that these opportunities are being provided which reflects perhaps the urgency of a refugee's needs and challenge to match this with resources. There is a tension which the programme must manage which is that its key characteristic of being flexible and fluid which enables it to be responsive and innovative can also be a constraint to more systematic integration of Strand responses and may impact on its effectiveness which is a subject discussed in the next section.

4. Effectiveness

The evaluation considered effectiveness of the programme in relation to the planned outputs and outcomes at the individual and system (programme) levels, as laid out in the programme proposals noting that a further 10 months of the current programme remains until the end of this phase on 31st March 2019. The section discusses in order:

- Participation in the programme
- Outputs and outcomes achieved
- The strengths, challenges and areas of programme strategies.
- Conclusions and areas to develop.

Points relating the structure, management and governance of the programme are considered later in Section 6 in discussion of the programme model.

Findings

4.1. Progress towards planned outputs and outcomes

4.1.1 Participation

There are good rates of participation in the programme though overall levels are not yet at the targets set by the programme. Individuals' participation is largely consistent with low drop-out rates. Cara set ambitious targets for its phase one programme of 70 participants in total and 120 in phase two. Progress towards these is good with relatively low levels of drop-out, but these ambitious targets are not yet met.

- Of the 78 participants in total who have attended a Cara Syria Programme workshop only six have attended all eight workshops (or 9 in the case of Level 1 participants which had a focus workshop for Level 1). There is a core of 29 who have attended at least four or more of the nine workshops held so far. This shows fairly consistent participation given that lower attendance rates are often linked to participants' later starting date in many cases.
- 63 Syrian academics have registered for English language online tutoring and there are 55 currently active and who on the whole attend regularly (18 on Level 1, 23 in Level 2 and 19 in Level3).
- It is estimated there are currently a maximum of 112 Syrians registered on the programme portal[5]. The total number of visits to the portal in 12 months up to May 2018 from Turkey was 731 visits. The most frequently visited pages after the home page are those with information on self-study materials, members listing, useful webs and free and open courses.
- Based on data from 14 webinars, 40 participants have taken part in the live webinars at some point; of these only 3 participated regularly in more than 50% (7 or more) and 21 in between three and six webinars and nearly half in two or fewer. Participation rates in the webinars "live" ranges from 10-19. The number viewing recordings is not accessible.

Fluctuating conditions in participants' lives in Turkey make continuous participation difficult and so the flexible approach taken by Cara has supported access to its activities and benefits. There has been ongoing recruitment to the programme throughout its lifetime. While this a challenge for the design of the programme, tutors have adapted to this fluctuating group of participants in their workshops. Participants choose which activities to pursue though there have been some caps put on participation levels in workshops (30 in some workshops in phase 1 and 55 now in phase 2). Online EAP tutors have taken a similarly flexible approach to ensure as much as continuity as possible with their participants, despite disruptions caused by both technology and life events. The use of methods such as webinars which are

[5] Total number of people registered is 212; 100 have UK email addresses so 112 is an estimate of Syrians registered. Figures May 2018.

recorded and can be viewed at any point and the provision of online materials on the portal has helped increase the accessibility to programme content.

Participants are drawn from a wide range of disciplines. Based on the data for active EAP participants, the subjects with the most participants are agriculture (5), engineering (5), economics (4) business administration (3), law (3) [6]. There are also small groups (three of more) of participants specialised in Arabic literature or mathematics. The range of subjects is a strength of the programme demonstrating its relevance to a broad academic constituency though also poses a challenge to the programme particularly when participants are keen for discipline-specific content.

Nearly all participants in the programme are Syrian academics based in Turkey, which is an appropriate focus. The programme originally aimed to target Syrians in Jordan also, but so far there has been far less activity in Jordan. The Syrian Union of Academics estimates that there are between 400-500 academics in Turkey. Cara's own database has 168 Syrian academics[7]. The vast majority are in Turkey (115) with much smaller numbers in Jordan (21), Europe (7), Syria (10) and other Middle Eastern countries (2). The majority of the visitors to the programme portal (other than those in the UK from programme partners including tutors) are based in Turkey, all workshops have been held in Turkey and all EAP participants are based in Turkey[8]. However, the one research incubation visit undertaken in phase 1 and one of two participants supported to present at conferences was from Jordan. While it is not known to what extent the Cara database reflects the actual distribution of academics, the data shows there is a significant demand for the programme in Turkey and this is a suitable focus for the programme at this point.

Effective methods to recruit participants in Turkey have proved to be using existing Syrian networks and particularly word-of-mouth. Cara made links with the Syrian Union of Academics, British Council and other potential sources of information on Syrian academics in Turkey and these have proved very useful starting points. Initial consultation meetings in Gaziantep and Istanbul in 2016 helped promote awareness of the potential programme. Most of the evaluation interviewees reported learning about the programme through friends and approached Cara based on this introduction.

Recruitment methods have proved effective in progressing towards target numbers but there are imbalances in participation across gender and discipline lines. Men make up the vast majority of programme participants. There are only three women registered out of a total number of 63 people registered for EAP online tutoring since it began (55 now active); there were only three women out of a total of 51 participants at the April 2018 workshop and they did not all participate for its entirety; the Cara database has details of 23 female academics out of a total of 168 Syrian academics including five women in Jordan and one outside of the Middle East. Cara has explored this imbalance in conversation with the participants and encouraged them to invite female participants. The evaluation was not able to access definitive information on the numbers and location of female Syrian academics outside of Syria to know whether this imbalance reflects their presence and interest to participate in the programme. Interviewees suggested that there was a relatively balanced distribution between men and women in academia in Syria before the conflict, though women featured more prominently in certain disciplines such as pharmacy.

[6] numbers based on current records (May 2018) of active EAP participants. Note there is a significant number (18) of participants where their discipline was not noted.
[7] Cara holds details of a further 132 potential participants.
[8] One EAP participant was based in Jordan but dropped out.

There is a range of views regarding the low levels of female participation with limited robust evidence to explain the situation fully. The evaluation heard the following explanations:

a) women are already employed and so not interested in the programme
b) more female academics have remained in Syria so it is likely to be imbalanced. More male academics are in Turkey due to leaving Syria because of risk of conscription
c) women find it difficult to attend workshops in Istanbul due to family commitments and cultural restrictions on travel
d) more women intend to return to Syria soon and fear any association with a foreign organisation in case it may cause problems on their return
e) more women academics have moved on from Turkey to Europe than men
f) Recruitment via word-of-mouth process reinforces the imbalance as men recruit men from their field.

There are a number of steps Cara could take to explore, and if appropriate, address this unequal participation more fully. It was not possible to explore in depth whether alternative models would promote more female participation but some potential next steps include:

a) research to establish more robust knowledge of the gender balance and distribution of academics outside of Syria
b) exploration of potential recruitment and communication methods to reach female academics more effectively e.g. through women's associations, social media
c) a focused consultation processes to establish if and how the programme can be designed to reach and involve women more effectively e.g. different location for workshops, different modes of engagement (online/other), more focus on subjects where female academics predominate e.g. pharmacy, focus on different priorities, women-only workshops, provision of childcare.

Box 1. Programme intended outcomes for individual Syrian academics

a) Enhanced basic academic/professional skills,
b) Enhanced knowledge and understanding of international standards in research and teaching,
c) Enhanced language skills, aiding connection, as well as access to scientific papers and journals,
d) Experience and understanding of alternative HE models and management structures
e) Enhanced professional connections and opportunities
f) Experience of designing quality research proposals to support future funding applications,
g) Experience of implementing rigorous, evidence-based research and delivery of quality outputs,
h) Contribution to addressing key challenges facing Syria through research outputs,
i) Publication/presentation opportunities in respected peer-reviewed journals, conferences etc.
j) Professional connections/networks to mitigate international isolation, and draw on, post return.

4.1.2 Outcomes at the individual level

The programme aims to enhance skills, knowledge and Syrian academics' professional opportunities and capacities as detailed in the box below.

Skills and knowledge development

It is a significant achievement that there are 55 active EAP participants and evidence of improved English language skills. In evaluation interviews participants reported some progress in their English language. Increased confidence was one of the most frequently cited aspects of change. 24 out of 28 tutors who fed back on their participants' progress at the

end of 2017 reported evidence of progress particularly in relation to fluency in conversation, confidence and knowledge of grammar. One reported progress in relation to new abilities e.g. able to tailor a personal statement form (for an academic post) and complete a job application. Participants have been supported to undertake an APTIS test at two points in the programme in September 2016 and February 2018. Only nine participants have taken the test on both occasions and of those nine the overall score of four participants' score remained static, one reduced their score, and four improved their results.

Participants' most frequent concern in EAP relates to their pace of progress and thus what the improvement can achieve for them. While feedback is consistently positive in relation to workshops and tutors, a consistent parallel finding is also significant frustration among participants with the pace of their development. An EAP tutor noted that it would be expected that participants experience at least 100 hours face-to-face teaching time to progress from one level to another, so it is unlikely that most participants will move up a level. There are exceptions among people who are extremely good language learners, motivated and have time for individual learning but these are few. Only two participants have progressed from level 1 to 2 though a handful have had their level revised from the initial assessment when they attended their first workshop. In Levels 1 and 2 many participants are aware they are unlikely to reach a level where they can undertake research with UK counterparts if strong English language levels are required. Participants recommended strongly that they have more intensive lessons e.g. a three months immersive course to progress more quickly. This is an area that could be useful to consider at least for those showing strong commitment and potential to benefit from an intensive EAP process.

In relation to academic skills development, participants noted some key areas of development notably in teaching, research-related skills and proposal development. These are areas workshops have addressed. There is particular interest among participants in the practical sessions to develop research proposals which can be put to donors. The participants have found webinars extremely valuable too these have also had quite a practical focus on teaching and developing academic profiles. Achievements through ASD workshops have been bolstered for some participants by their participation in the Strand 4 research on the Status of Syrian Higher Education which provided professional development opportunities too in the areas of qualitative research skills, data analysis and team skills.

The areas that are not so developed at this point and are leading to some frustration amongst participants is the lack of discipline-specific skills development and the lack of opportunities to undertake research. Most input so far has been either in general skills, which are useful, or in social science methods rather than the areas of natural science which are the subject area of many participants.

Opportunities and connections

Participants reported that a significant outcome for them has been the establishment of networks among themselves which provide support and information. Participants have evolved their own networks, supported by the relatively regular meetings in workshops. They have established a Whatsapp group for all Syrian participants and participants have shared information with each other e.g. about job opportunities.

The programme has helped some participants regain their professional identity, which has significant impact on their motivation, dignity and sense of self-worth. A significant outcome for some individuals participating the programme is that it has supported their re-immersion in academic life and helped them regain their professional identity as academics. Refugees lose much in material terms when they leave their home and community, but also many less tangible elements; one of these can be their professional identity. The Cara Syria Programme has helped participants regain this which is a key part of supporting the dignity of

a refugee. Participants describe the experience in Box two. An important factor commented on by some participants is the challenge to engage in research when they are so uncertain about their future**.** In the words of one participant "Research is not a kind of normal work – it needs stability, calm in mind. For research you need to feel well, stable". The support from participation in the programme to people's sense of well-being is more intangible than skills development, but clearly important. It also highlights the programme's limitations for participants faced with very few opportunities to make a living.

Box two: Regaining hope and dignity - Three participants' experience

- *When I came to Turkey in 2015 I was discouraged and frustrated. I didn't find work. I was outside the academic environment. I love academic work. When I started to meet with Cara and other colleagues it was very good for me. It encouraged me to work, to write something. To feel about myself as an academic. I had lost that feeling.*
- *This programme was very beneficial for us, after the circumstances we have been living after all routes were cut off around us, the roads towards research were closed in our faces. This programme is like a candle that is a light in a very dark tunnel.*
- *I feel I am an academic again. I lost this sense for some years. I wasn't involved in any programme for academics. This was very good. It is a big opportunity to meet people in this environment; education and so on. It gave me really a good chance e.g. I have networks with other colleagues in UK and even in Syria. It was a kind of virtual university, atmosphere to work. It gives me an opportunity to refresh my English. I used to write in English, but it gives me an opportunity. To meet other Syrian academics was important- to discuss together, to know the opinion of other colleagues.*

The programme has provided some but limited opportunities to participate in research and academic life so far. Opportunities have included the chance to participate in the Cambridge-led Higher Education in Syria research in which up to 21 participants took part in at least a part of it. However, in evaluation interviews participants did not tend to consider it participation in research maybe due to the time lag since the workshops or because it was outside their field, albeit a useful experience for them personally and an output in which they see the potential value. This may be something to consider in any future Strand 4 research regarding the balance in individual skills development and contributions to Syrian Higher Education. In addition, two participants were sponsored to present at conferences (and one of these also met with colleagues in Edinburgh and Reading to discuss research proposal outline from a group of participants), one participant undertook a research incubation visit to the UK and one was supported to take up pre-sessional at University College London. More visits are in the pipeline for 2018. The Strand 5. Cara Small Grants stream was launched in April 2018 and this round focuses on existing participants in the programme.

Support to link with UK academics and other professional opportunities are beneficial but need to be followed through for full benefit. There has only been one full research incubation visit so far in the programme. This was undertaken in 2017 by a Jordanian female participant with limited success. The visit to Manchester University considered psycho-social support methods for parents and children to deal with trauma and violence resulting from their refugee experience. The 35-day visit was motivating and highly valued by the participant for its facilitation of her access to academia including discussions with colleagues, library facilities but it did not lead to any further research due to a lack of funding and limited further

contact. Also, because the participant is based in Jordan she has no contact with the rest of the programme, so the visit has been somewhat of an isolated input to her situation, albeit one that was appreciated.

4.1.3 Outcomes at the system level

There has been some, but limited progress at the system level at this stage with two research reports and establishment of networks being the key outputs to date. Box three details the planned outcomes at the system level i.e. beyond benefits to an individual but of (potential) benefit to the Syrian Higher Education or other systems such as the humanitarian sector in its support to areas affected by conflict. The programme has produced research relevant to Syria, at this point in two draft reports on Syrian Higher Education which are directly relevant to Syrian development. The two draft reports were produced through an innovative process led by a Cambridge University team with twenty-one Syrian participants contributing at different stages as co-researchers. The programme has not generated other research at this stage, but ideas being worked on by participants which the programme may support through incubation visits or grants include research on agricultural economic options for Syria in the future; use of debris for rebuilding; and, e-learning for Syrians affected by disrupted education.

Box three: Programme intended system level outcomes

a) Strengthened Syrian academic capital within selected disciplines, particularly social sciences
b) enhanced research capacities for use by Syrian institutions in the future
c) production of innovative rigorous quality research of direct relevance to Syria.
d) establishment of international research networks and their potential to support the role of research in teaching.
e) Effective dissemination plans of research findings to inform policy and strategic planning amongst those involved in post-war reconstruction.
f) Strengthened regional ties that can support the future reconstruction of Syria's higher education and research sectors.

A significant system level contribution of the programme is its role in helping to break down divisions. Participants noted the benefit for themselves of the network that has evolved between them and commented on the benefit of that to breaking down barriers. They credit the importance of the Cara role in facilitating the process. In the words of one participants, "*This is a good chance to bring together Syrian academics. When we try to organise meet together ourselves there are some problems. Politics. [There are] divisions in our heads put there by the regime based on where people are from, religion and other things. We get suspicious if Syrians organise something. But when it's an external organisation organising it is better. Maybe some of these contacts will continue.*" This network has potential to be a valuable contribution to the future academia of Syria if and when peace and reconstruction begin. Furthermore, the skills and professional development individuals' gain through the programme will provide academic capital to any new Higher Education structure.

4.2 Programme strategies - strengths and challenges

This section considers the strengths and challenges of each of the individual programme strategies or strands in turn.

4.2.1 English for Academic Purposes

Strengths

The key factors which have contributed to the EAP's achievements is the harnessing of the university resources for English language training for academic purposes, previously untapped by Cara. Cara quickly linked to key partners such as BALEAP, Reading International Study and Language Institute and other key individuals in universities motivated and committed to the overall programme aims. The EAP steering group made up of representatives from Edinburgh, Reading and Sheffield have provided significant leadership of the EAP strand of the programme including through their recruitment of a highly committed and qualified group of volunteer EAP tutors (currently 55) providing weekly 1-hour online tutorials. The inclusion in the steering group of an experienced online learning expert with technical skills to support the programme has benefitted the EAP component and also the wider programme significantly e.g. through the portal development as well as induction and technical support to tutors and participants in online tutoring.

Box five: EAP Tutors commitment and motivation

- *It's the most enjoyable time of my teaching week!*
- *I enjoy being able to use my skills and experience for a genuinely positive purpose. The participants are good fun, generous and motivated, and the days spent working with them were a real pleasure.*
- *[I appreciate]... that I have the opportunity to help somebody who really needs it and to give these people a sense of normality and continuity.*
- *I wasn't quite sure when I started this, how relevant and helpful it would be for Syrian academics, but having worked with [my participant] for 7 weeks now, I realise that it will benefit both the him as an individual and the future development of Syria.*
- *I am sure that, in many ways, I have learned more from my involvement in the programme than my participant.....I've learned what courage and resilience look like, I've seen how someone can go through unimaginable (to us) experiences and maintain their optimism and determination, and even their sense of humour. My involvement in the programme has thus also taught me to put the minor irritations of daily working life into perspective.'*
- *One of the most rewarding things I've been involved with...*

The online tutoring is working well. Six key factors have contributed to the success of online tutoring which were identified by both tutors and participants. These are a) time input to establish a good relationship between tutor and participant based on mutual respect for each other's professional standing and acknowledgement of the voluntary nature of the relationship. This has also meant, for tutors, negotiating some sensitive territory at times in deciding what subjects to raise and what to avoid; b) flexibility and patience due to disruptions caused by both technology and life situations; c) hard work by tutors in particular to ensure that content is relevant with many of them customising content to their participants and seeking out relevant subject material though this is still a challenge; d) adapting methods to online tutoring something that is new to many of the tutors; and, e) innovation at the programme level e.g. in recording and sending recordings of each lesson to participants as a resource they can use, or for individual tutors to use to support online tutoring. Recordings have the potential to be used by Level coordinators to monitor consistency but this is not currently done. Finally, the commitment of tutors is clearly evident and has contributed to the success. Many reported feeling they gain considerable value from the relationship and opportunity to contribute to the programme and also that they gained both personally but also professionally in developing online tutoring skills (see box five). A full list of "Tips from Tutors" based on their feedback for this evaluation is included in Annex 7.

Support and coordination structures are a key strength of the EAP strand. The support processes for tutors which include a one-hour induction for each tutor by Level 1 coordinator on how to use the technology, the

preparation of easy- to- use tools such as the register and also the ongoing contact between the coordinators of each level and online tutors have been positive and appreciated.

Challenges

Three factors that have limited the scale of achievements to date, relate to time, technology and the range of abilities in each group.

Time constrains and frustrates tutors, participants and coordinators. Online tutors are fitting the time for tutorials into very busy schedules and it is clear that many are investing considerable time into the preparation and follow-up of the one-hour tutorials. So, whilst the commitment requested from tutors is something that is realistic (a one-hour, weekly tutorial for one year), it is still a stretch for many in full time employment. Participants vary according to the time they can input to EAP with some putting in 2-4 hours per day in individual study and others having minimal time for any individual work in between tutorials due to other demands.

Time is a major issue also for coordinators and suggests the current structure may be at capacity. Most of the areas for development are ones they have identified themselves and remain unresolved due to lack of time. This suggests that 20 tutors for1-2 coordinators per Level is probably the maximum that can be managed and the steering group or at least tutor-support capacity needs to be expanded if more participants join.

The experience of using technology has been mixed in the EAP sessions. On the one hand, recording of sessions and Adobe meeting rooms have been highly effective when they work; when they do not they have caused extreme frustration and disruption to tutorials. Tutors and participants report using alternatives such as Skype and Whatsapp instead. It is estimated that 60% of the lessons are recorded which maybe reflects the level of use of Adobe. Many tutors recommended further support e.g. through webinars, meetings, more on hands tuition to help them make fuller use of its functionality.

Finding suitable materials has challenged a significant proportion of tutors. The agreed textbook used in Level 1 and Level 2 is Empower, but many tutors found this inappropriate given the age and cultural profile of the participants. They reported that their participants did not use the booklet and instead wanted more subject-focused material though Cara reports also that participants requested additional copies for lower levels than they are set at. Subject specific content to use for reading and listening exercises is a particular challenge for the tutors to find given the range of subject areas the participants cover and their preference for a focus on their own subject - Ted Talks only go so far for some disciplines! Tutors also recommend developing occasional approaches such as group activities online. They recommend discussions and debates to enable participants to interact with each other and to have activities which are different from an individually focused learning activity. Webinars to some extent provide some of this, but they are more information provision to participants than opportunities to exercise communication skills. This is an area highlighted as particularly important for participants with no opportunity to practise English during the week outside of their tutorial.

Within workshops, the range of participants language levels can be challenging to ensure that all participate and benefit. Developing the workshops has been at times, in the words of an EAP tutor "on the hoof" over the past 18 months given the nature of the evolving programme. While this has enabled workshops to be responsive to needs reported by participants and to deal with the uncertainty of

participation in each workshop which fluctuates, it has drawbacks in building links with the ASD and online-tutorial content.

Monitoring progress in skills development is a challenge. The programme has developed some innovative approaches to assessment including formal testing, online and written testing administered by University of Edinburgh and refinement of assessment of participants in workshops. Participants have personal learning plans and some tutors have evolved methods to assess and share observations of progress with their individual participants. But all these methods also have their drawbacks i.e. personal learning plans are very loosely worded e.g. to improve spoken English without more specific goals so limits their use as a standard to assess against; formal, external processes such as APTIS do not always pick up on changes particular to individual student needs and academic English in particular; the Edinburgh process is rapid and rough (in their own words); tutor assessments may be partial and are by definition individual so difficult to aggregate to see overall cohort progress.

There is no consistent and systematic process to assess participants' individual progress in English language skills, but there is strong experience in assessment methodology drawn from the initial needs and prioritisation assessment processes. There is considerable expertise and potential to develop a customised system for the programme. Interviews with tutors suggest the development of some more customised approach that combines qualitative and quantitative aspects including tutor and participant own observations of change over a period of time as well as formal external assessment such as APTIS or IELTS[9], which are collected at regular points of time to monitor progress and change.

There is potential to stream line EAP coordination process. As the programme has evolved some duplication in EAP coordination mechanisms has also evolved with coordinators checking in and requesting updates from tutors in their groups on information that is also held in the tools held centrally e.g. the registers and personal learning plan updates. This could be streamlined.

4.2.2 Academic Skills Development

Strengths

Effective assessment, a committed and respectful approach, as well as flexibility and innovation have been key to enabling results in ASD to date. The effective, rapid assessment process carried out in the first ASD workshop has guided the content of subsequent activities in workshops and webinars and so led to results in line with those planned. The relationship between tutors and participants has been characterised by respect, notable in reports and other outputs from the UK academics which emphasise the difference in academic backgrounds and levels of seniority of some participants. The programme has been flexible in its approach which has enabled activities such as the webinars to evolve. These regularly attract 9-19 participants with an average of just over 14 and are available for download later (numbers for downloads are not available). The provision of webinars has also opened up contributions from a much larger number of UK academics than are able (or that the programme can afford) to participate in workshops. Webinar facilitators are a growing resource and have the potential beyond the provision of webinars e.g. as sources of or links to research mentors and research incubation visit hosts. The ASD approach has also evolved to become more integrated with EAP e.g. for EAP tutors to contribute in workshops which enables language skills to be more directly

[9] IELTS- The International English Language Testing System is a certificate is recognised as evidence of proficiency in English and used by more than 10,000 education and training providers worldwide.

linked to academic skills, as well as providing an opportunity to ensure workshop content is fully comprehended, particularly important in discussion of complex concepts and methods that are unfamiliar to participants and not used previously by them in their discipline area.

Challenges

Challenges to ASD progress relate to lack of explicit and shared structure and plans, difficulties to monitor progress and limited discipline-specific focus.

The content of workshops to date has been relevant to priorities identified by participants but there has been limited forward notice to participants of the planned content and no articulation of anticipated results nor systematic checking of these. Like other parts of the programme, ASD is challenged by the fluctuating participation of participants and their wide range of capacities, interests and disciplines. This has contributed to the fluid, flexible approach in the programme development, which has been of benefit in providing content quickly and responsively, but the flipside is the lack of structure and sense of progress at least for some participants. Evaluation interviews indicated this frustration is growing with time, possibly exacerbated by the extended conflict and constantly fluctuating conditions for life in Turkey. Participants and programme partners reported an interest to have a clearer sense of the overall programme structure possibly divided into semesters to enable a sense of direction and progress.

There is not an explicit process to monitor progress in ASD. Assessing progress in academic skills is even more difficult than in EAP. Challenges to the monitoring process include the lack of any pre-existing standard tool from which to build a customised a process for the Cara programme, no formal assessment process within the programme following the initial identification of needs and priorities, also that there is less continuity between participants and ASD tutors (there is no individual relationship as there is with EAP tutors) and also no regular divisions between participants according to either levels or main areas of interest (compared to the three levels of EAP participants). Furthermore, ASD tutors report that it is not common practice to asses practice in academic skills. However, the lack of recognition or a sense of progress for some participants is extremely frustrating "I *want to know if I have been improving. I don't know how to judge progress, I don't see the end of the tunnel or where this will lead".* At least three long-term participants commented on this problem noting that some participants will leave if they do not see or understand better their progress and the programme plan in terms of what it means for individuals at all levels of EAP. The current round of small grants for research will provide some mechanism to assess the current status of the group as a whole in developing proposals and undertaking research, which will be helpful and should be monitored to produce a baseline.

The key gap to date in ASD provision has been in discipline-specific activities. The provision of discipline-specific content is challenged by the range of subjects that participants are specialised in, but some clusters are emerging e.g. agriculture and economics which may enable a matching of ASD tutors to them. This is beginning to be addressed with efforts to bring out discipline-focused tutors to workshops (though so far not successful) and focused webinars such as in agriculture.

Participants had some criticism of translations of webinar. The provision of translation is a positive factor in webinars to ensure access to content by all (though some of the higher level English language speakers would prefer English only because they use the webinars as a language practice occasion too) but evaluation interviews heard from a small number of participants that translation is sometimes wrong and often too quiet. This should be checked by Cara. The inclusion of EAP tutors in ASD sessions in workshops was a valuable contribution to ensure, among other benefits, learning and shared understanding of

comprehension among participants. This is a helpful support for ASD tutors when facilitating workshops via translation and dealing with complex concepts outside of participants' own discipline e.g. qualitative research methodologies.

4.2.3 Research incubation visits (RIV)

Strengths

Customised approaches by Cara are a key factor to successful research incubation visits. A strength of the research visits that have occurred have been the match for Syrian participants with relevant UK counterparts. This is the result of intense levels of customised support by Cara to ensure participants and tutors are well matched. Participants who are self-motivated and proactive as well as having high standard English language skills are able to take advantage of the potential of incubation visits be that in conferences or in visits, but only a limited number are so far set up.

Challenges

Logistical challenges present obstacles to the programme. Two participants were refused UK visas. One participant was expelled from Turkey following the coup. The successful RIV in 2017 was beset by delays which resulted in the participant having to travel within 24 hours of securing a visa and so limited the potential preparation time with Manchester counterparts to set up the schedule for the visit. Hard work and flexibility by all concerned ensured that a good schedule was developed which benefited the participant, but this is obviously not an ideal process. Identifying suitable hosts for RIVs has proven difficult given that participants do not always have a clear research focus and also there is a need for subject knowledge to identify suitable mentors.

The process for selection of participants for research incubation is unclear including how participants are supported to access it. It seems that all Level 3 participants who are a) proactive b) articulate a research interest and c) identify potential mentors and d) have a high standard of Level 3 English can be taken forward. However, given the size of Level 1 and 2 cohorts plus the fact that many Syrian academics were more involved in teaching than research in Syria there may be need for more support in accessing these opportunities. A clearer articulation of the research incubation process to achieve participation on it, along with any criteria, e.g. access (or not) to EAP level 1 and 2 participants, would be helpful to share explicitly with participants and partners, particularly given the Phase 2 resource constraints which has provision for only 10 RIVs and growing number of participants[10].

4.2.4 Independently commissioned research

Strengths

A team with relevant expertise was identified to lead the research on Higher Education in Syria. The team has put in considerable time over and above that contracted, which has been a benefit and might not have been possible from all academic partners. The combination of the Cambridge team with qualitative and

[10] Funds available are for a budgeted 10 RIVs in phase 2. An option being explored by the programme is to encourage universities to cover costs to enable a larger number of RIVs.

educational research expertise and Syrian academics with direct knowledge of Higher Education in Syria pre- and post-2011, and their networks to former colleagues and students inside Syria provided a possibly unique combination of expertise and networks to undertake the research.

The process was one of mutual learning. The Cambridge team provided high quality intensive workshops which participants valued highly and led to clear outputs in skills developed and data collection tools. The use of qualitative methods and teamwork in data analysis was new to participants. They also valued learning more about the situation of Higher Education in parts of the country with which they were not all familiar. The Cambridge team reported learning a lot from this process also, ranging from undertaking a project of this nature to an appreciation of academic freedom. The focus by the team on respect, transparency and provision of choices, e.g. about names being in reports or not, helped to build an initial strong team spirit.

The research is relevant. The subject matter of the research was one that the participants felt was highly relevant and does relate to current humanitarian discourse in relation to Syria. This remains the case.

Cara was flexible and responsive to opportunities. Recognising the potential benefits of participation for Syrian participants and their interest, Cara successfully raised additional funds to allow up to 21 participants to take part in the workshops and research, as opposed to the original plan of 5.

Challenges

The original plan was over-ambitious in terms what could be achieved with limited resources in a short time. The research has dual aims of capacity building and production of robust research drawing data from a complex context. The process for Syrian participants to review the draft reports was constrained by it not being translated, its length, the time available and limited opportunity for shared discussion on issues emerging. A third workshop bringing together Syrian co-researchers and the Cambridge team would have been beneficial to discuss emerging findings and/or the draft report. In terms of innovative research such as this, the inclusion of milestones to review progress and adjust the timetable accordingly and realistically would have been beneficial. Resourcing issues are discussed further in the value for money section of this report.

The research process encountered many problems in terms of data collection and analysis due to, in part to Syrian co-researchers' lack of familiarity with the tools and the Cambridge team's limited previous experience of the context. The interview tools designed collectively were adapted by some -co-researchers into a written interview questionnaire, which did not always gather reliable and full data. The separation of analysis between pre and post 2011 posed more challenges to data analysis than was originally envisaged (because research informants did not clearly distinguish their analysis according to these time periods). The limited resources for translation both for translation of co-researchers data (assumed initially by Cara would be undertaken by the research team which was not the case) and analysis (as well as later for drafts of the report) also meant that this took time and was not carried out under the supervision of the research team.

Gender issues were not considered in depth. No female Syrian participants were part of the Syrian researchers, which may have limited the research access to female informants and gendered findings. Female interviewees were far fewer in number than male interviewees. On the other hand, the Cambridge team was entirely female so provided some balance.

Next steps are unclear regarding linking the research to policy. There is strong enthusiasm among all involved in the project (from Cambridge, Cara and Syrian participants) to ensure the research has influence. There have been some discussions with British Council and planned launched events for 2018 have been

postponed. Cara reports it does have a plan with events planned for 2018 (though currently postponed due to delays) and intended stakeholders of UNECO, UNHCR, UNICEF, World Bank and key government agencies. This is not well known across those involved in the research including across Cara so greater participation in its formulation and communication of it would be good. A documented plan would include strategies for how to reach and engage the stakeholders with the research message, details of products such as policy briefs, films, blogs and other outputs, identify key events and opportunities for influencing e.g. due to policy formulation opportunities in relation to Syria or more generally Higher Education support in conflict, along with the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the Cara research in its promotion.

The timeframe is now tight too for future research. Phase two budget includes provision for additional, new Cara independently commissioned research. The timeframe for this is now tight particularly in the light of the experience of the earlier phase. This may need to be reviewed.

4.2.5 Syria Research Fellowships Programme

The Fellowship programme was announced in April 2018. Adjustments to the programme design have been made which are relevant. The key change is for the first round of proposals to be for small grants restricted to Syrian academics, ideally from teams, which in turn enables more participants. At the time of the evaluation, participants were submitting proposals with evidence that participants from all EAP Levels were contributing, so ensuring benefits from this area of work are accessible across EAP levels.

Given the experience of earlier programmes by Cara for Iraqi academics where larger grants took longer than the originally envisaged five months to be complete to more than one year, though for sometimes complex projects but the timeframe for this strand may benefit from being revisited[11].

4.2.6 Portal

The portal is a highly valuable resource for the programme and has evolved through a learning approach. But it is not used to its full potential at present. The portal provides a space to store and link to useful materials including the programme's webinars and other resources for EAP and ASD learning. There is space for each EAP tutors to share resources, though this is not currently used. It was originally envisaged that the portal might become a space for interaction between participants and possibly for tutor interaction also, but other existing channels have proven more effective. To engage with participants the programme team has rightly adapted to take communication to channels already used by participants (Whatsapp groups). Tutor groups have set up their own systems, usually email groups for communication.

The portal is a valuable resource but could be used to a greater extent. Some steps that could support this are by:

i. more active promotion by all partners
ii. adding new materials more regularly and, in particular, including more interactive content so it becomes a more active learning location;
iii. including a calendar of upcoming events e.g. webinars and the subject;
iv. improving navigation tools for current content e.g. listing of webinars.
v. promoting new content in a regular e-alert to registrants.

[11] Hanley, T., Cara Iraq Research Fellowship Programme Mid-term Review p17

4.3 Conclusions

The programme is achieving significant results in a short time, particularly in the areas of skills development, but also in terms of less tangible benefits of academic identity, networks and sense of self-worth. The five strands and cross-cutting resources all contribute to the achievement of the programme aims at the individual level. They have evolved to become more inter-woven and there is scope for greater integration, e.g. in linking the commissioned research capacity-building element more closely to the ASD strand and in developing shared objectives or means of assessing progress in participant professional development.

Use of communication technology is proving highly effective as a means to widen access and ensuring more continuous contact with participants, though it is not without its hitches for quite a number of participants leading to frustrations for some EAP tutors.

There is a tension between the pace of progress that is feasible in some of the skills development areas and participants' ambition and indeed need for results driven to a large extent by the urgency of participants' requirement to find ways to make a living. This drives participants' interest in formal assessment and certification also, valuable assets for a refugee in a challenging and changing environment. There is also tension in allowing open access to an increasing number of participants rather than focusing resources on a more limited number of participants, one that participants acknowledge and appreciate is difficult given the need among their counterparts.

Considering the participation figures, the target of 120 participants looks high. If participation means active involvement in one or more strand on a consistent basis e.g. in workshops, EAP tutorials and research opportunities, the numbers are very ambitious. There are also issues of the capacity of the programme to cope with 120 participants. This is highlighted by the caps placed on participation levels in activities such as RIVs and workshops, (unless additional funding is sourced) which are now nearly full even though participation levels in the programme are still at under the half-way mark of the target (of 120). To reach the participation targets then levels of participation will have to be limited and therefore criteria for participants' inclusion in different activities be more explicit.

There is scope to develop a more structured approach for the remainder of this phase of the programme, and any future phases, which articulates intended results at the individual and programme levels.

The most significant constraint on the programme is resources of time and money. This is to some extent exacerbated by the voluntary nature of partners' contributions, though it is also a key driver in terms of the commitment, energy and creativity that the programme is drawing on and benefitting from. However, overambitious planning features consistently as a cause of targets being unmet. This is partly (but not only) due to under-resourcing of core capacity. The following section considers resources in more detail.

A number of areas emerge as priorities for development to support the effectiveness of the programmes. These include the potential to:

a) Develop a more structured approach to future stages of the programme to articulate to participants expected content and outcome (discussed further in conclusions Section 7);
b) Develop processes to monitor systematically individual progress in skills development in English and academic skills;
c) Address gender imbalance in programme participation levels;
d) Develop and source funding for a research communication and advocacy plan based on the Higher Education research and communication of other planned research outputs;

e) Develop methods to support sharing of expertise and resources between EAP tutors;
f) Increase activities to support the integration and coherence of programme strands such as more information to EAP tutors on programme strands, sharing of EAP and ASD workshop contents with tutors in advance so they can complement these subjects in their tutorials;
g) Increase structured learning within and between programme strands, e.g. increase EAP online tutors understanding of RIVs and research grants to help them use these as opportunities to support their participants' EAP development and shape content accordingly;
h) Link partners involved in independently commissioned research processes (Strand 4) more actively to ASD coordinators;
i) Review targets for participation and match to capacity and resources (including time, as well as people and funds).

5. Value for money

The evaluation used the 4E framework to consider value for money of the Cara Syria programme. It looked at:

- Economy - allocation of resources, including time and money, resources leveraged and practices to reduce costs
- Efficiency - implementation rate against plan
- Effectiveness - in relation to costs e.g. by participants, output or outcome, and
- Equity -resources allocated and performance of the programme to ensure equitable access and benefits for all qualifying Syrian academics regardless of gender or other characteristics, which include disability, religious affiliation and political persuasion.

Each of these four dimensions is considered in turn below.

A challenge faced in the evaluation of value for money relates to the available data. This had two aspects a) first, only budget data was available for phase 2, so this has been used in combination with actual expenditure for phase 1; b) second, the available programme financial reporting is organised around donor grants and reports without an overall annual or other programme budget which is unusual.

Findings

5.1 Economy

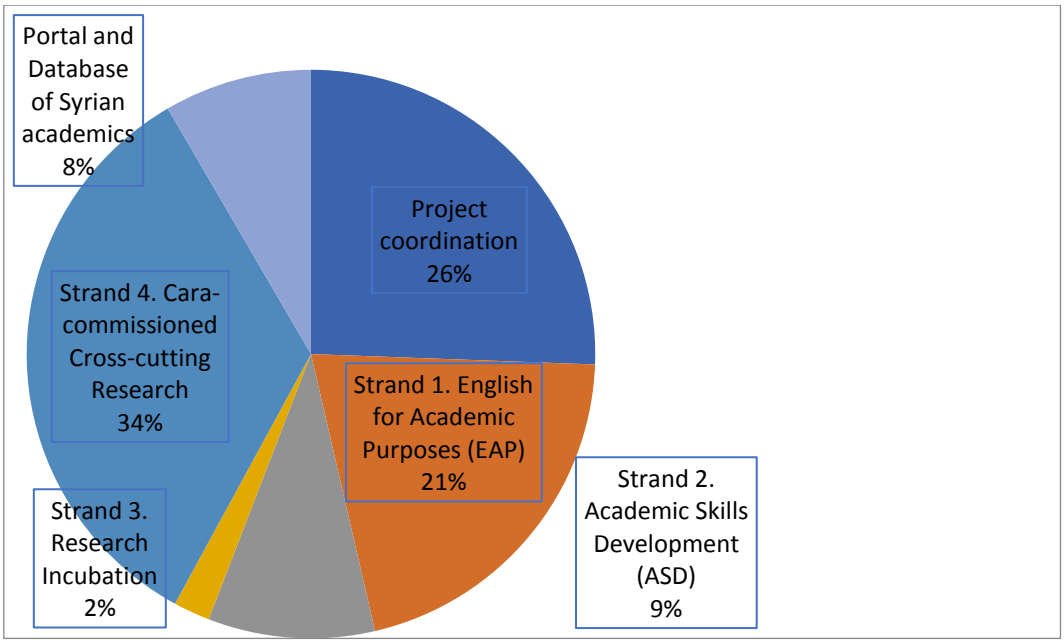
A total of **UK£922,869 was raised for the Cara Syria programme Phases 1 and 2 and the allocation of these resources is summarised in the diagrams below.** These charts only include funds managed by Cara, not any direct contributions by universities or an estimate of the value of time contributions of the many volunteers involved among partners. The analysis highlights some notable points.

a) **Cara implementation costs (including coordination and any contributions to core costs) have been well under 30% throughout the programme which is low for a programme of this nature, which has no major capital expenditure, but is time intensive.** 72% of all financial resources received by Cara go to direct programme costs intended to benefit participants directly. However, it should be borne in mind that phase one running costs considerably under-estimated the actual costs (time) for setting up and developing a programme of this nature, as well as time input before October 2017; the time spent on the programme by the Programme Adviser far outweighs the resource allocation. In addition, the phase two budget includes two additional staff who have still not been recruited as phase two enters its eighth month. Thus while the analysis gives a clear indication of the lean resourcing of coordination costs, it is evidence of a trend rather than accurate reflection of reality of resources expended. A comparison with the Iraq programme finds the Syria programme budget allocates a significantly lower proportion of the budget to programme coordination; a mid-term review found it had indirect costs of between 40-50% and, even with capacity resourced at this level, it was assessed as fully stretched[12].

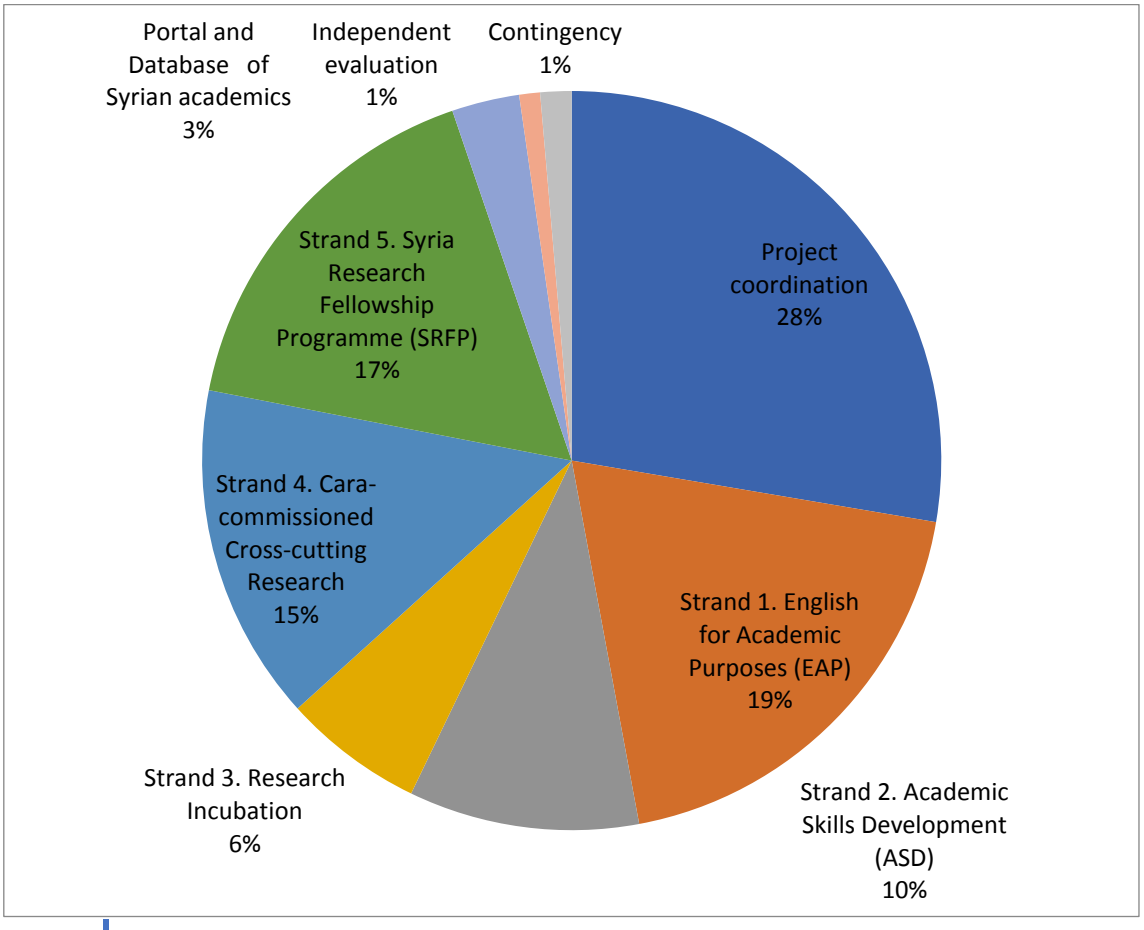
[12] Hanley, T., Cara Iraq Fellowship Programme- Mid-term review (2011) p.v

Figure 1 . Phase one allocation of resources

Phase 1



Phase 1 and 2 combined



b) **Great care has been taken to ensure resources are optimised, demonstrating good practice in terms of economy which is reflected in low costs for individual activities.** Cara pays careful attention to expenditure on items such as flights and hotel accommodation. Activity costs such as workshops and UK research incubation grants/visits are low, averaging UK£20k and UK£5k respectively. Moving to a model that combines EAP and ASD workshops has also had some cost savings e.g. in participant flights. However, the budgets may now need to be reviewed because participation rates are rising. For example, workshops are budgeted on an assumption of 40 participants, but the most recent workshop in April 2018 had over 50 participants. This may also mean there will be more people eligible for activities such as research incubation visits than resources allow, so clear criteria for selection will be needed unless more resources are available.

c) **The allocation to the independently commissioned cross-cutting research (Strand 4) is high particularly in phase 1.** In phase 1 the Strand 4 research absorbed 34% of all programme income, but this drops to only 15% when the two phases budget is considered. The phase 2 costs include a budget for new research not yet commissioned. In phase 1, additional funds were raised to enable more Syrian participation in the workshops and research process, which is welcome though the number of 20 (or 21 as took part in one workshop) is still considerably lower participation rate (and thus higher cost per participant) than in other components such as EAP and the workshops. This puts increased pressure on the research to produce significant outcomes (i.e. change in terms of both participant skills, but also and particularly impact on higher education policy for Syria and/or places affected by conflict, not just the production of reports). Impact of the research, beyond the individual participant skills development, will depend on its active communication. Cara plans to raise funds for this separately but has not secured these yet and the evaluation did not have access to a communication plan which though reported is not well known by partners in the research inside and outside of Cara. That said, the ideas among Cara and partners, i.e.Syrian participants and Cambridge team are plentiful and innovative. These include events in Turkey, films and other outputs to communicate findings, linkage to advocacy initiatives such as the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack and potential links via the Cara partners who funded the research and their networks (OSF and British Council).

d) Considerable resources have been leveraged by the programme, but are not represented by the figures used here. Cara estimates resources leveraged to date equal approximately UK£300,000 provided mainly in voluntary time contributions in Strands 1, 2 and 4 as well as some contributions by universities to research incubation visits. In most cases, time contributed by partners is over and above their routine work. Some individuals have some of the Cara role incorporated into their jobs, e.g. EAP Level 1 coordinator has hours allocated by the university to the Cara role, EAP Level 3 coordinator has been able to integrate the Cara work into the department's strategic plan and an ASD coordinator is using time allocated to research to support the Cara role, though this places a pressure to produce research outputs. However, while the universities agree to staff undertaking the Cara roles, it tends to be without any reduction in other responsibilities of their already full-time jobs, though in the case of Edinburgh at least there is some financial input to the cost of workshop participation e.g. travel costs. Edinburgh has also provided some coordination support from its administration. Coordination roles can be significant time commitments involving, in EAP for instance, recruitment, support and communication with approximately 20 tutors, preparation of workshops and participation in regular online steering group meetings every week. Other significant contributions are from the currently 55 volunteer EAP tutors delivering at least a one-hour online tutorial each week and associated preparation and follow up.

Universities have provided some financial input to research incubation visits, though these are few and at an early stage in the programme.

5.2 Efficiency

Analysis of the implementation of the programme activities show considerable activities achieved in a very short period of time, but also some significant delays in relation to plans. The pace of implementation is even more remarkable considering that key partners' development of workshops, setting up and providing online tutoring and other activities are all largely volunteers contributing their time, usually in addition to their main workload. In addition, the individuals and institutions involved in the programmes are new teams who have not worked together before. Indeed, one of the very positive developments noted by the EAP coordinators has been the excellent cooperation with academic skills colleagues and the benefits of their increasingly close collaborative approach to this programme, which is not always a feature of EAP and ASD university departments, which can see some professional tension over territory.

Delays to a large extent have been due to over-ambitious planning. The most obvious case of this is the independently commissioned research exacerbated by delays caused to some extnt to delays in securing funding the strand . The Strand 4 research has a capacity-building aim as well as one to produce robust research of relevance to the future reconstruction of Syrian higher education. It has been undertaken in an extremely volatile and sensitive area (geographically and in terms of subject matter) working with people who have not worked together on research before and, in the case of the Syrian participant on a subject outside their professional discipline and using new methods. The initial plan reported by Cambridge University for the research to be complete in three months has been far exceeded with the second report still being finalised more than ten months after initial work began. The fact that there is a plan for further research in the phase 2 budget, which should be complete by March 2019, is also a concern given the time required for the Higher Education research undertaken. A number of specific items were under-budgeted such as translation and others planned (but as yet unrealised) separate fundraising plans e.g. communication costs.

A challenge to efficient planning and use of time were the delays caused by ensuring that Cara could fulfil all the grants' legal requirements without risk[13]. Delays and uncertainty over funding availability particularly impacted planning in the pilot phase and early stage of phase 2. These impacted also on recruitment of staff budgeted for in phase 2 which meant there was an inefficient use of the Programme Adviser's time undertaking basic administrative tasks in addition to the more strategic roles in relationship management, programme coordination and development. It also delayed the start up of some activities e.g. Strand 3 Research incubation visits preparation getting underway.

Delays and under-resourcing has negative impact. Despite the programme coordinator's efficiency and exceptional high levels of productivity there has inevitably been some cost to this under-resourcing (in both phases). Areas which would have benefitted from more resourcing include a) communication within the programme with participants and between partners and externally to promote it; and, b) systematic management of monitoring data.

5.3 Cost-Effectiveness

A common way to consider cost-effectiveness is through analysis of cost per output or outcome. It is too early to assess outcomes at this point, e.g. changes for either individuals or at the system level, so the

[13] There were lengthy discussions to ensure Cara could fulfil the OFAC regulations which regulate this OSF grant.

evaluation has considered costs per participant and also costs of certain activities, e.g. workshops. These are also hard to assess due to the fluctuating numbers, however some clear messages can be extracted from existing data.

Cost-effectiveness varies significantly according to the number of participants in the programme. The evaluation made calculations based on assumptions of a) 30 participants - the average number of workshop participants in phase 1; b) 50 participants, which relates more closely to the number of EAP active participants; and c) 120 participants, which is the programme target**.** Unsurprisingly the programme is much more cost-effective when the number of participants is higher.

Costs per participant in UK£[14]

Item	Phase 1 UK£ Actual expenditure	Phase 2 UK£ Budget[15]	Total phase 1 and 2 UK£
Total	214,504	665,000	879,504
Cost per participant N=30	7, 150	22,167	2,9317
Cost per participant N=55	3, 900	12,091	1,5991
Cost per participant N = 120	1, 788	5,542	7,329

There are some limitations to looking at cost per participant given the different participation levels. As detailed in Section 3 on effectiveness, there are different levels of participation with some people benefitting from involvement in all five strands, but others not, through a combination of choice for some, but also due to caps on levels of participation. Also, these calculations do not take into account the capacity of the programme structure to support 120 participants, though they are based on the planned three staff not the current resource of one person (with some occasional support) which is an area to be monitored.

There is some inconsistency in resourcing different strands according to their effectiveness for individuals. One of the most intensively resourced strands of phase 1 was the independently commissioned research which absorbed 34% of the budget. Whilst Strand 1 EAP and Strand 5 Research fellowships have higher budget proportions, Strand 4 benefited only the 21 participants who participated directly in the research. This places a heavier requirement on this strand to produce outputs at the system level to be cost-effective

Cost-effectiveness depends to some extent on participants' own pro-activity to take up opportunities that the programme provides and this is largely outside Cara's influence. Cara and partners are able to provide opportunities for participants to learn English, develop academic skills and undertake research, but participants must also take responsibility for these to be converted into outcomes. So far there have been good levels of participation by the Syrian academics with good continuity and active participation in workshops, good continuity among the vast majority of EAP participants online and early indications are that there is strong interest from across EAP levels in the Strand 5 Fund for small grants launched in April 2018 to support research. However, participants themselves say there are very differing levels of commitment among the participants and a small number of interviewees proposed that tougher monitoring be applied so

[14] Figures based on Report to OSF for 2016-17 and proposal to OSF 2017-19. Budget for phase 2 does not include unrestricted funds (anonymous donation) unspent in phase 1 which equal UK£43,364. Where figures had to be converted the exchange rate used in the Cara OSF phase 2 application was adopted i.e. £1=$1.27. Annex 5 has more details of workings.

[15] Budget for phase 2 does not include unrestricted funds (anonymous donation) unspent in phase 1 which equal UK£43,364

that only committed and proactive academics benefit. This is difficult given the changing situations for individuals who can have participation affected by changing work or family demands, amongst other factors.

A limitation for future cost-effectiveness analysis is the lack of more concrete outcomes and a system to monitor them. Cost effectiveness should consider programme costs against the results (outcomes) of expenditure and programme activity. It is early at this stage to do so, but also the lack of more concrete description of the changes the programme envisages at least as a minimum level of success (e.g. beyond the provision of opportunity, but what the take up of opportunities do for participants and more specific analysis of skills developed) will make this difficult. More concrete articulation of the changes envisaged, e.g. in individuals' skills levels and aggregating these to more concrete programme aims, as well as more systematic monitoring of change will help this. Some targets exist such as publication rates for Cara-supported research which can be used, but they are limited. Such analysis will be useful if Cara aims to promote a model of the programme for scale up by itself or other organisations to use in other conflict-affected contexts.

5.4 Equity.

Equity is considered by looking at how accessible the programme benefits are for all types of potential participant and how any differences in access e.g. due to disability or specific needs are catered for. Equitable approaches consider that differential approaches may need to be taken to ensure real access for some groups due to factors such as language, gender, ability or location. Being open to participation is not enough.

Analysis shows that the programme is equitable in terms of enabling access by Syrian academics regardless of their location in Turkey, but there is much more limited access to programme benefits for those in other countries. Initially the programme aimed to focus support on Syrian participants in Turkey and Jordan and potentially inside of Syria. This has now been reduced to a focus on participants in Turkey. Participants based outside of Turkey can participate in webinars and access materials on the portal, but participation rates for these are very low. One participant in Jordan undertook a short research incubation visit to the UK though with limited success. While participation in programme online activities is not excluded the evidence suggests very low uptake of these opportunities and that more active promotion is needed to increase participation outside of Turkey. For instance, there are no EAP participants for online tutoring outside of Turkey indicating making something available is not sufficient to ensure its uptake or that access to EAP support online support is not attractive and use of the portal from countries other than the UK and Turkey is very low.

An innovation of the programme based on Cara's experience from its Iraq Programme is the introduction of activities to benefit participants with low levels of English. Some programme activities require good levels of English to be able to participate e.g. in research incubation visits. But the programme also has English language training to support participants to access opportunities available only to proficient English language speakers and has activities of more immediate benefit, e.g. potential to participate in Strand 4 independently commissioned research regardless of language level, access to webinars and ASD workshops which have translation, and also potential participation in research funded through the Strand 5 small and larger grant streams (initial small grant applications included a range of EAP levels).

There is no resource allocation to enable participation amongst those who are under-represented, particularly women or people with any special needs, e.g. potential participants with disabilities who may need additional inputs to make access equitable. The major disparity in participation lies in the gender

distribution of participants. The programme budget does not have resources to explore and/or address the imbalance. Resourcing could be for:

a) understanding the situation better i.e. research into female academics' distribution, priorities and preferences, as well as understanding any barriers to their participation in the programme as currently designed
b) design of the programme to enable women's participation e.g. provision of childcare or putting on additional workshops in places where female academics are living or having women only activities[16].

There are challenges for interviewees to take up some opportunities due their living costs and job insecurity. Cara reports providing honoraria for Strand 4 participants, covers all direct costs for participants on Strand 3 research incubation visits including some living costs for dependents. But an issue raised by evaluation interviewees was the cost to them to participate in programme activities, e.g. interviewees highlighted the need to fit Cara activities, including research opportunities, into their spare time if they have a job. For some, it means that research incubation visits are not possible because they will not have any regular income for the time they are in the UK, but have a family to support, or are in insecure jobs (not necessarily academic ones) which they cannot afford to lose[17]. Others had anticipated that Strand 5 research funds (small grants) would also cover time for them as researchers which it does not. It will be important to monitor for any inequities as to whom is able to take up opportunities.

5.5 Conclusion

The programme provides excellent value for money in terms of its optimisation of use of resources, leveraging of additional resources and achievement of results with very limited funds and time.

The key risk to value for money is the extreme under-resourcing and/or action to recruit people to work on coordination. It exposes the programme to extreme dependence on one person who holds most of the relationships and programme overview, and also to some extent under-resourcing limits results. The programme has also been victim to over-ambitious planning which needs to take into account the volunteer nature of many of the contributions, as well as building in contingency for delays caused by the difficult operating context. The programme would benefit from additional resourcing to ensure equitable access to its benefits for all potential participants. Greater clarity regarding the programme aims for participation by, and benefits for, Syrian academics outside of Turkey would be useful. Furthermore, some cut corners can risk the effectiveness of activities such as the limited resources for translation of drafts of the Higher Education research limiting co-researchers participation in its finalisation. Resourcing at times needs to be increased to ensure that results are achieved and maximised. That said, the results achieved with the available resources constitute impressive value for money.

[16] There have been a limited number of examples of offers of support to existing participants who might benefit from childcare but not a systematic provision of this for current and potential participants. It is not a known option among participants.

[17] Cara reports that it covers cost of dependents while the participant is in the UK but the issue was one raised by a number a of participants to the evaluation so either this allowance is not well known or insufficient.

6. The programme model

The Cara Syria Programme is a new model for Cara programming which builds on past experience and includes a number of new features and innovations. The evaluation considered some of its key features and its potential replicability. A diagram summarising the programme model is below. The diagram is based on the evaluator's understanding of the programme is below which can be further developed by Cara and partners as the programme evolves.

Findings

6.1 Underlying principles

The evaluation has identified some underlying principles that run throughout and support the programme. These are:

- *trust*- built by Cara and partners including tutors with participants and evolution of trust between participants, and indeed Cara and partners;
- *responsiveness*- the programme design has evolved and developed new activities, e.g. webinars, and conditions, e.g. change in Turkish university attitude to international cooperation following the attempted coup, and interactive elements of communication among participants which have moved to WhatsApp away from the portal
- i*nnovation* - the programme includes and encourages innovation among all partners, e.g. by tutors in developing tutorials and workshops, and in resources such as the portal
- *voluntarism* - the programme is largely being delivered by Cara with volunteer partners. This can cause delays, but allows the programme to benefit from the immense commitment of partners to its aims.

6.2 Strands

The programme has five strands, and each has key structure and implementation features which are replicable. Features articulated in the graphic below. Furthermore, each strand has developed a range of tools to support its implementation, which can be adapted in future programmes. These range from portal structure, to workshop content, to support and coordination mechanisms for volunteer EAP tutors.

Within each strand, programme partners developed a number of tools, including innovative approaches to assess needs and priorities. Techniques that have proved effective include a) use of participatory process such as that using Open Space Technology combined with personal development plans and their analysis used in ASD; b) English for Academic Purposes assessment process which combines Edinburgh-developed written and spoken tests and exercises, a formal/recognised process i.e. APTIS and a systematic process to refine EAP assessment by EAP tutors and coordinators in person in workshops. These can both be further developed and written up to provide learning for the sector and a toolbox for future programmes. ASD is being written up, to some extent, for publication in journals. However, there is scope to write these up also as more user-friendly supports e.g. as tools for future programme managers. Current learning outputs have tended to focus on academic audiences to be reached via journal articles. Other formats might be useful to develop, e.g. rapid programme brief for interested practitioners and toolkits for future tutors. Annex 7 includes a list of top tips suggested by tutors for successful online tutoring; this could be refined and shared.

The five strands that make up the programme have evolved from being relatively separate to being more integrated, building on their complementarities and shared aims. This is most evident in the EAP and ASD workshops with EAP tutors participating in ASD workshops to support use of vocabulary, check learning and

reinforce some of the lessons on English for Academic Purposes. There is room for more inter-linkage particularly in relation to:

- tracking progress in terms of outcomes (e.g. at individual level - changes in participants' skills and impact of opportunities taken up, as well as possible impact at the system level);
- planning content of different strands by sharing plans and content in advance of workshops, e.g. of ASD and EAP workshops so EAP online tutors can link to this;
- by more actively connecting the Strand 4 independently commissioned research lead and Strand 2 ASD coordinators, e.g. by ensuring contact between providers of these components.

6.3 Governance and management

The programme management and governance structures are well designed for flexibility and responsiveness, but there are three areas for development. The management and governance of this programme is extremely important particularly given a) the complexity and sensitivity of the context in which it is operating; and, b) the range of partnerships and activities being developed and required to achieve the outcomes and the time this involves. The overall development, coordination and management of the programme has been led by the Middle-East Programme Adviser. There is huge admiration for the role with partners across the board commending Kate's ability to galvanise partners, make things happen, commitment and dynamism.

However, there are areas for concern. First, the programme coordination costs are under-resourced. This is leading to some challenges and risks as discussed in the previous section. The programme has extremely lean management and implementation costs, which do not constitute a replicable model. Furthermore, the voluntary coordination of some strands by partners is not necessarily something that will be easily replicated in the future. The additional staff need to be recruited with urgency and the Syrian Programme Steering Committee is advised to monitor this closely to check there is adequate capacity. The current programme coordinator is on a consultancy contract and given the growing scale of the programme and responsibilities of the role, with more team management responsibilities, it will be important to keep a close eye on this for compliance with financial and other UK regulations, which is something the senior management is aware of and tracking.

Second, Cara's relationship to the programme partners and participants is largely held by one individual. The Programme Adviser plays an impressive role in nurturing and sustaining the multiple programme relationships, but the absence of contact with the rest of Cara means some partners feel some disconnect with the Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee which makes decisions on the programme. It would be beneficial to increase contact between the key partners and Steering Committee, e.g. by members of the Committee attending workshops or meeting to discuss potential future strategic directions such as for a phase 3. Greater connectivity with other Cara work in its fellowship programme would be useful to explore also, so the programme is less "stand-alone".

Third, there are limited opportunities and structure for strategic discussion. There is some, but limited time for discussion between strands (including Strand 4). Strategic planning for the programme as a whole is held by the Cara Programme Adviser albeit in consultation with others. There are a number of issues that would benefit from broader interaction, e.g. on how to maximise linkage between the five strands, balancing numbers with quality and resourcing, articulating and monitoring outcomes in more concrete terms, and

planning the way forward. While people's time is extremely short, there is a space and need for a structure such as an advisory or steering group bringing in expertise from the different strands, possibly the Cara Steering Committee and possibly from a wider range of Syrian academics, in the absence of the planned advisory groups in Turkey and Jordan. The roles of this new group or forum vis-a-vis the existing structures i.e. Strand steering groups and the Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee would be need to be articulated and care taken to avoid overloading structure. But this is a gap that should be filled.

6.4 Partnerships

The programme is characterised by a partnership model with appropriate and committed partners co-developing and delivering the programme. There is a broad range of important partners including donors, notably OSF, implementing partners including the range of universities involved, and networks which enable the programme to tap into resources, contacts and knowledge, e.g. BALEAP, Syrian Union of Academics and Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network. The programme could not proceed without these valuable partnerships. It is interesting to note that the programme has benefitted from a combination of personal commitment to the programme aims and professional interest in elements of it, e.g. in e-learning, international aspects of education and, for universities, a means to gain profile (or at least for departments in universities), fulfil global commitments to refugees and education, as well as to develop new approaches to support international students, a potential valuable resource for the future.

6.5 Sustainability

There are two aspects of sustainability that are of relevance to this programme, sustainability of the benefits of the programme for participants and sustainability of its structure. The first relates to the sustainability of the outcomes of the programme, e.g. how skills developed will be sustained. While any skill development process rests to some extent on the proactive role of the participants to maintain new skills, there are a number of factors that suggest the results of the Syria programme will be sustainable. These include a) the provision of resources that enable continued self-learning by participants; b) the development of a range of networks already established between the Syrians and beginning with international academics and; c) the individual benefits can directly benefit higher education and future reconstruction of Syrian Higher Education, with a life span well beyond the Cara Syria Programme. Learning from the programme is also being captured through journal articles being published by partners, which is part of an active research element of the programme.

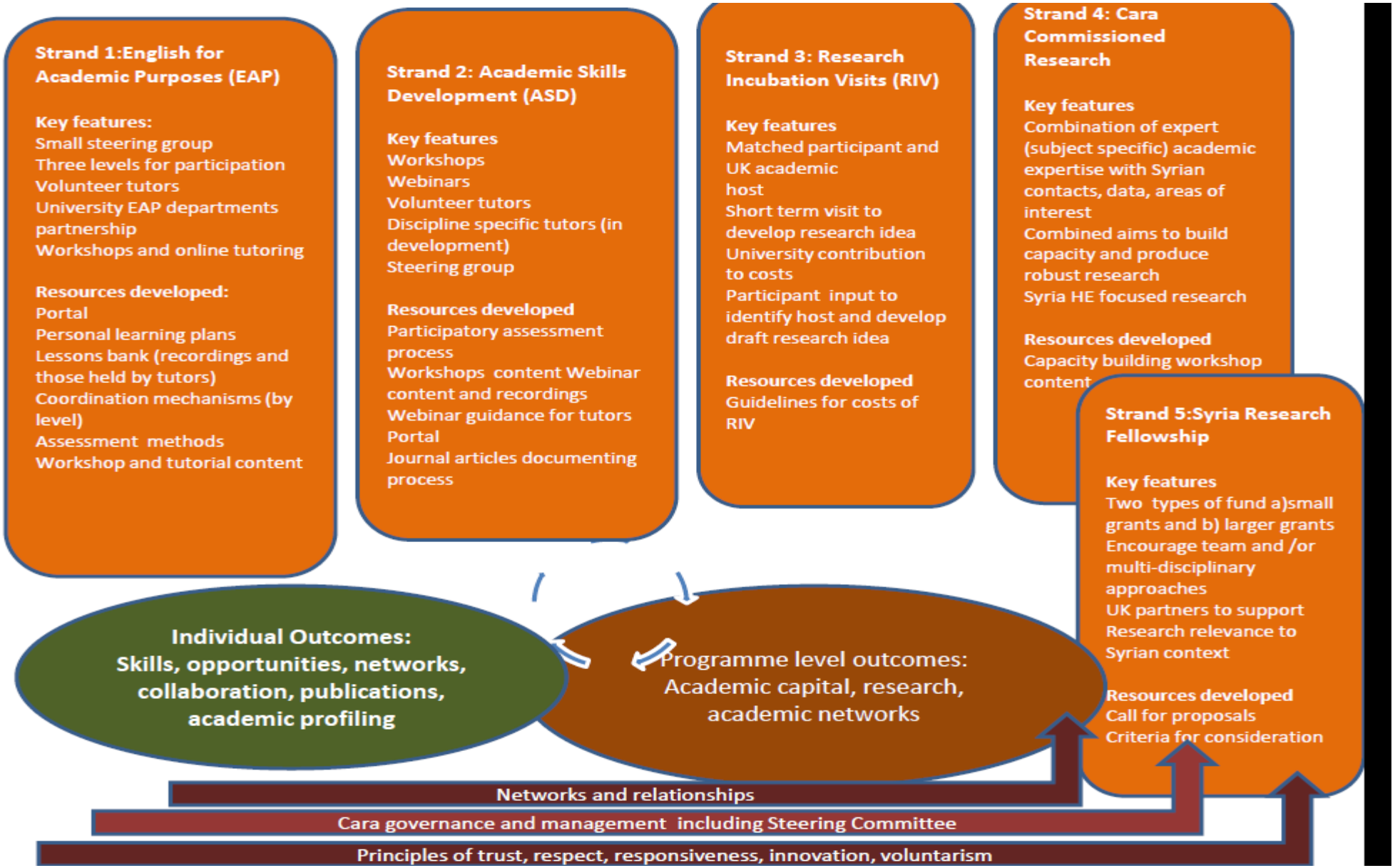
The second element relates to the sustainability of the structure of the programme. While the programme is at risk due its reliance on individuals volunteering, the level of commitment among partners is such that the sustainability for at least this phase of the programme is firm (other things being equal). But the coordination structures for the strands are currently stretched so any increase in activity is likely to need extra resourcing and, as discussed above, Cara's own resourcing of its strategic, coordination and other roles needs to be monitored closely.

The structure of the programme is sustained by the high levels of commitment of partners, but also by spreading responsibilities among a larger group. The recruitment of EAP tutors has so far been very successful and it seems likely that if there is a need for more tutors, more suitable people can be found, including those who are retired who may be able to take on more activities. The expansion of the number of EAP tutors becoming involved in the EAP workshops is also a good way to spread the workload, increase the group's knowledge of the whole programme, and contribute to a sustainable structure. Similarly, the introduction of the ASD webinars has resulted in a new people becoming involved which is positive.

6.6 Conclusion

The programme has an evolving model, which indicates it can be replicated in future crises. All crises differ so a model is only ever the starting basis for a programme, not a blueprint, and so will need to be adapted to the specific situation. In relation to Syria, the data suggests that scaling up the current model to reach a greater number of participants is possible. This will however require additional resourcing for coordination by Cara and partners, due to the intensive nature of the new strand, not yet fully operationalised and the planned growth of what has been so far limited research fellowships and incubation visits. Significant increases in resources are likely to be needed to increase participant numbers to any much greater extent.

The Cara Syria Programme Model



7. Conclusions and recommendations

The Cara Syria programme is responding innovatively to a clearly identified need through on-the-ground and online support to Syrian academics where they currently live(predominantly Turkey). The programme uses innovative and appropriate methods to identify needs and priorities, and these have informed the design and content of the programme. The five programme strands and cross-cutting resources are all relevant and contribute to the results. The five strands, and resources such as the portal, have evolved to become more interwoven. There is scope for greater integration as support for research through incubation visits and fellowships grow.

The programme has achieved significant results in a short time. These include participants' professional development in English and academic skills, production of innovative research on higher education in Syria, as well as less tangible but very important results for participants of providing opportunities that enable them to reclaim their professional identity as academics and develop professional support networks.

The use of communication technology-based methods for learning have proven highly effective. Use of online tutoring, provision of online resources and introduction of new activities such as webinars, available for live participation and via recordings, are means to widen access and ensure more continuous contact with participants. They are not without challenges due largely to internet connectivity, equipment capacity and expertise in their use among both participants and some partners.

There is some frustration among participants at the pace of the programme and their own development for which they recommend more intensive inputs, e.g. immersive EAP support, longer workshops in the summer. They are frustrated at the pace of their own change e.g. in English language skills and to some extent, the provision of research opportunities. This reflects perhaps the urgency of a refugee's needs and priority for immediate means to make a living, and the challenge to match this with resources and the feasible pace of professional development, particularly given the capacity of the programme. This is not to say participants are not highly appreciative of the opportunities and understand the efforts that the individuals' involved are expending.

The programme is achieving significant value for money in terms of its economy and level of outputs, such as workshops, online tutoring and research reports in relation to the funds expended. There is close attention to optimising the use of resources, successful leveraging of additional resources e.g. in volunteer time and through partnerships. The programme has however been victim to overambitious planning and under-resourcing of its capacity and some items, e.g. translation of the report, prevents full participation of Syrian co-researchers in its later stages. Also, more resourcing to ensure equitable access for all, particularly female academics would be beneficial.

The programme model is characterised by a successful partnership approach and by some key features underlying its success, which should inform any scale up or replication. The evaluation identified crucial underlying principles driving all programme strands and relationships, those of mutual respect, trust, responsiveness, voluntariness and innovation. Its structure has evolved with steering groups maintaining a link to Cara governance mainly via the Programme Adviser and others overseeing separate strands. Each strand has developed tools, resources and mechanisms that are relevant to scaling up the programme and its replication elsewhere. They combine to produce outcomes for individuals and potential at the system level, i.e. for Syrian Higher Education in the future. Some gaps have emerged at times between those delivering ASD and EAP components, and others are stretched, such as the EAP coordinators to support a growing number of online tutors.

The programme has to manage a number of challenging tensions. First, a key characteristic of the programme's development has been its flexibility, which enables it to be responsive and innovative, but can also be a constraint to more systematic integration of its different components, the articulation of programme plans and intended outcomes for individuals over different periods of time, and the assessment of these. Second, there is a tension between the pace of the programme, both in the skills development and evolving scale of the programme, relative to participants' ambitions and their need for more immediate results. The uncertainty of the context influences a third tension between allowing open access to the number of participants to maximise reach, rather than focusing resources on a more limited number, which might increase impact for individuals. Finally, the programme is implemented through a partnership model with highly committed and qualified partners drawn from UK universities, supporting its development and implementation. There is a tension here due to the largely voluntary nature of partners' contributions that limits the available time they have for the Cara programme, but this also is a key driver of the commitment, energy and creativity that the programme is drawing on and benefitting from. Occasional explicit consideration by the programme governance and management of these tensions and choices being made would be beneficial at a strategic level.

A number of areas emerge as priority developments to support the effectiveness of the programme. These are detailed below and are intended to be relevant to the duration of this phase to end of March 2019 and any future phase 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a more inclusive and participatory structure and/or process to develop future strategy

The programme would benefit from a cross-strand strategic advisory group possibly with Cara governance and wider Syrian participation, to inform its overall strategic development and guide implementation. It could consider some of the tensions and trade-offs in the programme, as well as questions on how to maximise the impact of the combined strands.

2. Increase communication within the programme enable greater coherence and maximise impact

More active communication of the whole programme to participants and partners, including EAP tutors, would help build understanding of the different strands, programme developments, overall aims and how the programme components fit together. This can help provide a sense of progress and support participants' ability to capitalise on all opportunities (e.g. through knowledge of anticipated results of each workshop) and partners' ability to integrate content. Options include: a) monthly or quarterly e-newsletters to participants and partners with programme news, such as new portal content, opportunities being taken up by participants for research through Cara, research products and upcoming activities and their content, e.g. workshops, webinars; b) webinars to share programme updates; and, c) more Cara time with the wide range of partners including EAP online tutors for connection to the programme and Cara.

3.Review participation targets and monitor effectiveness of different levels of participation

The programme aims to involve 120 participants, which is a high target given the resources required for current levels, which are around 55 regular participants. However, different levels of participation are possible and it may be valuable to structure the programme accordingly and more explicitly. Different participation levels have different cost implications for participant costs. One approach could be:

- Participation level 1 - full participation with English language tutorials, regular participation in workshops, access to research opportunities e.g. for those with good EAP levels and/or time to undertake research.

- Participation level 2 - English language support and participation in workshops and online opportunities only such as webinars and other resources e.g. for participants with more limited time and more interest in teaching and other benefits of the programme.
- Participation level 3 - Access to online opportunities only via the portal. However, given that evidence suggests very low levels of participation by participants who are not active in workshops and the EAP, this participation option would need more active promotion, support and possibly content to ensure some benefit to these participants (who may be based outside of focus countries for the programme).

Monitoring of the effectiveness of these different participation levels, participant satisfaction and the impact of any rationing that may be needed as participant numbers grow, e.g. in terms of workshop participation on both individual and system level outcomes would support programme learning and future decision-making about allocation of resources.

4. Establish more systematic processes to assess and track progress

The programme is designed around strategies of intervention (strands) and targets mainly for outputs, e.g. in terms of participant numbers at workshops, provision of opportunities and production of research and research outputs. However, to assess progress effectively, greater clarification of outcomes and their targets would be of benefit. This would be both at the system level and, importantly for participants too, at the individual level. There are understandable reservations among partners regarding monitoring and assessment of professional development, however, there is a strong sense among participants of wanting more formal acknowledgement of their progress through formal accreditation, assessment or other process, as well as clarity on what this development enables them to access or achieve. It is important also for future assessment of the success or otherwise of the programme model. Methods to assess individual progress could draw on the following steps:

- development of a range of pathways of progress for participants. This would acknowledge that not all participants have the same priorities and may not be able to access all the opportunities the programme offers because of English language limitations or other personal circumstances. It would lay out a number of "model" pathways as possible options for individuals;
- development and active use of integrated personal development plans incorporating ASD/EAP personal aims and more specific milestones linked to the pathways;
- regular qualitative assessment drawing on tutors' and participants' own reflections of progress;
- occasional formal assessment of EAP standard e.g. through APTIS or IELTS testing and potentially ASD also;
- more regular and systematic review of overall participant needs and priorities through participatory processes involving all, including new participants;
- more regular communication of anticipated outcomes for each phase and sub-phase; and,
- monitoring of the benefits for participants of participation in the programme, e.g. in securing jobs and other planned and unplanned outcomes.

5. Establish more shared learning processes within and between strands

The programme would benefit from the provision of more structured learning and sharing of experience both a) within strands, e.g. in tutor groups there could be meetings or online events for reflection, sharing of resources and approaches on how to provide effective online tutorials, or among webinar facilitators and tutors to consider workshop and other feedback; as well as b) between strands for instance to inform strands' integration, how to maximise impact and reflect on feedback from workshops and participants.

6. Actively plan for and resource the linkage of the programme research and programme learning to policy influencing work to benefit higher education in areas affected by conflict

The programme is producing outputs and evidence of value to higher education development in Syria and other places affected by conflict. To achieve impact with this learning a documented and shared communication and advocacy plan is needed, and investment in a range of products and processes. There are already some products being produced to capture learning from the programme that will be valuable, but it would be good to widen their range and audiences, to reach practitioners effectively who support higher education in places affected by conflict. Furthermore, Cara and partners, including donors, have links and influence in a range of fora and coalitions supporting education in conflict areas. These can be used but would need a shared plan and would also contribute to the impact of the programme beyond the immediate needs of Syrian academics and even the future reconstruction of Syrian higher education, to support higher education in other places affected by conflict.

Annex 1 Evaluation terms of reference

Independent Evaluation of Cara Syria Programme Pilot (1 Oct. 2016 - 31 Sept. 2017) and first 7 months of Phase 2 (1 Oct. 2017 to May 2018)

Terms of Reference (TOR)

1. Independent Evaluation TOR

Aim

To review the effectiveness, including cost effectiveness, and efficiency of the Syria Programme pilot relative to preliminary activities, outcomes/outputs in terms of ongoing delivery in Phase 2, and as the basis for a replicable model to be rolled out in the face of future comparable crises.

Tasks

i. Review of documentation and data captured over the pilot period, including participant evaluation forms relative to face-to-face workshops in Istanbul, needs assessment reports, and the 5 focus groups held with 34 Syrian colleagues and participants of the Cara Syria Programme.
ii. Review of Cara proposals and reports to the pilot's key funder: Open Society Foundation.
iii. Interviews with a selection of participating Syrian academics.
iv. Interviews with a selection of partners that have supported the development and delivery of the 5 Syria Programme Strands: Strand 1. English for Academic Purposes (EAP); Strand 2. Academic Skills Development (ASD); Strand 3. Research Incubation visits (RI); Strand 4. Cara-commissioned, Cambridge University-led research on the status of HE in Syria pre- and post-2011; and Strand 5. Syria Research Fellowship Scheme.
v. Interviews with members of the Care Syria Programme Steering Committee and the Cara Middle East Programme Adviser.
vi. Analysis of the cost efficiency of actual expenditure relative to the budget and implementation against the original Syria Programme proposal.
vii. Analysis of the pilot activities and first 7 months of Phase 2 of the Syria Programme and as the basis of a replicable model.

Outputs

Draft report (25 May 2018) and final report (15 June 2018) with recommendations on scaling up and areas for further development.

Timeframe

Up to 10 days between April and May 2018, with delivery of a first draft report for the client's review by 25 May 2018, and delivery of the final evaluation report by 15 June 2018.

Fee and Expenses

£500/day up to a maximum of £5,000, plus agreed expenses. The Fee will be paid in three instalments: the first £1,600 on signing of contract, the second £1,600 to be paid following delivery of the draft report and the third and final instalment to be paid following delivery of the final report. All payments will be made on receipt of an invoice, with agreed expenses paid on submission of original receipts.

Cara Support
Cara to provide requested documents and full list of contacts to facilitate interviews.

2. Syria Programme Background and Summary

Syria Programme Full Title 'Investing in Syria's Intellectual Capital: Creating pathways to the future, academics as agents for change.'

Overall Objective To nurture and facilitate future opportunities for Syrian academics by strengthening and connecting them and enabling their continued academic engagement, as a group that is vital to the future of Syria.

Beneficiaries Syrian academics in exile as primary beneficiaries. Secondary beneficiaries include dependents, regional and international respondents to the crisis and academics who will benefit from dissemination of research findings in the form of publications, conferences and Round Tables.

Pilot (Phase 1)

- *Timeframe* 12 months (1st Oct. 2016 to 30th Sept. 2017)
- *Income* £256,051.14 (all restricted funds)
- *Expenditure* £206,254.69 the balance to be paid as claims are submitted.

Phase 2

- *Timeframe* 18 months (1st Oct. 2017 to 31st Mar. 2019)
- *Budget* £645,000 (all restricted funds)

Summary Despite the Syria Crisis being well into its seventh year and the critical role that Syrian academics will have to play in the rebuilding of Syria, including the formation of future generations of doctors, teachers, engineers, lawyers, scientists, historians, architects, economists etc, the Cara Syria Programme remains the only programme across the whole humanitarian response to the crisis that is specifically and systematically focused on the professional needs of Syria's academics in exile in the Region.

The one-year Cara Syria Programme Pilot, launched on 1 October 2016 with the support of OSF HESP, amongst other funders, has established the Programme's relevance and effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness, and demonstrated Cara's ability to deliver in Turkey in the current political climate, the country where the largest number of Syrian academics have sought safety. The Pilot has also enabled Cara to build a network of partners and an infrastructure to support the roll-out of the Programme into Phase 2, demonstrating scalability, with an anticipated increase in primary beneficiaries directly involved in one of more strands of the Pilot from 54 to over 120 in Phase 2, each fully vetted to ensure eligibility.

The Syria Programme Pilot combines four complementary and interlinked activities[18] designed individually and collectively to address barriers to continued academic engagement and contribution whilst in exile. Central to those barriers are professional isolation, weak research profiles, outmoded teaching and research practices and limited English language, reflecting an insular and politically-constrained HE sector in which academics work primarily in Arabic with inadequate knowledge of international standards and practices, and minimal involvement in research. Strand 5. 'Syria Research Fellowship Scheme' was introduced in Phase 2.

Over the implementation period, Cara has worked with Syrian academics, supported *pro bono* by higher education and research institution partners and individual faculty members from the Region and beyond, to grow and deliver a highly-customised cost-effective capacity-building Programme. It merges practical training and vital professional networking and action-learning research collaboration opportunities with colleagues from the wider regional and international academic and scientific communities, to open-up academic pathways into the future. Over a third of the 139 Syrian academics registered on the Programme database benefitted from one or more of the Programme 'Strands' including 20 Syrian academics in exile in Turkey working as co-researchers with Cambridge University colleagues to establish reports on the 'Status of HE in Syria' pre- and post-2011.

A dedicated online Portal, developed over the Pilot, facilitates blended-learning approaches, including weekly one-to-one English for Academic Purposes (EAP) online sessions supported by over 40 volunteer personal EAP tutors, each partnered with a Syrian 'EAP Strand' participant. The Portal also facilitates delivery of, and access to, online resources, signposting, discussion groups, webinars, master classes etc. all of which will be expanded over Phase 2. Access to resources has also been supported by two major publishing houses, Elsevier and Cambridge University Press, which have provided *pro-bono* licences to online resources and materials, e.g. Science Direct, Cambridge English Empower, and promoted the Programme through their own networks.

The addition of a new research strand to the Syria Programme in Phase 2, replicating Cara's successful 'Iraq Research Fellowship Programme', will involve two 'open calls' for research proposals of relevance to Syria or Syrian refugee communities to allow the Programme to extend its reach to Syrian academics in exile in other receiving countries in the Region. Seventy percent of the exiled Syrian academics with whom Cara is working in Turkey have not been able to secure employment or employment commensurate with their skills, even where they have secured a university post.

As important as its role in connecting Syrian academics to colleagues from the wider regional and international academic and scientific communities, is the essential role the Syria Programme plays in connecting Syrian academics in exile to each other. The Programme provides a platform and framework to facilitate the development of discipline clusters that will be vital to the future of Syria. These will encourage research proposals initiated by Syrian colleagues, and developed and implemented in partnership with more experienced academics to ensure both relevant and rigorous

[18] Pilot activities: Strand 1 English for Academic Purposes; Strand 2 Academic Skills Development; Strand 3 Research Incubation visits to support joint research proposal development/collaboration; and Strand 4 Cara-commissioned cross-discipline/cross cutting research to allow those in EAP Levels 1 and 2 to benefit from action-learning research, to which the involvement of interpreters is essential due to limited English language skills. Strand 3 Research Incubation candidates are drawn from Level 3 as well as from others involved in the Programme with sufficient English language skills not to be participating in Strand 1.

quality research outputs. As the Programme's primary stakeholders, our Syrian colleagues will continue to play a crucial role in guiding the Programme's ongoing development into Phase 2, and in ensuring that it fulfils its objective to connect, strengthen and sustain this major part of Syria's intellectual capital into the future.

An action-research component has also been capturing the development/piloting process, and emerging lessons, to extrapolate a replicable model in support of academics affected by future comparable crises.

The Programme's research framework and the discrete pieces of research it supports, (this last to be grown over Phase 2), enables those in exile to be proactive in the task of addressing the challenges facing Syria, delivering and disseminating rigorous quality research outputs to inform the work of planners and policymakers considering a future Syria.

Whilst not all Pilot targets have been met, the Pilot has demonstrated the value and potential of the Syrian Programme and allowed Cara to establish an essential infrastructure and network of partners to facilitate delivery of the Syria Programme's full potential in Phase 2.

Syria Programmed Income and Expenditure £256,051.14 was raised in 2016/17. In addition to OSF and the British Council, financial contributors include several of the UK universities partnering Cara in the development and delivery of the Syria Programme, e.g. Kings College, Edinburgh and Reading.

Syria Programme Activities and Partners The five complementary and overlapping Syria Programme activities (Strands) respond individually and collectively to the overall Syria Programme objective, addressing one or more of the identified 'barriers' to continued professional engagement and development by Syrian academics whilst in exile.

- **STRAND 1. English for Academic Purposes (EAP)[19]** A blended-learning programme aiming to address weak English language skills, it combines weekly online tutoring sessions with 2- to 5-day workshops in Turkey. Participants are spread across 3 English language levels[20] that are pegged to IELTS[21] as follows: Level1. IELTS 2.0-4.0; Level2. IELTS 4.0-5.5; Level 3. IELTS 5.5 and over.

  English Language Assessment Two British Council 'Aptis' English language assessment sessions were run at cost for up to 50 potential Syria Programme candidates in Gaziantep/Turkey (September 2016) and Amman/Jordan (October 2016), followed by face-to-face interview assessments over the first two-day EAP needs assessment workshop in Istanbul (11-12 February 2017). These allowed degrees of homogeneity across participants to be gauged and the 3 EAP levels to be confirmed. Since February, Edinburgh University has taken on responsibility for assessing the English language skills using a Skype interview model developed for use by its

[19] OSF HESP approved Cara proposal (10/10/2016) ***Activity iv. English Language for Academic Purposes***
[20] Two English language assessment sessions were run by the British Council in late 2016. Edinburgh university now runs individual skype tests as and when new candidates have been vetted as eligible for the Syria Programme.
[21] IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

Veterinary Sciences and Law schools, which is also pegged to IELTS[22]. A further 31 beneficiaries have been assessed by Edinburgh since February 2017.

EAP Beneficiaries An initial quota of 30 was set to allow the EAP Strand to bed in and scalability to be evaluated given the highly-customised nature of the EAP Strand aiming accelerate positive outcomes. 21 Syrian academics in exile in Turkey attended the first EAP workshop (11-12 February 2017). The number of EAP participants has gradually risen over the Pilot period to **46 by mid-September 2017**, split across the three EAP levels**: Level 1. x11; Level 2. x17; Level 3. x18.** This excludes EAP candidates in exile in Jordan who have yet to be incorporated into the EAP Strand, but to whom online provision will be extended in Phase 2. A total of 89 Syrian academics in exile in Turkey have participated in the 4 EAP Workshops: **Workshop 1. (11-12 February) x21; Workshop 2. (29-30 April) x30; Workshop 3. (5-7 August) x29; Workshop 4. (9-13 September) x9[23].**

EAP Workshops Four EAP workshops[24] were run in Istanbul over the pilot period facilitated by colleagues from Bogazici, Durham, Edinburgh, Kadir Has, Kent, Reading and Sheffield universities. All but the final workshop was hosted by Bogazici University in Istanbul. Although the original proposal anticipated fewer but longer workshops, beneficiaries requested shorter 2- to 5-days to accommodate the realities of their lives in exile. The Pilot workshops have been run over extended weekends to facilitate participation. The final intensive 5-day EAP workshop was restricted to Level 1 participants and hosted by Columbia Global Centres Istanbul.

Personal 1-to-1 Online EAP Tutors The allocation of personal on-line tutors was initiated following the second EAP workshop (29-30 April 2017) and rolled out over May and June 2017. An initial call for volunteer EAP tutors put out through BALEAP[25] generated over 60 responses, each vetted by Strand 1. EAP Management Group members. Personal online EAP tutors are allocated to each EAP participant to provide weekly one-hour online tutoring sessions in this highly customised Strand. Tutors have a designated point of contact for both online technical issues and content/delivery issues. Adobe Connect licences were purchased to facilitate online sessions, with Management Group members overseeing an increasingly complex timetabling/scheduling task. The final 11 EAP candidates, assessed in mid-September, will have tutors allocated to them over the following few weeks. With the new academic year under way, timetables will have to be revised to allow for tutors who are unable to continue to volunteer to be replaced. The summer (mid-June to July-August 2017) as the busiest period of the year for EAP staff, as well as encompassing Ramadan and annual holidays, has seen some online sessions reduced to fortnightly. All will return to weekly sessions by the end of September 2017. One further area of scalability to be explored over Phase 2 will be the possibility of increasing online sessions to two a week. Some of the Pilot tutors have already done so informally. This will have further timetabling implications and require the purchase of a second Adobe Connect bundle of five licences[26].

[22] ditto

[23] The final pilot EAP intensive 5-day workshop was restricted to Level 1 participant to help accelerate progress amongst the weakest EAP group.

[24] 11-13 Feb 2017; 29-30th Apr 2017; 5-7th Aug. 2017; and 9-13th Sept. 2017 – all in Istanbul, Turkey.

[25] BALEAP is the professional body representing EAP tutors internationally.

[26] A bundle of 5 Adobe Connect licences managed by Sheffield was purchased for £1,200 in 2017 to facilitate online tutoring sessions. Cara will enter into discussions with Adobe to try and secure a new set of licences *pro bono*. Although

Strand 1 EAP Management Group The EAP Management Group is composed of senior language, technical and EAP experts from Edinburgh, Reading and Sheffield[27], in addition to the Cara Syrian Post-doc Fellow at Lincoln University (Dr Mohammad al Kaseem) and the Cara Middle East Programme Adviser (Kate Robertson), who both sit on each of the management groups as well as the main *Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee*.

Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) PLPs are developed by each participant following confirmation of eligibility and English language level assessment. PLPs capture the aims of participants and include the number of hours of self-study that each feels able to commit to given individual circumstance. These serve as a guide to online tutors and are accessible through the dedicated Syria Programme Portal, updated over time as a record of individual progress.

Quality and Consistency in Delivery An introductory 'pack', including a volunteer agreement signed by volunteer EAP tutors, has been developed to clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities. Tutors and participants receive an initial induction to the online portal, including verification of connectivity. Weekly sessions are recorded with the consent of both parties, to support learning, and allow monitoring of consistency in delivery across the tutors. Responsibility for monitoring the quality and consistency of online delivery across the three EAP levels is split between the EAP/English language experts on the Management Group: Edinburgh/Level 3; Reading/Level 2; Sheffield/Level 1. Sheffield is also responsible for induction and technical trouble-shooting. To facilitate online sessions, Level 1 participants have been provided with headphones[28].

Materials Cambridge University Press (CUP) has provided *pro-bono* online access codes and discounted textbooks for their 'Cambridge English Empower' series, providing the framework for EAP Levels 1 and 2. CUP has pledged to increase the number of licences and textbooks in line with the number of participants. Edinburgh University, which leads EAP Level 3, is drawing on in-house and external resources to better reflect individual disciplines. In addition, Level 3 participants have received *pro-bono* Elsevier ScienceDirect licences, to facilitate access to Elsevier's online journals. A selection of grammar textbooks has also been provided *pro bono* by Sheffield University.

Progression Individual tutors are responsible for advising when they believe an EAP beneficiary is ready to progress to the next EAP level. Those running EAP workshops also monitor for Syrian colleagues who they believe are ready to transition from one EAP level to another, to ensure as rapid a progression as possible to Level 3 and individual research pathways.

Strand 1. EAP Partners BALEAP**,** Edinburgh**,** Reading, Sheffield, Durham, Oslo & Akershus University College, Kent, Kadir Has and Bogazici universities and the Columbia Global Centres

discussions were initiated over the Pilot, the urgent need for the licences led to purchase to avoid delay of the online tutoring sessions

[27] Michael Jenkins, Head of English Language Education and Language For All, University of Edinburgh; David Read, Director of Technology Enhance Learning, English Language Teaching Centre, Sheffield University; Dr Sarah Brewer, Associate Professor, International Study and Language Institute, Reading University.

[28] 10 sets of headphones were purchased by Cara and allocated to Level 1 participants at the EAP Workshop 3.

Istanbul. The 40+ EAP online tutors represent a broad spectrum of other UK universities including Bath, Bristol, Open University, Glasgow and SOAS, amongst others.

- **STRAND 2**. **Academic Skills Development (ASD)**[29] This second blended-learning Syria Programme strand aims to address academic skills gaps amongst Syrian academics in exile, combining online activities and resources with face-to-face workshops. **The use of interpreters has been crucial to ensuring that all can benefit from this strand, regardless of language level.**

  Strand 2. ASD Management Group The ASD Management Group is composed of senior academics and experts from Cardiff, Edinburgh, Kent and Middlesex universities[30], along with the Cara Middle East Programme Adviser and Dr Mohammad al Kaseem. A first ASD Management Group meeting was held in early April 2017, with a further meeting in June 2017. Delivery of two teaching focused workshops in 2017 were prioritised and commitments of support received, including £10,000 from Cardiff to support the contribution of its staff to development and delivery of the Strand in Region.

  ASD Beneficiaries The ASD Strand is being developed with a dominant online delivery focus to facilitate access by a greater number of Syrian academics in exile, and to extend its reach to those in exile in other receiving countries in the Region. Online content and delivery will be reinforced by face-to-face workshops to address collective academic skills needs, identified by beneficiaries or those supporting delivery of other strands. Participation in the second ASD workshop (15-17 September 2017) rose to 34. Future ASD workshops will be restricted to 36 to ensure effective delivery.

  ASD Workshops Two ASD workshops were run in Istanbul over the Pilot period. The first, delivered by colleagues from Kent, Leicester and Middlesex universities on 28 April 2017, assessed individual and collective academics-skills needs to inform the development of the ASD programme. The data captured through personal development plans (PDPs) drafted by each of the 29 participants was compiled into two reports forming the basis of ASD 'Management Group' discussion at its June 2017meeting. The second ASD workshop, run over three days in Istanbul (15-17 September 2017), focused on international standards and practice in 'Teaching', and student-oriented teaching methods. This second workshop, delivered by Kent and Cardiff university colleagues was attended by 34 Syrian colleagues. The third planned ASD workshop, with a focus on research, was incorporated into **Strand 4. Research: 'The Status of Higher Education in Syria Pre- and Post-2011'** providing a context for a far more effective action-research mode of delivery – see ***Strand 4.*** One further ASD workshop is scheduled for October 2017 to be funded from alternative sources. It falls outside the pilot period to help maintain momentum pending confirmation of Phase 2 funding.

[29] OSF HESP approved Cara proposal (10/10/2016) ***Activity vi. Academic Skills Gap: Capacity-building workshops***

[30] Prof. Kenneth Hamilton, Dean (International) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Cardiff University; Prof. Kevin McDonald, Professor of Sociology and Head of Department of Criminology & Sociology, Middlesex University; Hayley Beckett, Head of Leadership and Staff Development, Cardiff University; Dr Jacqueline Boddington, Director of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, Middlesex University; Jon Turner, Director, Institute for Academic Development, University of Edinburgh; and Dr. Tom Parkinson, Lecturer in Higher Education & Academic Practice & PGDip/MA Programme Director, Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (UELT), Kent University.

Peer Discipline Mentors Discipline-specific needs are being met through one-to-one partnerships with peer discipline mentors, with such partnerships facilitated by Cara. These follow a relatively 'hands off' model, and will be left to develop at their own pace. Contact with Cara is maintained through brief monthly reports, or on an *ad hoc* basis as issues or opportunities requiring Cara input arise. A preliminary call clarifying the role and commitment went out through ASD Management Group universities in late July 2017, with a more targeted approach to follow over September/October 2017. A first tangible outcome of such a partnership was the acceptance of a paper by the *Society for Research in Higher Education* (SRHE) for delivery by Dr Shaher Abdullateef at its annual conference in Newport in December 2017. This will form part of a *Strand 3 Research Incubation* visit by Dr Abdullateef to Reading University (November/December 2017). ***(see Strand 3)***

Online Content Delivery of ASD online content is also facilitated through the Sheffield University-developed and managed Syria Programme Portal (***see Cross-Cutting Components***). ASD webinars streamed through the Portal are recorded to facilitate future access and grow the Syria Programme's online resources over time. To ensure continued access to online journals amongst those without HE institutional affiliation or a ScienceDirect licence[31], as well as to extend access of those who have ScienceDirect licences,[32] a list of open-access sites and repositories has been compiled and published on the Portal with accompanying introductory webinars. These included a webinar in which Dr Hylke Koers, Elsevier's Director of Research Communities, participated, to introduce open-access Elsevier resources such as Mendeley and Scopus. Edinburgh will take the lead in the development and delivery of a broader programme of online webinars over Phase 2.

Strand 2 ASD Partners Bogazici, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Kadir Has, Kent and Middlesex. An ASD-oriented knowledge-transfer collaboration has also been developed between Kent and Bogazici universities as a direct result of the Cara Syria Programme to allow those leading on the development of two new centres at Bogazici University – 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Research in HE'[33] – to benefit from Kent's progressive approach in which both have been combined into a single Centre. The Syria Programme beneficiaries in exile in Turkey will be used to help pilot the development of these two new centres at Bogazici.

- **STRAND 3**. **Research Incubation Visits (RIV)**[34] The aim of Strand 3 is to facilitate professional connection and continued academic contribution through research collaboration with colleagues from the wider regional and international academic and scientific communities. Strand 3 offers 4- to 8-week visits to the UK, hosted by university departments or groups with relevant research interests, to enable professional ties to be established, to support networking and conference opportunities, and to allow joint collaborative research proposals to be developed.

Strand 3 Beneficiaries EAP Level 3 participants are the main pool from which Strand 3 candidates are drawn, in addition to those whose existing level of English is sufficient to not

[31] Elsevier's ScienceDirect licences have been restricted to EAP Level 3 participants over the pilot. As Level 3 numbers are grown, Cara will negotiate the *pro bono* granting of additional licences, currently restricted to 11 in number.
[32] ScienceResearch is a resource that is limited to Elsevier's catalogue
[33] YOK, Turkish Higher Education Council only recognised 'Research in Higher Education' as a field of study in 2016
[34] OSF HESP approved Cara proposal (10/10/2016) ***Activity iii. Facilitating Research Collaboration: Research Incubation***

require EAP support. Strand 3 has also allowed the Cara Syria Programme to support Syrian academics in exile in Jordan who have not been able to benefit from the strands that have focused over the Pilot period on those exiled in Turkey. Although English language is a major eligibility criterion, where members of a potential UK hosting 'team' include dual English and Arabic speakers, Level 2 participants will also be considered for Strand 3 'Research Incubation' visits.

Strand 3 Visits Nine UK visits have been, or are in the process of being brokered: Manchester (x2), UCL (x2), Newcastle (x1), Birmingham (x1), Aston (x1), Edinburgh (x1) and Reading (x1). Cardiff University has also expressed an interest in a 'Strand 3' hosting, with two Syrian academics under consideration. The first UK visit by Dr Ghalia Alasha Hassona, a Syrian female child psychologist with an interest in education who is currently living in exile in Amman/Jordan, took place over a 5-week period (4 May to 9 June 2017) hosted by Manchester University's School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), a centre of excellence in research and teaching within the University's Institute of Education. The next 2 were deferred due to UK visa refusals.

UK Visa Refusals Despite the successful outcome of the first UK visa application by Dr Hassona, the next two UK visa applications for visits scheduled to take place over June and July 2017 at Manchester University and University College London, were refused. In July 2017, the Cara Middle East Programme Adviser met with the UK Deputy Consul General to Turkey and the UK Entry Clearance Manager in Istanbul, to clarify the Syria Programme's aims and relevance to UK Government policies on Syria. One further UK visa application, submitted following the Istanbul meeting, was granted in late July 2017, with the remaining visits rescheduled. The next UK visa applications will be submitted in October 2017.

HEI Affiliation Gaining honorary institutional affiliation from hosting universities is an important outcome of the Research Incubation visits, enabling continued access to host universities' online resources following return to countries of exile. Dr Hassona has been granted honorary status by Manchester University. Following a second UK-visa refusal for Dr Rima Al Hrbat[35], who had been due to join Dr Hassona at Manchester University as a co-researcher (her field of study is Early Childhood Education), SEED colleagues are now looking to include her in the implementation the research developed over Dr Hassona's visit to allow Dr Hrbat to also be granted honorary status at Manchester. It is anticipated that the future involvement of country of exile academics and HEIs will open the way to institutional affiliation in countries of exile.

Research Implementation Funding The Institute of Education/SEED faculty members[36] with whom Dr Hassona will be collaborating on a qualitative study of Syrian refugees in Jordan: '*Promoting resilience in refugee families. An exploration of parental perceptions following*

[35] A new visa application was submitted for Dr Al Hrbat immediately following the refusal, addressing all the stated reasons for refusal, but this second application was also refused on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to support intention to leave the UK, which appears to be based on the fact that she is single so will leave no family members behind in Jordan. Dr Hassona left two daughters and her husband behind.

[36] Dr Alison Alborz, SEED Senior Lecturer Complex Learning Disability, Professor Erica Burnam Professor of Education SEED, and Dr Terry Hanley, Programme Director in Counselling Psychology, Manchester Institute of Education. Others who supported Dr Hassona's visit at Manchester were Professor Rachel Calam, Professor of Child and Family Psychology; Dr Susie Miles, Programme Director Educational Leadership and Inclusion; Dr Laura Anne Winter, Lecturer in Education and Counselling Psychology, Dr Alaa El-Khani, Research Associate, who was also her main Arabic speaking contact.

participation in parenting programme' are in the process of applying for in-house funding to support implementation. Collaborative research proposals resulting from Strand 3 visits are currently required to be submitted to third-party funders, although the Syria Programme Phase 2 will include a new 'fifth' strand, replicating the successful Cara *Iraq Research Fellowship Programme* (2009-2012). Subject to confirmation of funding, Strand 5 will involve two 'open calls' for research proposals of relevance to Syria or Syrian populations in exile, providing a new potential funding source for Strand 3 proposals, where suitable alternative funding/funders are not available.

Cost of Visits The cost of Strand 3 visits range from £2,500 to £5,000, depending on duration, country of exile, location of host institutions and number of dependents. This includes flight, visa, health insurance, local travel and living costs. Manchester University contributed £500 towards Dr Hassona's full visit costs of £2,500. Other host-universities have indicated they will cover the full cost, allowing Strand 3. visits to continue post-Pilot, pending confirmation of Phase 2 funding.

Return Visits Although no return visits were scheduled over the Pilot period, it is anticipated that each initial visit will engender one or more follow-on visits at key points in the research implementation, particularly in the case of lab-based disciplines. All would benefit considerably from the involvement of country of exile academics and HEIs.

Three-way Research Collaborations Phase 2 will seek to develop the involvement of country of exile academics in emerging Strand research collaborations. One such three-way collaboration has already been established between academics from Middlesex and Kadir Has universities working with a Syrian academic from the field of Islamic jurisprudence with a focus on 'Radicalisation'. A fourth core research team member is also being sought from the field of psychology. The involvement of internationally respected UK-based academics will provide an additional draw for academics from countries of exile. Strand 3 will also pull on existing professional ties with Turkish academics or academics from other countries of exile in the Region.[37]

- **STRAND 4. Research: 'Status of HE in Syria Pre- and Post-2011'**[38] The aim of Strand 4 is to support capacity-building, connection and continued academic contribution on issues of relevance to Syria, by providing an action-learning research opportunity for Syrian beneficiaries regardless of discipline and English language skills. The use of interpreters and translators has been essential to facilitating the involvement of Syrian colleagues with limited English language skills, and the focus on higher education, as a non-discipline specific topic, has been essential to the involvement of Syrian colleagues from across the discipline spectrum, including history, agriculture, maths, law, economics, sharia, geography, medicine, biology/ecology, chemistry and engineering.

  Research Team. The Strand 4 research has been led by Cambridge University's Director of Educational Innovation, Prof. Colleen McLaughlin, two Cambridge Faculty of Education

[37] Professor Tom Curtis, Professor of Environmental Engineering at Newcastle University's Centre for Synthetic Biology and the Bioeconomy, who will be hosting Dr Abdullah Saghir in late 2017, will approach Turkish colleagues with whom he has ongoing professional ties.

[38] OSF HESP approved Cara proposal (10/10/2016) ***Activity v. Higher Education in Syria.***

colleagues, Dr Jo Dillabough[39] and Dr Olena Fimyar[40], supported by an Arabic speaking Palestinian Research Assistant to oversee the literature review. Cambridge team members have worked in partnership with 20 Syrian colleagues in exile in Turkey as co-researchers, as well as study informants and training beneficiaries for this qualitative study. The Syrian co-researchers were selected by Cara from its 'Database of Syrian Academics' ***(see Cross-Cutting Components)*** to ensure broad representation across disciplines and their (ex)universities in Syria, with the additional criterion that each had to have maintained contacts with ex-students and university colleagues who remained in Syria. The quality of the data captured has relied almost exclusively on these established trusted personal relationships. Initially budgeted to involve 5 Syrian colleagues, additional funding has been sought from the British Council USD28,788 (£22,500), which has been confirmed, and from OSF HESP USD25,000 (£19,535), with outcome still pending, to support a four-fold increase in Syrian co-researchers involved in the study from the budgeted 5 to 20. The increase in Syrian colleagues directly involved in the research will not only benefit them, but also the value of the study findings.

Strand 4 Workshops and Study Implementation Two 4-day workshops were run in Istanbul over the Pilot period, hosted at Bogazici University (2-5th June 2017) and the Columbia Global Centres Istanbul (15-18th Jul. 2017), enabling Syrian co-researchers to be involved throughout the research process, from development and design to data capture, analysis and write up. The first workshop allowed a common understanding of the study and its objectives to be established; a mapping of key events post-1971 that had impacted on Syria's higher education sector and institutions over time; a current geographic and political mapping of Syria's HEIs and Research Institutes across regime and non-regime controlled areas; and, the development of two interview schedules to inform the qualitative interviews to be undertaken by Syrian co-researchers over June and July 2017. Syrian colleagues also benefited from training in qualitative interview techniques and coding to ensure the anonymity of interviewees and captured data, as well as guided consideration of allied issues such as ethics, confidentiality and consent.

One hundred and nine (109) remote interviews were carried out with Syrian colleagues inside Syria (students, academics and university administrators) between the two Strand 4 workshops. Respondents spanned both regime and non-regime controlled areas and both private and public universities. Syrian co-researchers also contributed substantially to the identification of literature review documentation, as well as fleshing out of the preliminary Workshop 1. mappings. The second 4-day workshop (15-18th July 2017) facilitated training in data coding and analysis, as well as the identification of emerging themes and preliminary write-up. Syrian colleagues have taken the lead on the analysis and write-up of interviews using an agreed framework, to support consistency in drafting across the research team, and the 10 identified themes to guide their analysis: Impact of conflict; Mission and values of the university; Management, governance and staffing; Quality; Resources, infrastructure and funding; Capacity-building; Admissions; Teaching (methods, assessment); Employment; Improvement strategies and policies; and Research. Additional themes have emerged from the analysis, including the role of universities at the societal/community level.

Study Outputs The study will deliver two complementary reports, the first, co-funded by the British Council, will focus on the 'Status of HE in Syria pre-2011' providing a baseline for the

[39] Reader, Sociology of Young People and Global Cultures, and Chair/Convenor of Education, Equality and Development
[40] Senior Research Associate

second. The second, will focus on the current 'Status of HE in Syria' and draw extensively on the baseline report. A first draft of each report, in which the various contributions will be compiled by the Cambridge research team members, will be available by mid-October 2017, with a final version of the two reports available by the end of October 2017.

Honoraria A modest honorarium has been paid to each of the Strand 4 Syrian co-researchers to acknowledge their vital contribution, including the undertaking of the 109 qualitative interviews with university colleagues still inside Syria. No other payments have been made to Syrian Programme participants over the Pilot period. Only the direct cost of participation in Syria Programme workshops has been covered, e.g. travel, accommodation and food, which has not deterred participation in any of the strands.

Dissemination Discussion is already underway with Bogazici University with regard to a second Round Table to follow-on from the original Bogazici co-hosted two-day Cara Round Table *'Sustaining Syria's Intellectual Capital: Academics as Agents for Change'* held in Istanbul on 9-10th June 2016. The June 2016 Cara Round Table marked the launched of the Regional Cara Syria Programme. A second Round Table, to which relevant respondents to the crisis would be invited, will provide a useful dissemination platform for the Strand 4. Research findings.

- **CROSS-CUTTING COMPONENTS** Two further Syria Programme components have been developed over the pilot period to support and facilitate delivery of the four Syria Programme strands. A 'Database' of Syrian academics and their dependents and a dedicated online 'Portal'.

Database The Syria Programme database currently holds data on 139 Syrian academics, with an average of 2.5 dependents each[41] bringing the total number of individuals on the database to 483. Cara is now receiving 2 to 3 new requests a week from Syrian academics wishing to be included as participants in the Syria Programme. Those in exile in Turkey on whom the Pilot has focused are the dominant group.

Online Portal The dedicated Syria Programme online Portal, developed, managed and maintained on Cara's behalf by Sheffield University, supports activities across the Syria Programme strands such as the weekly online one-to-one online EAP tutoring sessions, ASD webinars, resource sharing, signposting, discussion groups etc. The full potential of the Syria Programme Portal will be developed over Phase 2, including support for the development and collaborations of communities of interest and discipline clusters, as an increasing number of research proposals are developed, funded and implemented.

[41] The total number individuals (academics and dependents) included on the Syria Programme database is 366

Pilot: Schedule of Activities

Pre-Pilot: Key Events

9-10 June 2016	• Two-day Cara Round Table, Istanbul: Hosted by Bogazici University and the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul
September 2016	• Cara Meeting of UK University Sector, London: hosted by King's College London • British Council English Language Aptis Testing, Gaziantep/Turkey • Confirmation of OSF 2016 Award (USD100,000)

Syria Programme Pilot: Key events

October 2016	• Launch of Syria Programme Pilot following OSF Funding confirmation • British Council English Language Aptis Testing, Amman/Jordan • Consult Meeting with Syrian Academics, Gaziantep/Turkey: hosted by UNOCHA • Planning meeting for English for Academic Purposes (Strand 1): hosted by ISLI/Reading University • Call through BALEAP for expressions of interest in EAP strand (16 responses)
November 2016	• First Full Steering Group EAP Meeting: hosted by Reading Uni. (Bath, Cara, BPP, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, KCL, Kent, OU, OSF, Reading, Sheffield, Unity)
December 2016	• EAP Needs Assessment Questionnaire drafted/circulated to Syrian academics • 36 Completed NAQs: Responses collated • Confirmation of anonymous donation £100,000 • Pledges of funding from Edinburgh, Reading and KCL Universities • Management Group created (Cara, Edinburgh, Reading, Sheffield, M AlKaseem) • Cara Syria Programme (SP) Steering Committee confirmed (Chair, Hon. Sec, Allocation Committee Chair, Exec. Secretary, M. Al Kaseem, M A Mohammad)
January 2017	• Turkish HEI partners confirmed – Kadir Has and Bogazici universities Istanbul • Erasmus Key Action 2 bid partners confirmed: Frei, Malmo, Kadir Has, Bogazici
February 2017	• EAP Management Group confirmed. • Planning meetings Istanbul: Cara, Bogazici, Kadir Has, Edinburgh, Reading, Sheffield, Durham, Kent • Syria Programme online Portal set up – development ongoing. • EAP Workshop 1 (11-12 February 2016) including registration of

participants on Portal – personal learning plans and commitments drafted
- Three EAP Levels established
- OSF 2016 Award received by Cara
- Erasmus Key Action 2 Consortium bid aborted: deemed premature.
- Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee Meeting (28 February 2017)
- Webinar streaming on Portal and ongoing testing including pilot of one-to-one tutoring online (Ziad Al Ibrahim)

March 2017

- Confirmation of Cambridge University Press and Elsevier support
- Verification of Eligibility of potential new SP candidates - ongoing
- EAP Programme development

- Set up of ASD Management Group (MG)

April 2017

- First ASD MG Planning Meeting
- Call via BALEAP for EAP Volunteers (over 60 responses)
- Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee Meeting (6 April 2017)
- Strand 3. UK visits agreed with Manchester (x2), UCL (x1) and Newcastle (x1)
- Submit first two UK Visa applications for Strand 3 visits to Manchester University.
- ASD Needs-assessment Workshop 1. Istanbul (28 April 2017) Personal Development Plans (PDPs) drafted. Workshop facilitated by Kent/Leicester/Middlesex
- Edinburgh University takes on responsibility for English language assessment by Skype of new SP candidates (31 'interviewed' between April and September 2017)
- EAP Workshop 2 Istanbul (29-30 April 2017) Edinburgh / Reading / Sheffield – included introduction to online tutoring and availability check
- First UK Visa approved (Dr Hassona) in late April.
- Cara-facilitated Istanbul Meeting with Dr Salih Bakakci, Director of Middle East and Africa Research Centre, Kadir Has University, and Dr Taiseer Barmu (SP Participant) to discuss a research collaboration on 'radicalisation', with Prof Kevin McDonald / Middlesex as a research team member.

May 2017

- 5 Adobe Connect licences purchased to support one-to-one online sessions.
- Vetting and allocation of one-to-one online EAP tutors to SP participants

over May - ongoing as new eligible participants join.

- First one-to-one weekly online tutoring sessions timetabled and underway
- Induction for tutors and SP participants, including verification of

connectivity
- ASD MG Online Meeting (11 May 2017)
- Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee Meeting (11 May 2017)
- Drafting of online volunteer tutor introduction pack and volunteer contract
- Responsibility for quality in delivery allocated: Level 1 Sheffield; Level 2. Reading; Level 3. Edinburgh
- First UK Visa refusal (Dr Al Hrbat) – a second UK Visa application submitted responding to each of the Entry Clearance Officers reasons for refusal.
- Two ASD Needs-Assessment Reports (Dr T Parkinson/Prof K McDonald) shared.
- Appointment of Cambridge University to lead Strand 4. 'Status of HE in Syria'
- Cara funding requests to British Council and OSF to increase number of Syria co-researchers in Strand 4 Study from 5 to 20.
- Strand 4 HE in Syria – planning meeting including Cambridge team, Cara Mid-East Adviser and Dr Al Kaseem.
- List of Strand 3 candidates circulated to EAP/ASD MGs.
- Strand 3 visits being negotiated with Prof Tom Curtis/Newcastle and Prof Wiebke Arlt/Brimingham

June 2017

- EAP MG now meeting weekly online and monthly face-to-face.
- Dr Samir Abdullah (Historian) participates in 2-day British Institute conference Ankara on the pillage of Syrian artefacts – facilitated by Cara SP grant.
- Increasing cross-fertilisation across EAP/ASD MGs
- Middlesex commit to running ASD workshop on Teaching in early October 2017
- Confirmation of second anonymous donor funding tranche (£25,000)
- Strand 4 Workshop 1 (2-5 June 2017) Istanbul/Bogazici University
- Two new UK Visa refusals (Dr Al Hrbat and Dr Abdulhafez)
- ASD MG Online Meeting (30 June 2017)
- Cardiff express interest in Strand 3 hosting - 2 potential candidates identified

July 2017

- Online one-to-one EAP tutoring ongoing
- Strand 4 Distance Interviews by Syrian co-researchers with students, academic and university colleagues who remain in Syria – 109 completed by Workshop 2.
- Submission to, and acceptance of paper, supported by Cara SP mentor, for presentation at 'Society for Research in Higher Education' (SRHE) conference in Newport, December 2017. Dr Shaher Abdullateef aims to combine his presentation with a Strand 3. Visit to Reading University (tbc)
- Call for SP discipline mentors put out visa ASD MG.

- Strand 4. Workshop 2. (15-18 July 2017) hosted by Columbia Global Centers Istanbul. Delivered by Cambridge.
- Cara meeting with UK Deputy Consul General to Turkey and UK Entry Clearance Manager in Istanbul (17 July 2017) to query UK Visa refusals and clarify nature/aims of the Cara Syria Programme.
- Dr Samir Abdullah introduced to Merve Tezcanli, Columbia Global Centers Istanbul Fellow, given shared focus on Ottoman History, as a possible collaborator/mentor.
- Dr Mohamad Rashid introduced to Deputy Director of British Institute Ankara, Dr Leonidas Karakatsanis (Political Sciences) as possible collaborator/mentor.
- Second UK Visa approved 26 July 2017 (Ziad Al Ibrahim) for UCL pre-sessional
- Joint outline research proposal drafted by 5 Syrian SP participants from the field of Agriculture, and submitted by Cara to Reading School of Agriculture.

August 2017

- Dr Nahed Gazzoul facilitated present her paper at the Global Active Learning Summit in Tokyo/Japan (3-5 August 2017) supported by small Cara travel grant.
- Strand 1. EAP Workshop 4. (5-7 August 2017) delivered by Edinburg, Reading and Sheffield
- Strand 3 visit under discussion with Dr Hope at Reading School of Agriculture.
- Ongoing analysis and write-up of Strand 4 by Syrian co-researchers of 109 interviews and draft write-ups

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September 2017

- Confirmation of British Council Strand 4 Funding (£22,500)
- Strand 1 EAP Workshop 5. (9-13 September 2017) intensive 5-day course limited to Level 1 participants, hosted at the Columbia Global Centers Istanbul
- Strand 2 ASD Workshop 2. (15-17 September 2017)
- Five focus groups with Syrian SP participants were run in tandem over 16 and 17 September 2017 to elicit feedback on the Pilot and, as part of the overview action-research to help formulate a replicable model to support academics affected by future comparable crises. The focus groups were facilitated by Dr Karin Whiteside/Reading, Dr Seda Altug / Bogazici and Dr Tom Parkinson / Kent. All three will contribute the analysis focus group data in addition to that captured throughout the Pilot in the form of participant feedback, needs assessment reports etc. following transcription of the focus group recordings
- Draft Strand 4 Reports on Status of HE in Syria Pre- and Post-2011
- Data captured over the Pilot will also inform an independent evaluation scheduled to take place following completion of the Pilot on 30 September 2017.

Annex 2 List of evaluation participants

Alan McCarthy	Professor of Microbiology, University of Liverpool Member of Cara Programme Steering Committee
Anne Lonsdale	Chair, Cara and Chair of Cara Programme Steering Committee
Colleen McLoughlin	Professor of Educational Innovation, University of Cambridge University Programme Strand 4 lead
David Read	Director of Technology-Enhanced Learning, English Language Teaching Centre University of Sheffield Programme Strand 1 EAP Level 1 coordinator
Karin Whiteside	Director, Academic English Programme (AEP), International Study and Language Institute University of Reading Programme Strand 1 EAP Level 2 coordinator
Kate Robertson	Cara Middle East Programme Adviser
Kevin McDonald	Professor of Sociology, Middlesex University and member of Cara Programme Steering Committee
Michael Jenkins	Head of English language education and languages for all, University of Edinburgh Programme Strand 3 coordinator, EAP Level 3
Sarah Brewer	Associate Professor, English for Academic Purposes, University of Reading Programme Strand 1, EAP Level 2 coordinator
Stephen Worsworth	CEO, Cara
Tom Parker	Lecturer in Higher Education and Academic Practice, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Kent Programme Strand 2 (ASD) coordinator/steering group chair
Will Hutton	Teaching Fellow, ELSS, Queen Mary, University of London Programme Strand 1 Level 3 tutor

- 21 Syrian participants were interviewed. Their details are not shared here for reasons of confidentiality.
- 18 EAP tutors responded to a survey. They also remain anonymous.

Annex 3 Evaluation matrix and tools

3.1 Evaluation matrix- Independent evaluation of CARA Syria Pilot Programme

Evaluation question	Indicators	Source and method
1. Effectiveness a) How effective is the Syria pilot programme? b) To what extent have planned outcomes, outputs and activities been achieved? c) What approaches are most and least successful? d) How effectively is the programme team/network learning and adapting?	• Relevance of the range of activities to meeting the needs of the participants and objectives of the programmes • Evidence of: a) Enhanced professional connections and opportunities b) Enhanced basic academic/professional skills, c) Enhanced knowledge and understanding of international standards in research and teaching, d) Experience of designing quality research proposals to support future funding applications, e) Experience of implementing rigorous, evidence-based research and delivery of quality outputs, f) Enhanced language skills, aiding connection, as well as access to scientific papers and journals, g) Experience and understanding of alternative HE models and management structures, h) Contribution to addressing key challenges facing Syria through research outputs, i) Publication/presentation opportunities in respected peer-reviewed journals, conferences etc. j) Professional connections/networks to mitigate international isolation, and draw on, post return. • Evidence of programme/system level outputs and outcomes: a) Strengthened Syrian academic capital within selected disciplines particularly social sciences	**Relevance** - consider match between assessment and programme content; explore assessment process (Cara interview/docs - 2016 roundtable, consultations, individual assessment and programme overall design process); other sources of need analysis; review of needs (Strand 4 research); - participant perspectives (interviews-participants); - portal Google analytics data, including repeat visits, duration, level of participation. - appropriateness of methodology - Istanbul workshops, webinars, 1-1 tutors, RIV, HE research participation, other **Individual outcomes:** ○ FGDs for feedback on individual gains and benefits- themes ○ Interviews with strand 'lead' re observations ○ interviews with 15 participants (Re: enhanced connections [include portal, Whatsapp groups, workshops, other outside CARA, other inside CARA group], new opportunities exposure, understanding of international standards, design of research proposal, language skills, alternative HE models, relative strength of different strategies and inputs; priorities, recommendations; trends/change ○ project doc (research proposal plan) ○ review of PDP - Academic and English language (change in levels of skills- academic and English)

	b) enhanced research capacities for use by Syrian institutions in the future c) production of innovative rigorous quality research of direct relevance to Syria. d) establishment of international research networks and their potential to support the role of research in teaching. e) Effective dissemination/plans of research findings to inform policy and strategic planning amongst those involved in post-war reconstruction. f) Strengthened regional ties that can support future reconstructing Syria's higher education and research sectors. • Effectiveness of Cara management of the programme including in relation to risk management, communication (with partners/participants) and monitoring for learning and adaptation. • Sustainability of the network of implementing partners	○ Feedback from tutors (feasible to link to individuals for a sample? Plus general. (Academic and English) ○ - ?? Survey of tutors? (change, effectiveness of strategies, CARA management, project design) ○ List of research produced/plans/ publication/presentations;); - too early? - KR ○ Review webinar subject list relevance to interests/needs -see latest listing Feb 2018 which runs up to 2019 ○ Webinar participation - detail goes up to 24 Jan- Strand 2 - webinar- participant **System level outcomes** • Analysis of participants (subject, gender, other) • Interviews - KR and analysis of Cara strategy to engage social sciences • Interviews with participants regarding future plans for links with Syria (and link with Syrian institutions) • Review of research planned/underway and relevance to Syria needs (BC assessment of needs/other) • Interviews with participants about planned research (proposals? Interview with Jordan- timing) • Analysis of research dissemination plan (is there one?)- BC; participants research; round tables? • Analysis of portal use -/participation - current stats. Use stats from March 2018 or update? [check this actual date not just saved date]. Talk to David. What are the ways to support/encourage participation. **Management and learning processes** • Interviews with CARA staff, ED, SC. strand leads, others (tutors, mentors) • Review of learning processes including monitoring (survey post webinars -); EAP assessment; feedback forms - RI-Ghalia, other) **Sustainability**

		Interviews with core team; other providing in-kind (universities involved?- motivation, future)
Efficiency a) How cost-effective is the Syria pilot programme (Phase 1)? b) How efficiently is the programme being run? c) Is the programme providing good value for money?	• Implementation of the project is in line with the plan (time) • Actual expenditure is reasonable in relation to budget • Appropriateness of the allocation of resources (time and money) in relation to programme needs and aims • Level of resources leveraged from others (pro bono/in kind donations) • Sustainability of implementation at level of resourcing • Resourcing enables equitable participation by both men and women as well as others with specific situations.	• Comparison of activities and outputs achieved against plan • Analysis of expenditure against budget • Analysis of budget and what items most resource intensive • Quantification as far as possible on in-kind resources leveraged • Interviews on how equity resourced
Replicability of Cara Syria programme model What are the key lessons from the Cara Syria model to date to enable replication in future crises?	• What are the key elements of the Syria programme model? • What factors have led to programme success? How can these be replicated in future crises? • What are the key challenges. How could these be mitigated in the future?	• Interviews and other data analysis • Include developments/continuity in approach since Zimbabwe (Ann Lonsdale), Iraq • Explore process of each strand development; how they came together and advantages/disadvantages of this process. • RI - process for selection; matching; visa; lessons • Develop graphic - strand with aim; tools developed; stakeholders/participants • Develop narrative with a) each strand - aim, tools, lessons learned re process including securing participation of universities, managing expectations of participants, visa? other and success/challenges, and b) interactivity between them • S4- see Appendix 4 re learning on research. Compare with needs assessment of ASD. What are the links?

3.2 Evaluation tools- interview checklists and survey

3.2.1 Strand coordinator - Interview checklists (adapted for different strands workshop leads and steering group members)

Evolution

- How did you become involved in the programme? What has driven your interest?
- What have been the key steps in developing the EAP programme? What has gone well?
- What have been the key challenges?
- What has evolved differently from what you expected?

Effectiveness

- Assessment process- what went well; challenges? How to improve in the future.
- How do you monitor progress in the participants? How well does the method work? How could it be strengthened?
- What feedback do they get on their progress?
- How is quality of EAP Level 1 tutors supported/assured?
- How well do the workshops fit with ongoing tutoring? Lessons learned?
- Are there any other ways that EAP support could be provided (other than weekly tutorials plus workshops)? Pros and cons of alternative models.
- Portal - what is going well; challenges; future plans; how has used differed from expectations (if at all).
- What data is available e.g. numbers of downloads from the site including of webinars and/or other resources; time people spend on the site; most visited pages; peaks in visits and what drives this?
- Technology- comments on adobe link up and how well this has worked.
-

Programme design

- How have the links between the different strands evolved to be complementary?
- What lessons are there from this process for the future? [e.g. communication, joint planning, other]
- What works well in maintaining good working relationship between partners involved in a) the ASD/EAP strand of the Cara programme and b) other strands e.g. skills for academic development and/or research projects.
- How well does the Steering committee work? What is good about it? How could it improve?
- Are there any important strands missing that you are aware of?

Sustainability

- What support do you receive from your university? How were they brought on board? What is their interest/incentive? What could help sustain /increase this?
- Sustainability of a) your time and input; b) your institutional support; and, c) the network e.g. tutors etc. What can help to support its sustainability? What is not realistic?

Recommendations including to Cara and any other comments

3.2.2 CARA Syria Programme -Survey - EAP Tutors

Your input to the evaluation of the Cara Syria programme is very important. Your reflections can help support its future development. I would be grateful if you could send me your responses to the questions below saying as much (or as little!) as you wish by **end of Wednesday 16th May.**

All feedback is confidential - please email your responses to me only at thanley7@gmail.com

Do let me know if you would like any further details on the evaluation process. Thank-you very much for your time!

1. When did you begin tutorials with your partner Syrian participant?
2. How have you structured your tutorials? Does this enable you and the participant to track progress? Is there anything additional that would be helpful?
3. Do you have tips for sustaining the participants and/or your own motivation to pursue the programme/continue with the tutorials?
4. What do you value most from your participation in the programme?
5. What have been the main challenges for you in your role as a tutor?
6. What has been most helpful in supporting you in your role as a tutor?
7. What additional support would be helpful? e.g. from the coordinator, CARA, university, colleagues, participants, other?
8. Please share up to 3 lessons learned that you have found helpful in making online tutorials successful.
9. Please make up to 3 recommendations on how CARA and the network of partners including the EAP coordinators and tutors can develop the programme further?
10. If you are based outside of the UK, has this affected how you engage with the programme? Please give any details of what has helped, specific challenges or differences you are aware of.
11. Any other comments?

Thank-you very much for your time and input!

3.2.3 Interview checklist for governance and management

1. Please describe your role in relation to the Cara Syria Programme.

2. What have been some of the key achievements of and challenges for the programme?

3. How have lessons from previous and/or similar programmes been integrated into the Syria programme? Examples.

4. What are some emerging lessons from the Syria programme? What are the implications of these for a) its future development and b) Cara responses to other/future conflicts? Are there risks for Cara in running the Syria programme and how are these managed?

5. What works well in the Steering committee? What are its challenges? What, if anything could improve its effectiveness?

6. How does the Cara Syria programme fit with a) other Cara programmes and activities and b) other similar activities in the Syria response.

7. What recommendations do you have for the future development of the Syria programme?

8. Other comments?

3.2.4 Interview checklist for participants

Interview checklist- Participants

- Introduction to the independent evaluation - aim, purpose, confidentiality, independent check so some duplication from previous discussions, consent. Internal document but maybe shared with e.g. donors, other interested parties. Aims to help make the programme stronger in next phase and future.

1. Introduction and motivation

a) How did you hear about the programme?
b) What did you join? What activities have you participated in?
c) What is your interest in joining it? What did you expect from it? Have those expectations changed?

2. Overall benefits

a) What have been the benefits of participation so far? What do you expect in the future?
b) What do you value most from your participation in the course?

3. Specific intended outcomes - individual

a) **EAP -** Have your English language skills improved as a result of the programme? How do you know? What has helped most? What has not been helpful? Have other external factors helped?
b) **ASD** -What areas of academic skills development are important to you? How, if at all has the programmed helped you? What has been the most important benefit? Example. What has helped most (webinars, workshops, any particular inputs). Least?
c) **Standards** - How, if at all, has the programme provided information and training on international standards in research and learning? What was new for you (2-3 points)? What is useful? How do/will you use it? Examples
d) Research

- How has the programme helped provide you with skills or opportunities to design research proposals? What was most helpful?
- Has the programme helped/provided you with opportunities to implement research? Details.
- Did you participate in the HE Research led by Cambridge University with Cara? What was your role? What went well? What was difficult? What were the benefits of it for you? What could have helped you to gain more from the research experience? How will the research benefit Syria HE in the future? What needs to happen to make sure this is the case? What do you know about how the research will be communicated to influence policy in Syria in the future? What would you recommend?
- UK visits - what went well, challenges, gained, since, future plans?

e) **Networks** - Have you made new connections through this programme with a) Syrian academics and b) internationally? In what ways, if at all is this helpful/useful to you now and in the future? How are these connections maintained?

f) **Higher education** - Have you learned new things about different higher education models? Examples? How is this useful to you?

4. Programme and sustainability

a) **Inter-connectedness-** how have the different elements of the CARA programme been complementary to each other e.g. English tutorials, webinars, workshops, research? How could these links be strengthened?

b) **Progress** - What, if any progress have you made in your research and academic development since beginning the programme e.g. in skills, capacities, confidence other. How do you know/examples/evidence. What could help you track progress?

c) **Relevance and sustainability -** How might you use the new skills if you return to Syria in the future? What difference will they make to a) you and b) your institution/students/higher education.

d) **Relevance** - How do these skills help you in your life here in Turkey and/or future destination?

5. Recommendations

a) What is important for new people starting on the programme to be aware of? How can Cara better support them - what should Cara do the same/differently?

b) What would you like to see Cara change in the programme for the future?

c) Other comments?

Annex 4 Participants analysis

Taken from registered and active EAP participants, May 2018.

Subject	Active EAP participants
Agriculture	5
Engineering	5
Economics	4
Business administration/management	3
Law	3
Chemistry	2
Education	2
History	2
Computing/IT/Mathematics	2
Geography	1
Maths	1
Microbiology	1
Literature	1
Oceanography	1
Political Science	1
Psychology	1
Sociology	1
Zoology	1
Not stated	**18**
Total	**55**

Annex 5 Portal data

Portal use - in 12 months from 19th May 2017 then

Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page
/	951	616	0:01:54
/self-study-materials/	377	233	0:00:42
/members/	281	192	0:01:44
/useful-websites/	263	157	0:03:11
/free-and-open-courses/	189	127	0:01:47
/tutors-area/	158	109	0:01:16
/forums/	128	86	0:00:40
/groups/	128	107	0:00:34
/self-study-English-for-academic-studies-speaking/	103	84	0:03:36
/level-1-tutor-area/	89	52	0:00:34

Country	Users[42]	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate
United Kingdom	191	175	489	22.70%
Turkey	170	140	713	39.27%
Jordan	10	10	28	14.29%
Greece	6	6	10	60.00%
Malaysia	6	6	47	25.53%
Germany	3	3	9	22.22%
France	3	2	4	25.00%
Netherlands	2	0	3	33.33%
(not set)	2	0	3	33.33%
United Arab Emirates	1	1	2	50.00%
	400	348	1,322	31.85%

[42] NB- a user is a device not necessarily a different person using the portal because individual participants may access the portal through more than one device such as their mobile phone, computer.

Annex 6 Data for Value for Money analysis

Expenditure

Item	Phase 1 UK£ Actual expenditure	Phase 2 UK£ Budget[43]	Total phase 1 and 2 UK£
Running Costs (inc. SO Fees/Salaries/Cross-cutting costs) and core	54,878	188,430	243,308
Strand 1. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) - workshops and online tutoring	44,612	126,100	170,712
Strand 2. Academic Skills Development (ASD)	20,336	68,310	88,646
Strand 3. Research Incubation	4,454	49,600	54,054
Strand 4. Cara-commissioned Cross-cutting Research	72,194	57,560	129,754
Strand 5. Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)	0	147,000	147,000
Cross-cutting inputs - Portal and Database of Syrian academics	18,030	8,000	26,030
Independent evaluation		8,000	8,000
Contingency	0	12,000	12,000
Total	**214,504**	**665,000**	**879,504**
Cost per participant N=30	**7150**	22167	29317
Cost per participant N=50	4290	13300	17590
Cost per participant N=55	**3900**	**12091**	**15991**
Cost per participant N = 120	1788	**5542**	**7329**

Income[44]

Programme phase	Funding Source	£	Running Total UK£
Phase 1	OSF HESP (Oct2016)	£78,156	
Phase 1	Kings College London	£5,000	
Phase 1	Anonymous Fund1	£100,000	
Phase 1	Reading University	£2,250	
Phase 1	AnonymousFund2	£25,000	
Phase 1	British Council	£25,370	
Phase 1	OSF HESP Microgrant	£19,593	
Phase 1	GiftAid on £10K	£2,500	
			257,869
Phase 2	OSF HESP	**UK£665,000**	**922,869**

[43] Budget for phase 2 does not include unrestricted funds (anonymous donation) unspent in phase 1 which equal UK£43,364

[44] Figures based on Report to OSF for 2016-17 and proposal to OSF 2017-19.

Annex 7 Tips from tutors for successful online tutoring

A survey to all EAP tutors asked for top tips for making their online tutoring successful. Here are responses in the tutors' own words.

1. Approach

- **The relationship** - I think it is important to spend a bit of time connecting as people. Connect with the person and make an effort to keep this up, as that is what will sustain you. It takes time to build up a rapport with the participant. You have to make that personal connection in the beginning and work hard to maintain it, despite interruptions to the tutorials for a whole variety of reasons. We always start with a bit of friendly / informal chat. I have met his children, and (as I sometimes do the sessions from home) he has briefly met my family too.
- Trying to get to know the participant's situation will help tutors develop their understanding and empathy, and keep encouraging/gently pushing: these are not typical students, some may struggle with their memory/retention even of simple language due to having experienced trauma. I think if Tutors can figure out the main language issues of the participant and focus on some specific goals, these can be broken down into steps/milestones that are attainable. Making them S.M.A.R.T. goals is a good idea.

- **Flexibility and patience**
- it will take a while to get used to the fact that you cannot simply pass your student a worksheet or write on a whiteboard.
- Be patient with technology, even if sometimes the sound doesn't work right away due to slow connections. I'm pretty experienced with online work, but it can still be tricky/frustrating at times to communicate effectively via internet/video, due to delays.
- Technical issues can delay or postpone classes and other factors can mean you don't see the participant for a few weeks. Patience when technology lets you down for three weeks in a row!
- Use communication channels that work best for you - I have given up Adobe Connect as my P has no time during the day now, so we are Skyping and this is more comfortable for him, so be flexible with the platform you use.
- Let go of teacherly approaches to 1-2-1 or even to online instruction.
- Perseverance - Don't lose heart if you think the student is not producing and learning
- Be prepared to ditch the lesson plan and go with it

- **Encourage** - Always be encouraging and have lots of patience. Even when your student gets it wrong time and again be positive.
- **Communication** via email before to prep and after to review the sessions, as well as in-between. So constant communication really. Liaise regularly with your participant about what they want to cover, what is going well, not so well etc. Keep talking and communication lines open

2. Before the tutorial

- **Co-ownership of the agenda -** Get the student to contribute to the course learning by providing you with some language questions. Get the student to submit a short piece of writing a day before the session so you can give effective formative feedback (both in the session and in writing). Negotiate aims and objectives with the participant rather than imposing a syllabus.

- **Preparation** - Get set up early, check all links and do an audio test. Convert files well ahead of your lesson and then upload as tech. can be slow – It's a little annoying having to convert everything to PDF. Set tasks to complete for the following week, including vocabulary review, writing tasks and presentation preparation

- **Sequencing** – really think about the sequences and screens you may need (resources) when planning so that you can upload them – you can only upload one lesson at a time unless you're using the same materials

- **Have a plan B in case tutee hasn't done homework etc.**

3. The tutorial - content

- **Relevance of content**
  - Make lessons relevant to their context. Customise content to the participant interest, particularly to their subject area where possible e.g. find articles and Ted Talks of relevance to review as homework and discuss in tutorials.
  - Avoid 'Western-centrism' in materials as far as possible. There are names and concepts well-known to us, but of no interest to them whatsoever (often even upsetting). So be sensitive.
  - Personalise for the student. I tend to plan sessions around a text, with lessons focusing on either reading and writing, or speaking and listening skills. We will use the same text for a number of weeks in order to exploit it for vocabulary, discussion points and presentation opportunities. Using texts in my participant's professional field allows us both to chart progression in terms of understanding of key terms, and of ability to produce spoken and written responses to the texts.
  - Participants should be able to see the direct link between what they are learning (from the book) with the English they will be using in real life => therefore, we should always try also to include specific wants from our participants into our lessons (e.g. how to do a presentation)

- **Resources**
  - I have found that the Empower book is too low level for my participant as he has a strong grammatical understanding. He prefers to focus on material directly related to his field as he is extremely motivated to engage in academic work in English as soon as possible.
  - The access to the Cambridge LMS website

- Using the discussion - I try to be strict about clarity in speech - by this I mean, even if I think I have understood his meaning, I ask him to clarify / repeat /rephrase until I find his meaning really clear. This is because I know he has to interact in English with people from a wide range of countries, and it's really important that his message is clear - if for example he is trying to secure funding for vital projects. In a group face-to-face class, I would expect some of the onus for this kind of "negotiation of meaning" to be on classmates.

- Innovations- I found the sound recorder - I've taken to recording and attach to an email and send to him in advance and he records something and sends it back. He sent me a text and then read it and so I can then comment on his pronunciation and we can have a dialogue in the class. Recordings are easier because he's quite slow in speaking.

- **Marking progress** - Celebrate any language improvements/milestones you notice, as that will help them feel more motivated to go on. My student seems to like the fact that I review at the beginning and end of the session: he knows I'm assessing his learning and seems to appreciate it. He has also asked me to give him feedback on the emails he sends me, which is easy for me to do

. Set up clear aims and set of tasks Having a book to work on and specific language goals/writing goals helps give a true sense of purpose to sessions. Even for lower level students, perhaps Tutors can aim to do this.

- **Online tips**
  - Use some visuals during the lessons. It keeps things interesting.
  - Let participants speak as much as possible.
  - I have rethought layout and visual presentation to make sure it works online.
  - Give enough time to hear instructions and absorb them.
  - Don't flick the powerpoints screen too quickly
  - I learnt I must not leer into the screen like a Cheshire cat!
  - I've had to rethink how I present information online when I only have a screen and cannot use much body language. Too many words and verbal descriptions do not help.
  - I've slowed down my speech because of time lapses in hearing what we are saying.
  - Don't hurry to cover the materials.
  - Do lots of listening and making sure everything is on the PowerPoint so that info can be checked if the connection goes. **Don't worry about digital silence – give thinking time!**
  - During our discussions, I find it helpful to make a note of any errors on a notepad as we speak, then I can find appropriate moments during the tutorial to focus on the error correction and try to make relevant language suggestions.

- **Dealing with sensitive subjects**
  - Be aware of, and sensitive to, participant's situation/ emotional state etc. Avoid certain subjects if necessary.
  - I have also had to be sensitive about the type of questions I ask such as 'When did you last have a holiday? The participant got quite upset when he saw a picture which reminded him of a situation in Syria, so I always ask myself whether a picture would be appropriate.

4. After the tutorial

- Email them with relevant backup links for extra practice after the lesson and in the week when possible.
- Share the PowerPoints if student doing session on phone
- Keep lesson records up-to-date so you can remember what you talked about last session etc.
- I think it's important to establish channels of communication with the student (whether through email or through another medium) so that they feel they can contact you with queries, send homework etc. outside the lesson time. This is especially important as attendance is not guaranteed and you may not see the participant for several weeks. It's also important to find out about the student in the first few weeks - interests and family as well as their academic field/career goals.