



CARA SYRIA PROGRAMME

Independent Evaluation

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Acronyms

ASD	Academic Skills Development
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
HE	Higher Education
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PI	Principal Investigator
RIV	Research Incubation Visit
SP	Syria Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference

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Executive Summary

The evaluation of the Cara Syria Programme (SP) considers the programme's effectiveness and value for money including its efficiency and impact. It focused on the time period from June 2018 to October 2019. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach drawing on programme documentation, statistical analysis and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis.

Effectiveness

The Cara Syria Programme has achieved significant results in terms of its intended outputs and towards outcomes. The programme improved skills and networks among Syrian academics and in particular succeeded in its intention to enable academic engagement by Syria academics in exile in Turkey. There is evidence of improvements in most participants' English language skills for academic purposes, but many participants remain frustrated at the rate of progress. There is also evidence that some participants developed relevant academic skills in key areas to enable their academic engagement but the scale and depth of this is hard to assess from current data.

Relevant research is underway supported by the programme through its partnership approach bringing together UK-based and Syrian academics with processes in place to ensure its high quality. The programme is already producing work of potential value to Syria's future both in its higher education system and also in other spheres. Most Cara-provided larger grants and small grants, as well as activities in other strands, have or plan publications and other communication of their research. However, the pressure to publish is causing some tensions, particularly if the quality of participants' academic writing is not yet high. This also places pressure on some UK-based academics acting as principal investigators and mentors who have to navigate their role and extent of involvement which at times is unclear.

The number and depth of individual participants' involvement in research through Cara-provided and facilitated opportunities has increased over time, though the proportion of participants accessing academic engagement opportunities is more limited in scale than those engaged in wider skills development activities. The gender imbalance in the programme is more pronounced in participation levels for research-related opportunities than in skills development activities.

A key programme lesson is that skills development requires a multi-pronged approach to enable new skills to be embedded; this takes longer than originally envisaged for many individuals in programme plans. Key areas where research proposals and projects have exposed weaknesses are in research methodology, particularly in relation to qualitative research skills, locating research in the wider literature, in ethics and risk assessment, as well as in aspects of academic writing including critical analysis.

Additional outcomes of the programme include the development of groups and networks of Syrian academics and between Syrian and UK academics. The programme has also increased visibility of the Syrian participants to academia, policy makers and practitioners, which has in turn led to important pathways for some Syrian academics to move beyond the Cara Syria programme direct activities to more sustainable academic engagement and indeed livelihoods.

Value for money

The programme provided considerable opportunities for Syrian participants academic engagement at low cost. The programme demonstrates excellent use of resources and leverages significant additional funds from external sources that contribute to the programme aims. The programme is run efficiently in terms of optimising the use of resources and adapting well to an uncertain and sometimes volatile operational environment, aided significantly by the increased administrative team, though this remains small. Internal and external factors continue to inhibit implementation of plans to schedule.

The programme approach is one that prioritises equity in terms of meeting individuals' priorities and needs but is challenged by gender dynamics. It also lacks explicit criteria to provide guidance and clarity on what is equitable resource allocation across all participants and therefore to individual participants; this is linked to the choices of whether resources should be distributed between participants more equally or focus on people able to take up the opportunities available (without limits or caps) and/or to produce highest quality research.

While the programme demonstrates strong value for money there are areas for improvement to ensure cost effectiveness is maximised. These include articulating the longer-term outlook and continuing to improve internal administrative and team working systems to support greater efficiency and structure in the programme.

Cara role and future developments

Cara has taken on a range of valuable roles in this phase of the Syria programme in addition to the direct provision of opportunities through workshops, online tutoring and grants. Roles include logistic support to enable like-minded initiatives, brokering and facilitating opportunities, as well as providing a legal umbrella to enable UK universities to work with Syrian academics without an institutional "home". However, supporting these roles is also time consuming so needs to be built into programme plans as an explicit activity. In addition, a further role that participants raised and would like to see is Cara's support to increase their opportunities in Turkey.

Cara has a number of qualities that enable it to play this range of roles well, which include its relationship with UK universities through the Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network, its growing experience in this type of programme in the Middle East, flexibility in approach, legal status as a UK NGO with a higher education focus and knowledge base and a willingness to involve others and provide them space to be creative within the programme. A key quality is the value given to and focus on academics and their academic engagement and wellbeing as ends in themselves rather than instrumentalising higher education and academics.

The Syria and other previous programmes provide a good foundation for Cara to respond to other crises with a similar, but context specific, approach. A number of measures can build Cara's readiness to respond including a) building its knowledge on distance learning b) more institutionalised knowledge and skills on network and partner development c) more systematic processes to enable UK university participation and make visible their contribution and d) a guide to assess feasibility, design and implement a future programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

The programme has clearly achieved considerable results in the midst of a complex environment. The Cara Syria Programme has continued relevance to Syrian academics in exile in Turkey as evidenced by their continued engagement in it and the continued need due to conflict and risks for Syrian academics. Key features of the programme are its flexibility for participants which gives them some control over their level and focus of participation and also its multiple strands which respond to the range of different learning styles across participants, as well as the need for reinforcement of learning over time. There is some tension in programme aims between the breadth of the capacity-building aims and intention to produce and publish high quality research.

Cara has the potential to respond to other conflicts with a similar approach. While any future programme would need to be designed in relation to the particular features of a new context, the programme strands and roles Cara has taken in the Syria Programme are all relevant. Factors which may make a context relevant include a) the scale of the conflict and extent to which academics are affected and b) likely duration of a crisis (the programme is a long-term programme, not a rapid response).

The programme has grown in scope and scale and this has implications for how it is organised to enable the inputs of so many different actors and to ensure the programme's outcomes can be maximised. Implications are the need for a more formalised and structured approach to aspects of the programme. It also opens up choices for the future largely based on options for the scope and scale of the programme, range of Cara's roles and decisions around how far to support individual participants, as well as how much to invest in capturing learning to support any future programme.

The initial phases of the Syria Programme have benefitted from the flexibility and independence that its structure, run as a relatively separate entity under Cara, has enabled. The greater scope and scale of the programme, as well as the significant experience being gained in the programme relevant to Cara's future work, suggest the benefit of closer integration with the core Cara work and team.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Develop a management response to the evaluation accompanied by an action plan.
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop a longer-term strategy for the Syria Programme and within this resolve some existing tensions including: a long-term comprehensive budget and funding strategy; strategy with vision of the scale of the future programme including explicit articulation of the balance between capacity building and quality of research and clarity on the Syria Programme's links and relationship with Cara core work.
- **Recommendation 3:** Build the evidence base to support learning, fundraising and provide a resource for future programme development in Syria and beyond. Include more systematic processes to monitor participant progress and impact of research, as well as initiatives to capture and share learning e.g. through commissioning outputs to collect learning on a) methods to undertake research in volatile contexts and b) learning on ethics procedures in conflict areas.

- **Recommendation 4:** Develop an online resource which can be used in future programmes bringing together the experience of the Syria programme into a guide and resources package for Cara's support to academics in exile. Keep this as a dynamic resource bringing in new components as activities evolve but an accessible package that is user-friendly.
- **Recommendation 5:** Consider options for alternative support to female academics through a research project to identify needs, priorities and means to engage female Syrian academics who are based in Turkey and possibly in Syria if at risk.
- **Recommendation 6:** Formalise Cara's expanded roles in brokering, partnering and making visible to policymakers and practitioners the Syrian academic community in Turkey and Syria and develop strategies including resourcing to support these.
- **Recommendation 7:** Increase the attention and support given to the communication of Cara-supported research by individual research teams as well as through Cara-facilitated processes and go beyond communication in published articles and presentation in academic conferences. Activities might include capacity development inputs to communication planning and implementation as well as resourcing and facilitation of public, policy and practice engagement.
- **Recommendation 8:** Hold strategic discussion involving Cara management and governance and possibly key programme partners to discuss and make decisions on key issues including a) entry and exit pathways for participants b) aims and strategy for influencing policy on HE in Syria c) programme outcomes and aims possibly using the model used in this evaluation to clarify the hierarchy of aims. Ensure these decisions are known across the programme.
- **Recommendation 9:** Increase the transparency of decision-making in the programme. This should include broadening the Cara presence and visibility to participants and partners beyond the Syria Programme team, clarifying and (re)-communicating criteria for eligibility to participate in the programme, clarifying if there are any caps on levels of participation or resourcing (for individuals) and increasing attention to feedback and sharing rationale for project proposals' acceptance and rejection.
- **Recommendation 10:** Build on the lessons regarding how to maximise programme effectiveness including more structured and formalised preparation, articulation of roles and expectations for UK-academics and participants in RIVs and workshops, articulation of research project milestones as part of research grant management to review collectively progress and plans eg for publication. Also consider options for more intensive EAP support to enable accelerated progress.
- **Recommendation 11:** Develop processes and guidance to support and ease university involvement in the Syria programme in managing some administrative aspects eg grants. Also, develop systems to make visible universities' contributions to the programme and its impact and more systematically connect Cara-contacts in universities who are part of the Syria Programme and Scholars at Risk network.

1. Introduction

1. The evaluation of the Cara Syria Programme (SP) considers the programme's effectiveness and value for money including its efficiency and impact. The evaluation has a focus on the programmes' outputs and emerging outcomes, particularly of the research-related strands. It focused on the time period from June 2018 to October 2019¹. During this time the programme received two grants, one from the Open Society Foundation (OSF) for phase two of its funding and another from the Mellon Foundation for a pilot component focused on Arts and Humanities. The activities of the arts and humanities largely cross the activity streams 1-5 (see below) and so analysis of them is integrated across the report.
2. The Syria programme is organised around six strands of related activities. These are:
 - English language for academic purposes (EAP) (Strand 1)- provided through online tutors in one-to-one tutorials, 3-day workshops in Istanbul approximately every three months and, newly started, group English classes in face-to-face and online groups in Turkey facilitated by in-country English language teachers. Other workshops and activities also provide opportunities to use EAP;
 - Academic skills development (ASD) (Strand 2)- provided through three workshops (July, September and December 2018) and weekly online fora in the form of the webinars series and the replacement e-learn soiree² series.
 - Research incubation visits to the UK (RIVs) (Strand 3) – 3 - 8 week UK university visits for Syria Programme participants with good levels of English to enable networking, training and the development of research ideas and collaborations between Syrian and UK-based academics, as well as honorary institutional affiliation to enable continued access to the host university's online resources following return to their country of exile;
 - Cara-funded cross-cutting research focused on Higher Education in Syria– (Strand 4) – this time period included activities to disseminate the phase 1 research on Higher Education in Syria pre- and post-2011, as well as a process to identify new areas of research. Phase 2 research focused on the role of higher education in addressing the societal challenges facing Syria. There were 4 workshops to support the research process and a dissemination event in Istanbul.
 - Syria Research Fellowship Scheme (SRFS) offering small (£3K) and larger (£15K) research grants – (Strand 5), the former only open to existing Syria Programme participants and the latter through open calls, both competitive. Research is undertaken usually through the Cara research partnership model which comprises teams of a multi-disciplinary nature and involving Syrian academics working with UK-based academics who usually are the Principal Investigators (PIs) or, in the case of small grants, mentor to the team. Research was supported with 6 skills development workshops which included sessions on grant proposal and academic

¹ Some activities which continued into November and December 2019 are included. Data used is based on that provided to the evaluation in January 2020.

² E-soiree are a new format replacing webinars and have three formats:

- **Presenter and Discussant.** Syrian colleagues present on their work – max. 10 minutes – aiming to provide a context for the agreed topic on which the discussant draws and expands for a wider discipline audience.
- **In Conversation**, where two academics – which can combine a Syria Programme participant – come together to discuss and unwrap an agreed research- or teaching-related topic.
- **Master Class.** Replicates the webinars although the extended timeframe compensates for the time lost to translation.

writing and presentations. UK academics act as reviewers of proposals, mentors to individuals and groups undertaking research through small grants and Principal Investigators (PI) on larger research grants. Research teams meet in Istanbul.

- Arts and humanities-focused activities – (Strand 6) include all of the above activities again with dedicated workshops. A ten-month pilot led to an invitation by Mellon Foundation to reapply with resulting two-year programme which runs through to 30th September 2021.

3. This is the second evaluation of the Syria programme. The first, completed in June 2018, made a positive assessment of the progress of the innovative programme in its second 18-month phase following an initial 1 year pilot (1st Oct 2016-30th Sept 2017) which had largely comprised English language support for academic purposes, academic skills development, a commissioned piece of research led by academics from Cambridge University carried out with 20 Syria programme participants on higher education in Syria pre and post 2011 (the phase one research was launched in the phase being reviewed in this second evaluation). The first evaluation made 6 recommendations summarised below.

- a) Establish a more inclusive and participatory structure and/or process to develop future strategy.
- b) Increase communication within the programme [among different actors involved] to enable greater coherence and maximise impact.
- c) Review participation targets and monitor effectiveness of different levels of participation.
- d) Establish more systematic processes to assess and track progress.
- e) Establish more shared learning processes within and between strands.
- f) 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.

Developments in relation to these recommendations are considered within the following discussion.

2. Methodology

4. **The evaluation has used a mixed methods approach drawing on programme documentation, statistical analysis and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis.** It included the following activities.
 - a) Document review –including of programme proposals and reports, feedback from participants from all workshops including the transcripts of focus group discussions, Cara grant guidelines for proposals and feedback to applicants on proposals (see annex 5 for documents reviewed).
 - b) Analysis of data on participant engagement, grant applications, products of research-related activities.
 - c) Analysis of financial data on programme expenditure and budgets.
 - d) Review of content of the programme portal and other platforms established (e.g. for Arts and Humanities group and another for EAP teaching in workshops).
 - e) Evaluator participation in a meeting of EAP tutors in October 2019 at the Queen Mary University London where tutors shared experiences and lessons learned.
 - f) Observation of Istanbul workshop in November 2019 which brought together four research teams including their UK mentors and/or PIs and Syrian academics (some participants were also members of other teams).

- g) Interviews with 21 Syrian programme participants. The selection of Syrian participants from for interviews aimed to reflect a range of levels of participation but prioritised those involved in research opportunities given the evaluation terms of reference (ToR)
- h) 23 interviews with Cara and programme partners including:
 - i. Cara management and governance - Cara CEO, Chair of Cara Syria Programme Steering Committee and Cara Middle East Adviser ³and Programme Administrator (4)
 - ii. EAP tutors and coordinators for all levels (5)
 - iii. Academics involved as research mentors, principal investigators, hosts for research incubation visits and workshop facilitators (in Istanbul and also online in webinars and e-soirees) (13).

17 of the interviews were carried out face-to-face in Istanbul and the remainder by skype/phone. A full list of interviewees is in Annex 4.

i) Data analysis - was in relation to the evaluation matrix indicators which were developed at the inception of the evaluation in cooperation with the Cara SP team (Annex 6).

5. Constraints and limitations

The evaluation faced a number of methodological constraints.

a) Aggregating data for holistic understanding of programme - The programme documentation is organised in relation to donor grants and phases of donor funding. The programme phases have tended to over-run (discussed later) and overlap (e.g. the launch of Phase 1 reports on higher education in Syria took place in Phase 2 but was a Phase 1 activity). Also, documentation e.g. on small and larger grants was organised by donor rather than combined. This presented some challenges to gain a good understanding of some aspects of the programme in a holistic way and also limited some types of analysis that are possible, most relating to the budget and value for money analysis. Cara team support in bringing together some of this information into a holistic package enabled sufficient analysis for this evaluation's purpose.

b) Interviews with participants - are skewed towards those who have been successful in their application for grants and/or research incubation visits. This is due to the evaluation focus on outcomes of research-related activities and because the Istanbul- workshop that the evaluator was able to attend involved only successful grant applicants. There is therefore less detail and data from participants with more limited involvement. The evaluation made efforts to ensure these less involved participants were covered to some degree through participant interviews by phone/skype with people not involved in grants and also through review of the notes from nine participant focus group discussions (FGD) held by the programme during the year which had wider involvement of participants.

c) The scale of the evaluation - meant that some evaluation options were not feasible. These include potential options of a survey or other methods to engage more participants in providing their feedback, methods to identify their individual progress, e.g. academic skills development over the programme time period and a larger number of interviews to include more external

³ Cara's Middle East Adviser is the lead programme adviser and referred to as such at times in this report.

stakeholders involved in activities such as roundtables and research launches. Options for setting up monitoring to enable more review of these activities in the future is discussed in later sections.

d) **Gender balance in participant interviews** – only three female participants were interviewed out of the 21 participant interviews in total. This reflects to some extent the more limited involvement of female Syrian academics in the programme, also discussed later.

e) **Uncertainty about future plans** – During evaluation data collection, discussions were underway between Cara and OSF regarding its Phase 3 OSF funding. The extended discussions meant that some of its Phase 3 planned activities were delayed, although Arts and Humanities-related activities funded through the Mellon Foundation were underway. The uncertainty influenced some discussion about next steps.

3. Effectiveness and impact

3.1 Overview

6. The Cara Syria programmes aims to achieve a number of different outcomes. The evaluation inception phase used the programme documentation and discussion with the programme adviser to identify these and has used the following listing to consider the programme's effectiveness.⁴
 - a) Programme participants have accessed opportunities for academic engagement through the programme
 - b) Programme participants have developed networks and connections between themselves and with other academics internationally
 - c) High quality research products produced through international collaboration enabled through the programme
 - d) Contributions to Syria's development in Higher Education (now and future) and other subject areas
 - e) Visibility, accessibility to and engagement with programme participants and their local expertise and knowledge by policy makers and practitioners interested to inform Syria-related policy, practice and future developments.
7. Programme outputs which contribute to these outcomes are:
 - Improved English language and academic skills
 - Intermediary research products - reports, policy briefs, learning, research proposals, journal and conference papers.

⁴ This is a slightly different articulation from the list of outcomes articulated in phase 1 and the previous evaluation which identified them, based on grant proposals as: –

- 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.

The programme aims to achieve these outcomes and outputs through the activities detailed in this report's introduction above. This section focuses on the progress and scale of outputs and outcomes and considers each in turn.

3.2 Output area: skills development

8. The programme aims to develop skills in English for academic purposes (EAP) and in academic skills on the basis that this in turn will enable increased academic engagement by Syrian participants.

a) English language skills

Key finding: The programme is achieving positive results in the development of Syrian participant English language skills for academic purposes, but many participants remain frustrated at the rate of progress.

9. 107 participants are active in EAP activities with 68 participants in regular contact with online tutors and 107 participating in workshops.⁵ A further 30 participants have expressed an interest to participate in online tutoring. Of these, 12 have been matched with tutors to begin weekly sessions in 2020.
10. There is evidence of progress in the level of EAP skills among the majority of participants, but it is difficult to be precise about the scale of individual and aggregated change. Participants are divided into four levels (the fourth, highest level created in 2019 to enable more focused workshops for the participants with high level English skills). EAP tutors and coordinators interviewed report that most students have moved up a level in their EAP group since they began to participate in the programme. Between March and July 2019, 11 participants were promoted to the new Level 4; with a further 5 transitioning from EAP Level 2 to Level 3; and 4 from EAP Level 1 to Level 2 since February 2019, 30 participants have undergone APTIS tests more than once⁶. Of these, 24 showed progress and moved up a level in APTIS ratings; but six regressed and moved down a level in APTIS ratings. Across stakeholders, there is a general agreement that factors inhibiting progress are lack of time due to other life demands on participants, general aptitude and/or commitment to language learning and self-study as well as limitations in inputs of quarterly workshops and one-hour weekly one-to-one online sessions.
11. Participants expressed a view that they would like to be assessed in relation to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (APTIS does not focus on English language for academic purposes).⁷ However, EAP coordinators' interviewed considered this might not be very encouraging to participants who, on the whole, have relatively low levels of English in relation to overseas students usually joining in UK universities and taking these tests.
12. EAP tutors are well-placed to assess the progress of their tutees but this is not currently documented or analysed on an aggregated basis due, mainly, to time constraints. Individual tutors have a strong grasp of their tutee's progress and the coordinators have a sense of progress particularly through

⁵ Numbers based on data provide by Cara

⁶ APTIS is an assessment tool developed by the British Council to test English language skills across four areas in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

⁷ The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as a language of communication. It uses a nine-band scale to clearly identify levels of proficiency, from non-user (band score 1) through to expert (band score 9).

observation at workshops. Capacity constraints and fears of over-loading volunteer tutors has limited the extent to which this progress is documented (though learning agreements form an early part of participants' engagement with tutors, these seem not to be followed through closely). There is some caution among EAP coordinators to avoid making the process too bureaucratic or time demanding on volunteers. They are also keen to maintain the relationships between tutor and participant, carefully nurtured over time as relationships between equals. However, there is room for a relatively light touch system to track change, e.g. through an annual survey of tutors and participants to identify what has been learned, lessons, aims for the year ahead and any feedback to Cara they would like to make as well as more systematic use of APTIS testing to increase the proportion of participants assessed on this on a regular basis (currently 30 have undertaken APTIS tests more than once).

13. A remarkable feature of the programme has been the network of EAP tutors actively involved in providing online tuition and workshop facilitation and coordination. At the time of evaluation data gathering there were 68 active online tutors with 12 new tutors lined up to start in 2020. Cara records indicate 23 tutors have left the network with approximately 25-30 joining each year as (potential) tutors. The role played by the EAP coordinator in maintaining and developing this network is crucial and they also organise the development of courses in a well-structured way. These roles are entirely voluntary with EAP coordinators undertaking the role in addition to their "day job". The continuity of the EAP tutors (like some ASD tutors) has been a key strength of the programme and contributed substantially to its results.
14. **Participants' main frustration is with the pace of learning.** Many identify their own lack of time as a key factor in this and are highly appreciative of the input of online tutors and workshop facilitators. However, they are aware that one hour a week and a 3-day EAP workshops every 3 months is not sufficient to progress quickly. A new Cara-provided activity of group English classes in Gaziantep in face-to-face meetings or online started relatively recently. While the classes are still bedding down in terms of agreeing content, participants involved in these were strongly supportive of this input though not everyone seemed to be aware of the opportunity. Participants who have been on research incubation visits, noted the rapid progress in their confidence levels in English through its daily use over their UK visits.
15. **Interviewees shared the following ideas as options to increase the pace of learning.** They are intended to be complementary to the existing inputs rather than to replace them.
 - provide EAP intensive classes during research incubation visits to take advantage of participants' time and space in these visits when they do not have other work and family demands usually constraining study in Turkey
 - provide British Council or university-related tutors to Gaziantep and/or other locations to run more intensive workshops in locations in Turkey where groups of participants reside
 - commission a university to provide remote teaching on EAP using new technology and remote classroom possibilities (and possibly link with in-country tuition).
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b) Academic skills

<p>Key finding: There is evidence that some participants developed relevant academic skills in key areas to enable their academic engagement but the scale and depth of this is hard to assess from current data. The lack of a formal, systematic process to track change makes it difficult to gather</p>
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learning at a programme level which could be used to guide future investment in programme options. A key programme lesson is that skills development requires a multi-pronged approach to enable new skills to be embedded; this takes longer than originally envisaged for many individuals in programme plans. In addition, participants' value support in skills development for teaching as well as research.

16. Key programme activities to support the development of participants' academic skills include:
 - workshops which focus on specific skills areas e.g. academic writing
 - webinars and e-learning soirees which again focus on specific areas
 - research incubation visits that include specific skills development such as in laboratory management or other techniques and also provide exposure to UK academic processes including conferences and opportunities to sit-in on seminars
 - through practice a) as part of teams undertaking Cara-funded research on Higher Education-related subjects (strand 4) with associated workshops to support and b) through the process of application for and, if successful, implementation of research grants.
17. Evaluation interviews with participants, ASD tutors and academics involved in the programme as well as focus group discussion (FGD) transcripts indicate participants' progress in some academic skills areas. Data suggests some participants have developed their skills in qualitative research methods, in academic writing, in technical skills such as laboratory management techniques (through for instance UK visits) and in understanding of international standards and good practice as well as approaches to research. In addition, a key feature of this phase has been teamwork across disciplines to produce research that has built participant skills in project planning and management, in understanding of other disciplines and in the value of inter-disciplinary approaches. Data suggests improvements are most notable in participants who have been successful in securing Cara research grants (though again hard to judge if this is due to changed skills levels or pre-existing higher skills levels because of the absence of baseline data).
18. **Some participants note the importance of developing skills for teaching.** Areas of interest are in uses of new technology, teaching resources and skills for curriculum development. They note the usefulness of EAP to source teaching materials often only available in English and in ASD in becoming familiar with other wider range of methods for teaching and adult learning. The uses of new or enhanced skills in teaching are not currently captured in programme monitoring data and opportunities to observe these e.g. by programme facilitators are more limited than for research where the programme activities reveal strengths and weaknesses, for instance in proposals and research grant outputs.
19. **Key areas where research proposals have exposed weaknesses are in research methodology, particularly in relation to qualitative research, literature review, and in ethics and risk assessment as well as in aspects of academic writing including critical analysis.** It should be noted that elements of the risk and ethics assessment procedures have proved to be new for UK academics too who, even if experienced in this procedure are not always familiar with the range of ways to consider risks in a Syrian (conflict-related) context. UK academics note the challenges faced in participants' locating their research in the wider body of work (which may be due to a lack of familiarity with the research and/or a lack of practice in presenting research in this way) rather than just a presentation of research in isolation.

20. **A key learning in the programme has been the need for multiple approaches and reinforcement of skills areas to support their development.** While there have been workshops covering issues such as how to identify or formulate research questions, agree an appropriate methodology and how to undertake data analysis, weaknesses in these areas recur in participants' work as observed by reviewers of grant proposals and UK-based academics involved in the programme.
21. **Programme partners (Cara staff and volunteer ASD facilitators) noted that the Syria programme has tended to focus on research skills in the past 18 months rather than teaching-related skills.** This follows the introduction of calls for research. Participants note the need and their interest to rebalance the programme to serve the needs of the participants who are primarily involved in teaching as well as those taking up the research opportunities the programme provides. Support in academic skills for teaching can support participants in both their current work and future opportunities to rebuild Syrian Higher Education.
22. **Academic skills are difficult to assess and to track change. There is no formal, systematic system in place in the programme at this point.** A feature of Phase 1 was the establishment of learning agreements where, in ASD workshops, participants laid out their own aims. These documents were not closely followed up in Phase 1 and do not feature in Phase 2 of the programme. The absence of a framework identifying the areas for skills development that all facilitators, UK academics and participants are working towards, also makes this a difficult area to track. Interviews with participants and observations by UK academic mentors and PIs indicate improvement but it is not possible to quantify this in terms of change in skills levels at an individual level nor to aggregate across the programme participants.
23. There is some interest among workshop facilitators in the evolving arts and humanities strand to consider how to put in place a process to track academic skills development, which could involve both self-reflection and also facilitator/UK academic input. This could be expanded beyond the arts and humanities cohort. Any system will need to be light in terms of volunteer input and respectful of participants' experience and status, a notable feature of the programme. An interesting development is also in the current initiative to create an online foundation course which will include at least some levels of self-assessment and reflection.

3.3 Outcome area: Programme participants have accessed opportunities for academic engagement through the programme

Key finding: The number and depth of individual participants' involvement in research through Cara-provided and facilitated opportunities has increased over time though the proportion of participants accessing academic engagement opportunities is more limited in scale than those engaged in wider skills development activities. The gender imbalance in the programme is more pronounced in participation levels in research-related opportunities than in skills development activities.

24. Cara facilitates opportunities for participants' academic engagement through:
- research incubation visits to the UK
 - opportunities to undertake research through research commissioned by Cara and provision of small (£ 3000) and larger (£ 15,000) grants
 - enabling links with UK and other academics at events such as Round Tables which also bring together policy makers, planners and practitioners involved in the Syrian crisis response

- affiliation to universities which enables access e-resources and provides participants with a university-based email address, which can help in external applications, e.g. to participate in conferences
 - provision and facilitation of an academic community in webinars, e-learn soirees and the Istanbul workshops, where participants work together and with international colleagues as an academic community.
25. **16 participants have benefitted from research incubation visits.** Benefits of the visits have included establishing new connections with UK-based academics, the development of research projects already underway, the development of plans for potential collaboration on research from both within and outside of Cara funding (detailed in following sub-section) and have provided an opportunity to observe UK and international academia in action, e.g. in seminars and conferences. The majority of RIVs report positive outputs from the visits including establishing contacts, developing project plans and gaining new skills and accessing opportunities for training and networking. RIV hosts tended to see exposure to UK academia as one of the key benefits.
26. **24 participants are involved in Cara-funded research relating to Higher Education in Syria (strand 4)** – this is an increase from 15 in Phase 1 and includes 17 participants who did not participate in phase 1 commissioned research. There was notably more positive feedback regarding participation in this phase of HE-related possible reflecting the incorporation of lessons from phase 1. Key factors in phase 2 included the longer time awarded to the process, the structured approach to writing, the provision of mentoring the small groups undertaking the research and greater participation by the participants in determining the research focus. Aspects which some participants found more challenging were being allocated to a team (rather than forming their own teams), teamwork itself for some and working on issues outside of their discipline area.
27. **53 participants have participated in small and larger research grants including 19 on larger grants and 40 on small grants.**⁸ 6 participants have participated in more than one grant. There is some evidence from interviews that the Syrian team leaders of grant proposals tend to benefit most from the grant application and research process because they take on the primary role in receiving and responding to feedback and often in the academic writing along with their mentor or PI. Feedback is not always widely shared within teams by the team leader though a new initiative in December 2019 with Cara facilitating discussion of feedback with full teams may address this.
28. **There is some and potentially more integration between programme activities to build skills and experience.** While some participants have used the experience of small grants to develop larger grants, either in terms of their subject matter or skills development, there are only a small number of people who have had small grants and gone on to lead a larger grant proposal from among the participants so far. This is a potentially staged approach that could be explored. An interesting development is that the RIVs have become increasingly inter-woven with the Cara grants with a significant number of them being used to develop proposals and/or take forward part of the research projects e.g. in use of laboratory or for intensive writing phases and collaboration between Syrian participant their mentor or PI. In addition, EAP and ASD activities and strands have evolved in a more integrated way with, for instance, EAP tutors participating in research-related workshops to support research teams and also contact between EAP and ASD coordinators in the UK to liaise in

⁸ Some participants have been involved in both small and large grants.

planning and also the development of the Foundation course. This integration is beneficial to the programme's coherence.

29. **75 participants participated in webinars and/or e-learn soirees over the evaluation time period.**

The shift to the more diverse range of formats for these online sessions through the e-learn -soiree series has been positive with average attendance rates increasing from 12 to 35. Subjects covered in webinars and soirees have been relevant and wide ranging. They included subjects relevant to teaching and, more frequently research. Soirees have also provided opportunities for participants to share their research and research experiences with colleagues and so contribute to an academic community, which evaluation interviews indicate they value.

30. **Five participants have secured fixed-term affiliations to universities in the evaluation time period.**

This enables their access to e-resources as well as a university-based email address, which is beneficial when engaging internationally. An important development underway is the potential of affiliation for a further 20 participants with University of South Wales, which is likely to begin in 2020. It has also opened up some opportunities for co-supervision of PhDs with longer term support being offered by some RIV host universities. There is currently no data on how participants capitalise on their affiliation; it is an area that would benefit from follow-up with the relevant participants and possibly through university generated data (e.g. in the scale of resources accessed) through a short survey or similar method each year.

31. **16 participants have taken part in one or more Cara-facilitated round tables in Istanbul.** Three roundtables took place in June 2019 (two funded externally by GCRF) which brought participants together with international and local humanitarian responders to the Syria Crisis and academics from other parts of the world who a) had interest in higher education in places affected by conflict and b) food security. Participants interviewed noted their appreciation particularly of the chance to discuss higher education development and other conflict-affected countries' experience.

32. It is clear that participants highly value the opportunities for academic engagement. While some benefits of these are tangible as detailed in other outcomes (regarding skills, connections, networks) other are less tangible and relate to professional pride, self-respect and status.

33. There are also some (limited) financial benefits for participants in Cara-provided opportunities through for instance per diems provided for participation on larger grants and honoraria provide to those involved in the Cara-funded HE research (Strand 4). These are highly valued given the priority of most participants for a more secure livelihood, though Cara-financial support through grants is low and only direct costs are covered for small grants. Indeed, the financial support to enable research incubation visits as well as on research grants is an area highlighted by some participants and also UK academics as an area for Cara to review given the financial struggles some participants experienced in the UK.

3.4 Outcome area: Programme participants have developed networks and connections between themselves as well as with other academics internationally

Key finding: There are groups and networks of Syrian academics and between Syrian and UK academics developing through formal and informal processes facilitated by the programme and by participants themselves, but there are also constraints due to factors including political and gender dynamics.

34. Activities which have supported the creation of networks and connections have been:
- workshops bringing people together including some social activities in them
 - links created with UK academics during research incubation visits and through collaboration on research grants (with mentors and PIs)
 - through the creation of a network of expert advisers who are willing to be drawn on for a range of inputs to the programme but particularly at this stage review of grant proposals
 - EAP online tutorials.
35. Evidence of networks developed among participants is in:
- a) the creation of an Istanbul Declaration developed by the participants in the Arts and Humanities pilot strand, which was signed by participants indicating a fledging academic arts and humanities community among the 48 Syrian academics participants in the arts and humanities activities.
 - b) communication among participants outside of the programme e.g. through dedicated WhatsApp groups
 - c) strong links between participants and their individual online EAP tutor, many of these relationships have been sustained now for over one or more years (68 current regular partnerships).
 - d) planned and/or sustained contact between participants and their hosts, mentors or PIs after Cara-supported activities complete. It is early to identify the scale and depth of this contact, but evaluation interviews revealed a strong commitment from both UK academic and Syrian participants' (particularly the leads of projects) to maintain contact in well over half of the projects and Cara-facilitated relationships. RIVs contributed to plans for long-term collaboration between Syrian participants and UK-based academics, sometimes cementing pre-existing cooperation relationships facilitated through Cara, e.g. on small and larger grants but also with other academics met during the visit. There are examples from at least seven of the 16 participants who undertook RIVs and developed ideas and also firmer plans for collaboration outside of Cara-funding in agriculture, archaeology, botany, linguistics, higher education and, more provisionally, in literature. In addition, some other participants also developed proposals for Cara grants (and progressed existing grants) including in engineering.
 - e) Positive responses to requests for assistance from Cara by the network of over 200 volunteer university experts developed by Cara and partners to support the programme e.g. through grant proposal review.
 - f) There is some evidence that the participants use the network of fellow programme participants as a platform or source of contacts for planning their own initiatives to support Syrian HE.
36. Interviews with participants indicated their interest to have contact with Syrian academics in countries other than Turkey and Syria, including in Europe and the Middle East to support the creation and maintenance of the Syrian academic community. This could also include those hosted

by UK universities through the core Cara Fellowship Programme. This is an area Cara and participants could consider together.

3.5 Outcome area: High quality research products produced through international collaboration enabled through the programme

Key finding: The programme is producing a good number of research products some of which are high quality. Most larger grants and small grants, as well as activities in other strands, have or plan publications and other communication of their research. However, the pressure to publish is causing some tensions, particularly if the quality of participants' academic writing is not yet high. This also places pressure on some UK academics who have to navigate their role which at times is unclear.

Research products, including published articles in peer-reviewed journals and conference papers, are generated through the programme's own commissioned research (strand 4) and small and larger research grants (Strands 5 and 6). In addition, UK academics taking part in the programme have also generated research products from learning processes taking place within the programme; some of which involve some Syrian participants as co-authors. Furthermore, collaboration between Syrian and UK academics facilitated by, but not directly managed by, the programme will produce research products e.g. an Edinburgh University-managed GCRF grant on food security and cultures. "Cultures of expertise: Academics in exile & their role in the future of food security for Syria".

37. **So far, the majority of research products in terms of articles have been generated by Cara-commissioned research (Strand 4) and UK academics involved in skills development strands (strand 1 and 2).** Strand 4 has generated two reports and a policy brief, three published articles with a further seven in review and one pending resubmission. These concern higher education in Syria—its status and potential contribution to key social issues to be published in the peer-reviewed journal of Education and Conflict Review (currently in final stages to enable publication). Cara programme facilitators, sometimes with Syrian participant co-authors have produced nine published articles on subjects relevant to pedagogy in higher education including in areas affected by conflict.
38. **Research supported through Cara research grants (strands 5 and 6) have produced five published articles with two further articles currently in review and others in development.** The Cara Syria programme has awarded 27 research grants in this phase of the programme (a further 13 were agreed to be funded under Phase 3 of the OSF funding of the programme if the grant is agreed but they fall outside the scope of this evaluation). Most grants have yet to reach a stage at which they are ready to publish though two grants have produced articles that have been accepted and two more grants have generated articles that have been submitted and are being reviewed. A further 14 grants have work underway to finalise articles or are awaiting results of their review.⁹ Two grants (both small grants) have not produced articles nor plans to do so. Nine grants are still at the stage of finalising their implementation (these are from calls issued in December 2018 and July 2019 indicating the time taken for the research process).
39. **A number of features of the programme have supported the quality of research products.** Key steps include:
- a) grant selection process which considers methodological issues in depth

⁹ This nine does not include the articles produced as a result of Cara-funded research focused on Higher Education in Syria.

- b) technical input by UK academics as part of research in all of the above processes be that as mentors or PIs and
 - c) peer review processes of research reports and journal articles maintains the standards of outputs to be in line with international standards.
40. A challenge to the quality of the research products has been the capacity of some participants in research and academic writing and this has at times raised tensions between the programme' aims with on the one hand, aim to build capacity and on the other, aim to produce high quality research. In particular, this has placed some mentors and PIs in teams in difficult positions to determine their role and the extent to take on analytical and writing responsibilities.
41. Significant lessons in the process include:
- a) the time taken to produce high quality products is longer than originally envisaged, usually between 18-24 months. Each stage of the process has taken longer than envisaged from the finalisation of plans following feedback from the Cara grant selection committee, securing ethics approval and writing up through to submission of outputs. Data gathering has often proved to be the most straightforward stage of the process.
 - b) Most but not all Syrian participants are interested to publish research hence the unexpected development that participants with small grants aim to produce articles intended for publication (which was not originally expected as an output from the grants). In response, Cara recruited mentors to support these processes, a valuable addition to the programme and illustrative of the responsiveness of the programme to needs and opportunities.
 - c) Some UK academics are struggling with what they perceived is a pressure to publish coming from Cara to meet its funding requirements when they assess their teams not to be at a stage yet ready to publish. They see the pressure to publish as undermining some capacity-building components which need more time and space and possibly to delay any publication until a future project. Evaluation interviews regularly raised the tension between the product (research output) v process of capacity building. Others also raised the need for participants to have a base-level of skills before being part of research teams to ensure ability (and commitment) to participate and be clear on extent of a PI role in capacity building and pre-existing skills levels of teams.
 - d) The value of the feedback process and that more active dialogue around the feedback and support to participants to respond to it will enhance skills. At the moment some feedback is not well understood or not taken on board. A recent workshop in December 2019 to discuss feedback may aid this.

3.6 Outcome area: Contributions to Syria's development in Higher Education (now and future) and other areas

Key finding: The programme is already producing work of potential value to Syria's future both in its higher education system and also in other spheres. While the potential to use these outputs is uncertain given the Syrian context which continues to be highly volatile, the Cara strategy to support their use is also unclear.

42. Activities which contribute to the development of Syrian higher education include:
- research into the impact of war on Syrian higher education pre and post 2011 and also strategies and policy options for higher education in the future in five areas (role of

social sciences; cultural heritage; energy security; food security and role of education more broadly). The research findings and recommendations on the status of Syrian HE pre and post 2011 were launched in this phase of the programme in a well-attended Cara event in London in June 2019 with the participation of over 200 people at the occasion mainly, from data available it would appear to be from UK universities. The second phase research, which considered the potential role of Syrian HE in a range of areas in Syria's future was discussed at a roundtable which involved academics with similar interest areas in their conflict-affected country and also relevant policy makers and practitioners such as Norwegian Refugee Council and UNESCO. The research considering the potential roles of Syrian HE will be published in a special edition of the journal, Education and Conflict Review.

- the development of a cadre of academics with enhanced research skills. This includes all 149 participants who are active to some extent in the programme.
- development of a cadre of Syrian academics with enhanced teaching skills. Some of these academics are actively involved in providing teaching to Syrian students in Turkey and Syria, as well as potentially playing a role in the future development of HE in Syria if and when peace is established. Participants' contact with and involvement of some Syrian academics in-country who act as data collectors and in other roles e.g. informants in research projects, which maintains their professional links with former colleagues and the Syrian academic community in Turkey. The scale of this involvement is not currently compiled as part of programme monitoring.
- Nurturing of a Syrian academic community that intends to play an active role in Syria's future in their relevant sectors. This is a role that academics did not play to such a large extent in the past but is being shaped by the research on the role of HE in Syrian and exposure to UK and other academics where participants see how they work with policy.

a) Contributions to developments in Syrian Higher Education

43. The potential impact of the outputs of the programme relevant to Syria's current and future Higher Education is hard to estimate precisely but there are clear immediate benefits for Syrian students as well as potential benefits for future education policy makers and universities in Syria. Given that many of the Syrian participants are involved in teaching (numbers not known) Syrian students in Turkey and parts of non-regime-controlled Syria, the academic skills they are gaining including in teaching styles and use of technology, as well as other specific skill areas such as laboratory management are immediately being applied. The HE reports have potential to inform future education policy in Syria by both the provision of baseline data and policy recommendations on roles of Syria HE and the group of participant gaining wider skills not currently active in Syria teaching but intending to return will also play a potential influential role. However, the extent to which this potential of individuals will be realised is beyond Cara's influence at this point.
44. **A key strength has been the production of a research policy brief producing an accessible product with the key points of the HE-related research and events have involved some relevant stakeholders in Syria HE.** The research products are serving useful purposes in capturing knowledge on Syrian HE and the impact of the conflict on it and are producing policy recommendation for consideration in future HE policy development in Syrian. The activities which have been used to promote awareness of the research findings have been a Round Table in Istanbul and launch event in London. These have involved some relevant potential policy makers include UNESCO, other international responders to the crisis and a wide range of UK university representatives. In addition,

there are plans and drafts of articles underway, which will make the new reports on roles of academia in higher education in Syria more visible when published.

45. **The impact of the HE-related research outputs is somewhat limited by the limited articulation of an intended strategy to achieve impact. A strategy could clarify current and potential audiences and means to engage them.**¹⁰ There is no documented strategy for who are the key audiences for the HE-focused research. Details of who this has been distributed to, take up and response (beyond those attending the Round Table) was not available and it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to follow up with individuals participating in these events. There is currently no system to collect or track audience feedback and use of the reports. It is also not clear who in Cara would be responsible to take forward such a strategy. However the development of an influencing strategy is challenged by continuing unstable conflict and limitations in some stakeholders' scope of work e.g. UN agencies limited opportunities to engage with non-state actors as well as dynamics within the group of participants who have differing views regarding Syria's future but nevertheless there is value in Cara having a vision and clarity regarding the communication aims related to the research now and in the future. It should be noted that few, if any, Syrian female participants are involved in some of these higher-level activities.

b) Contributions to other areas of Syria's development

46. A criterion of Cara-supported research is its potential contribution to Syria's future and there is evidence that research projects are producing outputs that have actual or potential benefit to other areas of Syria's development beyond Higher Education. Some of the outputs are also relevant to other countries particularly those affected by conflict. These include those related to capacity building and pedagogy in such situations. Some examples of research products relevant to Syria's future include:
- a. conservation of Syrian resources e.g. seeds through connections and potential training from the Millennium Seed Bank
 - b. Documentation and mapping of how Syrian resources are being affected by the conflict e.g. forests, archaeology
 - c. Techniques and innovative approaches being developed to support Syria in the future e.g. in plant disease management and use of destroyed buildings in rebuilding.
47. Given the stage of development of the research projects the focus of Cara-supported activity has been very much on producing journal articles rather than wider communication processes. The key activities to promote awareness of research findings and policy implications are currently journal articles and conference paper presentation, though some Syrian participants have contacts with local authorities in non-occupied areas and other stakeholders e.g. farmer groups. Cara has also organised Round Tables in Istanbul to share some research.
48. The potential contribution of research findings to Syria-related policy and practice are influenced by:
- the scale of the Cara-supported projects
 - the extent to which research is uncovering something new
 - funding levels for communication of research (currently low)

¹⁰ There have been some activities since the evaluation data collection was complete with a further Cara roundtable on this subject held in February 2020.

- time and support given so far to develop and implement communication strategies for research projects.

3.7 Outcome area: Visibility, accessibility and engagement with programme participants by policy makers and practitioners interested to inform Syria-related policy, practice and future developments

Key finding: A new outcome has emerged in which Cara makes visible the Syrian participants as a resource to academia, policy makers and practitioners. There are some early positive results in this approach and potential to do more in this area.

49. **An emerging outcome is increased awareness among policy makers and practitioners interested in policy and practice to inform Syria's future of the Syrian academic participants and their relevant skills and expertise.** So far, visibility of the participants has been achieved through Round table events in Istanbul where there has been a small number of policy makers attending. But there has been more exposure to UK academics with similar interests e.g. through RIVs, research projects and development of the experts network, workshops and events such as the launch of the research on HE in Syria, which was attended by over 140 UK academics and promoted awareness that the research had involved Syrian academics. Conference presentations also promote awareness of their skills and existence.
50. These activities mainly involve a smaller sub-set of participants (16 Syrian Programme participants in Round Tables, 16 in RIVs with some overlap between these groups). There are few Syrian female programme participants this number: one followed a RIV this phase and none were in the Round Tables.
51. **The main results of research outputs to date have been in academia** i.e. in plans for larger scale research led by UK-based academics who have been involved in the programme; plans for research are on a scale that goes beyond the Cara-funded projects but that will enable Syrian participants' involvement in international research to continue directly and/or via Cara. Two participants are employed as consultants on a GCRF to explore food security across three countries with Syria one of these and there are plans for other projects underway. Additional participants will be involved as researchers in the project (estimated at 15). There are also additional projects in discussion at time of data gathering. There is scope to increase awareness of the participants' skills and expertise to others e.g. in INGOs and international organisations, many of which commission research for policy making and practice.

3. Value for money

52. There are detailed reports available for the programme's donor grant budgets and actual expenditure but there is not a comprehensive budget bringing together all planned costs and income for the programme for a specific time period e.g. one year. This limits some financial analysis because donor reports do not run to the same schedules and donor budgets necessarily consider all costs of running the programme e.g. Cara running costs in real terms (a contribution to Cara running costs is included in each grant). Furthermore, it is difficult to combine the two budgets due to their different budget categories which would enable a comprehensive overview of costs for all participants. The establishment of a programme budget over and above the donor grants would be useful to enable management and oversight of the programme finances.

53. That said, the evaluation undertook analysis to consider value for money in relation to the 4E framework which looks at economy (how resources are allocated and optimised), efficiency (in relation to implementation rate of the programme), effectiveness in relation to costs and equity. These are considered in turn below.

3.1 Economy

Key finding: The programme demonstrates excellent use of resources and leverages significant additional funds from external sources which contribute to the programme aims.

54. **There is strong evidence that the programme team worked towards and largely achieved optimal use of resources.** Examples of financial vigilance include care in cost of flights, choice of hotel to ensure both convenience for the workshop but also reasonable costs (a change of hotel in phase 2 from phase 1 for accommodation made considerable savings) and programme running costs.
55. **A significant feature of the programme's resourcing is the considerable resources leveraged by the programme which is well over UK£350,000 in the evaluation time period.** There is ample evidence that the programme leverages resources which are well over the conservative figure of UK£250,000 estimated by the programme team. Resources leveraged include time (monetised) of the volunteer EAP tutors, weekly E-learn Soiree presenters, and workshops facilitators, contributions made by universities to research incubation visits (e.g. waiving fees and contributing to accommodation and other costs) and the costs of some participants' ongoing affiliations to universities providing them with access to e-resources and a university email address. While a precise calculation of resources leveraged is not possible a (still conservative) estimate by the evaluation puts the resources leveraged at UK£367,000 which does not include the costs of expert advisers, mentors and PIs involved in the programme e.g. in review of proposals.¹¹
56. **The cost area which has seen an increase in expenditure since phase one is in staffing, but this remains a relatively small proportion of the overall budget for this people-intensive programme (35% of the total cost). Budgets continue to under-estimate programme running costs with some costs absorbed by Cara and the team (e.g. office running costs).** Running costs which are detailed in budgets as programme team costs and contribution to Cara running costs total 35% of the total Cara budget for phase 2 (based on OSF expenditure). This is slightly higher than phase 1 where the same category was at 28% of the project. However, the increase is necessary for the programme expansion and indeed the evaluation recommendations that highlighted the under-resourcing of the programme in terms of staff. The expenditure levels for staffing are still extremely low across the programme. Other running costs are also somewhat under-estimated due to the running costs of the office being absorbed by the consultant Programme Adviser. (see Annex 3 for more details –

¹¹ The estimate of over UK£350,000 is made up of a) 68 EAP tutors providing 40 EAP 1-hour classes per year with 1 hour for preparation/follow up at UK50 per hour: $68 \times 2 \times 50 \times 40 = \text{UK}272,000$ b) Workshop facilitators. With four at each workshop, 12 workshops per year of 3 days each. Time calculated at UK£250 per day. $5 \times 12 \times 250 = \text{UK}15,000$. C) Research incubation visits – estimate of UK£5000 to include time of academics and contributions to costs including bench fees, affiliation, other. $16 \text{RIV} \times 5 = \text{UK}80,000$. The costs of PI and mentors are much harder to estimate given the wide range of time they input and range of their costs when built into external or commercial contracts.

financial analysis). Having a limited view of the real costs may be an impediment to decision making in the future regarding other programme options for a Cara response to other conflicts.

3.2 Efficiency

Key finding: The programme is run efficiently in terms of optimising the use of resources and adapting well to an uncertain and sometimes volatile operational environment aided significantly by the increased administrative team, though this remains small. Internal and external factors continue to inhibit implementation of plans to schedule.

57. A significant change which improved the efficiency of the Syria programme implementation has been in the increase in Cara programme team, which has enabled skilled and senior personnel from both within Cara and externally to focus on more strategic elements of the programme thus using their skills and expertise more efficiently e.g. EAP volunteer coordinators have been relieved of some administrative tasks. The Cara team, now with five persons in it, increased its monitoring of progress in the programme with data and documentation tracking participant engagement and grant management vastly improved since phase one. The increased Cara team means the Cara programme adviser can focus on more strategic work rather than administration.
58. **That said, given the increased scope and scale of the programme the Cara programme remains very tightly resourced in terms of personnel which results in delays and inefficiencies.** Examples include the matching of new participants to EAP tutors which can take up to six months and workshops being organised at relatively short notice (compounded by uncertain funding situations). In addition, the lack of senior personnel in the team, alongside the programme adviser, with a complete overview of the programme and authority to take decisions continues to result in a significant dependence by Cara on a single individual to shape and steer the programme. Cara management and governance are well aware of this risk. The new appointment of a position expected by Cara to act as a deputy in the programme may address this but will need organisational support to succeed.
59. **An aspect of value for money where the programme struggles is in the implementation rate of the programme against its plan.** There are a number of reasons for delays, some of which are outside of the control of the Cara team. These include:
- a) **Late confirmation of funding in relation to anticipated grant** – Extended discussion around OSF phase 2 funding slowed down the programme activities. While activities began as scheduled in April 2018, they were at a reduced level until funding was confirmed in June 2018 which had a knock-on effect on the planned schedule of activities.
 - b) **Ethics process** - the introduction of (a very worthwhile) ethics processes to both small and large grants has resulted in delays as participants, and sometimes UK academics have struggled with these. Large grants are required to go through a UK- university ethics process and these can take time. In some cases, the processes are relatively new for the UK academics particularly in relation to working through issues in a Syrian i.e. conflict affected context. This is time that needs to be built into future plans.
 - c) **Learning about the time required to produce research outputs at publication levels** – Participants have needed more support and time to develop their academic writing skills than anticipated at programme planning stage. Participants have tended to require

considerable support to structure papers, to “locate” their research in the wider body of literature in the field and to navigate journals, in addition to language challenges. The average time to achieve outputs ready to submit for publication have been nine months in Strand 4 Cara funded HE-related research and at least this time for small and large grants being closer to 18-24 months from the time of calls being issued.

It should be noted the actual rate of publications is greater than anticipated due to teams working on small grants going ahead with producing papers for publication which was not anticipated but has often required considerable input from mentors to the team.

- d) **Late appointment of staff** - delays in recruiting new Cara staff funded under the programme meant the programme continued to be run by a single consultant for some time in 2018. A full team was only being finalised at the time of the evaluation data collection.
- e) **Logistical challenges** – Key logistical factors present challenges to precise scheduling and planning of the programme. These relate to:
 - i. the availability of participants - some are working full time as well as facing uncertainty in their lives as the political situation in Turkey and Syria remains volatile and impacts on the time they have as well as frame of mind to focus on the programme and its opportunities
 - ii. availability of UK academics can be a constraint with those volunteering to support the programme inevitably being extremely busy themselves and possibly increasingly so as UK universities seek to reduce costs
 - iii. visas – until Cara programme adviser secured, with the support of the Deputy Consul General in Istanbul, an agreement of the Regional UK Visa and Immigration department to help with UK visas, a key achievement in itself, delays and refusals for visas delayed a number of activities notably the Research Incubation Visits.

3.3 Cost effectiveness

Key finding: The programme provided considerable opportunities for Syrian participants academic engagement at low cost. It is not possible at this stage to estimate the scale of effectiveness of that engagement in terms of skills developed or impact of the research produced but in terms of opportunities taken for academic engagement the cost-effectiveness is significant. There are areas for further improvement to support greater efficiency and effectiveness of inputs to the programme e.g. in terms of UK academics’ inputs and to track outcomes to estimate cost effectiveness.

- 60. The evaluation was not able to undertake cost effectiveness analysis in terms of the costs against outcomes but did undertake analysis of costs of activities and cost per participant to provide some indication of value for money.
- 61. **The costs per participant are low.** Using the figure of 149 participants being active on the programme then within the OSF-funded phase 2 the programme costs **UK£5281 per participant**. The arts and humanities pilot costs **UK£4787 per participant** (48 participants). These are presented in summary below and available in detail in Annex 2.

Table 1: Summary of cost per participant in OSF-funded phase 2 of the Syria Programme

LINE ITEM	total expenditure UK£	Number benefitting	Cost per benefitting participants (not including Cara costs except in total) UK£
Running Costs (inc. SO Fees/Salaries/Cross-cutting costs)	168715		
Strand 1: EAP total (OSF)	114949	108	1064
Database of Syrian Academics	6720	N/A	
Online PORTAL	4450	149	30
Strand 2. Academic Skills Development (ASD)	75461	88	858
Strand 3. Research Incubation	46248	16	2891
Strand 4. Cara-commissioned Cross-cutting Research	58146	24	2423
Strand 5. Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)	158900	53	2998
Independent Evaluation	8060	N/A	N/a
Contribution to Cara Core Costs 5%	30225		N/a
Total	786,824	149	5,281

Table 2: Cost per participant on the arts and humanities pilot of the Syria Programme.

Mellon grant expenditure - pilot phase	Budget UK£	Expenditure UK£	Cost per participant n=48
Total pilot	342,481	229,789	4,787

62. More detailed analysis of costs and levels of participation show a more variable picture of costing per participant but one that still provides value for money in terms of cost per participant. It is maybe more informative to combine these two donor grants to get an overall picture of costs and also to consider them in relation to the number of different participants involved in specific activities. These costings are also useful in the following discussion on equity.

- Total cost of the programme including OSF phase 2 grant and arts and humanities pilot is **UK£1,129,305**
- Cost per participant (149) of combined income from Mellon pilot and OSF phase 2- **UK£7,579 per participant.**
- Cost per participant who is participating in research activities (77) - **UK£14,660.** This figure is calculated based on the group of 77 participants active in Cara-facilitated opportunities to undertake research in Strand 4,5 and 6. However, it should be noted it is a much smaller group of 19 participants who are active in larger grants and from these the effects appear to

be greatest often most for the Syrian team lead. The dilemma about the extent to which to focus resources on this smaller group who are more successfully taking up opportunities provided by Cara is discussed in the following equity section. (See annex 2 for further details).

63. **Issues which have reduced the cost-effectiveness of programme activities** have included the following:

- **Reduced time of research incubation visits** – any factor which has reduced the planned 3 to 8 week RIV has limited the scale of outcomes of the visits, though some, notably laboratory-based projects have opted for shorter time periods when relevant to their project. Furthermore, there is some evidence that RIVs taking place during the summer holiday period have also been of more reduced benefit to participants, particularly in arts and humanities because of the reduced opportunities for engagement with a wide groups of UK-based academics and/or other opportunities such as conferences and university life. Clarity through an agreed ToR and plan for the visit in advance (enabled by more time for preparation) were also recommended.
- **Lack of clear ToR for RIVs and UK-based academics in a range of roles (PIs, mentors, hosts, facilitators)**. A frequent comment from UK academics related to a lack of clarity regarding their role though most so far worked it through either based on their own experience and/or with the programme adviser. UK-based academics raised issues around the lack of clarity detailing in advance what is expected of individuals in workshops (particularly but not only in their first workshop), agreed expectations of host and participant in RIVs, the extent and expectations of their role as a mentor, and how to negotiate some of the ambiguities of roles. The model used in the Strand 4 Cara-funded HE-related research in which there was a lead academic to guide and support the mentors involved in each research group with authority to take decision on how the groups should progress and roles mentors should and should not take (e.g. do not act as translators or take on writing roles in the team but work closely with at least one team member in this) worked well. This is a model that could be a basis for other research groups too, particularly those working on small grants, but possible to facilitate larger grants when PIs noted they would appreciate more understanding of how other PIs are negotiating some dilemmas e.g. through a session at the end of workshops. Academics also noted the potential usefulness for them if they were provided with more background on what workshops and inputs their team members have already followed on the Cara programme e.g. writing skills resources.
- **Short notice of workshops and limited communication of the programme’s longer-term schedule and activities** – UK academics noted the challenges they faced when the schedule for workshop and other programme activities are agreed or changed at short notice. Many of them need at least 3-6 months’ notice to be able to block time for Cara. While the programme has struggled to provide this due in part to funding uncertainty there appears to be significant room to improve notice of the programme’s schedule. Most people involved in the programme are extremely sympathetic to the challenges of the operational context including the political environment of Syria, participants’ time constraints and the funding environment but are able to be flexible only up to a point. Mentors, PIs and hosts also noted the limited information provided to explain what else was going on in workshops alongside their meetings with research teams.

- **There may be potential linkages that can be made with the wider Cara programme of activities including the fellowships which will increase the impact of the programme.** There is potential linkage with the fellowship programme and in supporting the impact of research products. The Syria programme has run quite independently from Cara core programmes, albeit in a way that ensures oversight and full information by the management and governance of Cara, but with limited linkages between teams and activities. This is exacerbated by the physical separation of the teams and means the programme is not necessarily perceived as core work of Cara nor as fully understood by all Cara staff as it could be which in turn limits their potential to support it e.g. with administrative support.
- **The lack of documentation to enable handover of functions when staff change** – much of the knowledge of how certain activities are done in the programme is held by the team but not documented e.g. in terms of operating the portal, matching EAP tutors and participants. There would be value in documenting this to support handover when new staff start.¹² This is discussed later in relation to capturing the lessons from the programme for future potential responses.

3.4 Equity

Key finding: The programme approach is one which prioritises equity in terms of meeting individuals' priorities and needs but is challenged by gender dynamics. It also lacks explicit criteria to guide what is equitable resource allocation across all and therefore to individual participants.

64. A significant feature of the programme, which has increased over time and contributes to an equitable approach, is its customised approach to individuals. The programme has a set of activities available to all programme participants, and the Cara team and others involved work hard to customise opportunities including RIVs and UK links to match closely with the participants' own priorities. There is some indication this has been more difficult for Cara to achieve for arts and humanities participants. The approach is time consuming but is one that illustrates respect for individuals' professional experience and needs and is an admirable feature of the programme. While the grants for research are awarded on a competitive basis, Cara has also aimed to create opportunities for others to carry out research though the opportunities provided in the research it funds focused on Higher Education in Syria.
65. An equity-related issue raised in the first evaluation and one about which Cara is well aware is the gender imbalance in the programme in terms of the number of men and women accessing the opportunities provided in the programme. The Syria programme has taken significant steps to address this for instance providing funding for female academics with children to bring those under ten to the workshops and actively seeking out female academics mainly through word of mouth via participants and their networks. Participants' report that challenges to achieve balance in terms of numbers include the smaller pool of female academics from Syria in Turkey and constraints on their ability to travel and attend workshops.
66. **However, a notable feature is that the imbalance in numbers becomes more pronounced with the more advanced opportunities** e.g. there are only three female participants active in research activities supported under small and larger grants (based on figures provided by Cara for grants up

¹² Some work on documenting internal processes is now underway.

to October 2019). The Cara team is aware of the issue and has seen some small but positive progress to more involvement of women in teams particularly since the launch of the arts and humanities pilot as well enabling children to be brought to Istanbul during workshops but the ongoing imbalance deserved ongoing attention.

67. **The continued gender imbalance raises the question of whether the programme is addressing the priorities of female academics.** Some participants felt female academics maybe more likely to focus on teaching. Others, that they would prefer research and skills development opportunities that required less travel within Turkey and internationally. The inclusion of some gender-focused research in either Cara-commissioned research or other work could look into this question in more detail.
68. **There is some debate among participants regarding who is eligible to benefit from the programme.** This relates in particular to whether participants without PhDs should be considered and also what type of institution constitutes an academic organisation (the two criteria participants understand to be criteria for participation but which in fact differs from that defined by Cara¹³). There are a number of participants who have master's degrees only and some worked in organisations outside of universities as researchers or in other roles who some participants view as not eligible. The evidence from the programme suggests these participants are participating fully and achieving good results but some participants feel this is a bending of the Cara criteria or rules. The centrality of the programme adviser to the programme with participants having no contact with other senior Cara personnel exposes the adviser to accusations of favouritism despite efforts to be equitable across the programme. More transparent decision-making and shared criteria or increased communication of existing criteria for decisions can help address this. Participants also raised concerns regarding the support provided to Syrian academics who had already had experience in international settings before the programme began and thus were better equipped to succeed in processes such as grant applications. They pointed to the capacity building aim of the programme and that some successful grant recipients were not in need of capacity but were absorbing limited Cara resources.
69. **A dilemma facing the programme concerns the extent to which resources should be distributed between participants equally or focus on people able to grasp the opportunities available and/or highest quality research.** This is an issue raised to some extent in the previous evaluation. As the figures above show the resource allocation to people involved in research is more than double those who are not active in research but maybe working academically in teaching. The imbalance is even greater if the focus of resources on people in larger grants is taken into account. This question links to the dilemma of whether the programme focuses on the producing high-quality research which would suggest a focus on supporting the most highly-skilled academics rather than a focus on building the capacity of a broader group. There is no correct answer to this dilemma, but it is rather one for the programme to continue to consider and potentially make explicit the grounds for resource allocation and decision-making of what and who to support, for how long and to what level of resources.

¹³ Cara defines an 'academic' as someone who has held a post as a lecturer and/or researcher in a higher education institution or equivalent. Cara does not distinguish between seniority, gender or discipline.

4. Discussion

4.1 The model

70. **The following diagram summarises the key activities provided by Cara and programme partners and the intended results of the Cara Syria programme.** The model shows the range of activities currently being undertaken (here they are removed from the confines of the structure of “strands”) and shows that they together contribute to a series of outputs and outcomes. The progress of an individual through the programme is not necessarily linear but the programme does have a hierarchy of results. This model suggests the priority is the intermediate outcomes i.e. academic engagement of Syrian participants as well as networks developed rather than the quality of the research or later impact.
71. **There are a number of key lessons that can be drawn from the programme experience to data which will be important for any future similar response.** These include:
- The importance of having foundation level or entry level skills and level of understanding of some key academic skills areas and concepts. A new online learning course is in development that will aim to cover these and should facilitate new entrants’ inclusion in the programme. Further consideration of skill levels required for research grants and international cooperation maybe useful.
 - The relevance of subject-focused skills development approaches– there are high satisfaction levels with subject-specific or more focused opportunities be that through initiatives such as the arts and humanities pilots, grants for research or through RIV which enable a focus on specific skills of interest to the participant.
 - Recognition of the importance of mentors even for small grants
 - The need for multiple approaches to develop skills and that this takes time.
 - The long time period needed for some to move from identifying a project idea and draft proposal to its finalisation and production of research products (18-24 months).
 - The importance of ethics and risk assessment processes but these can be lengthy
 - The importance of providing terms of reference to UK-based academics to clarify roles and expectations, to ensure understanding among Syrian participants of the UK academics’ roles and communication of the wider structure of the programme to hosts, mentors, PIs.
 - Value of learning about research through teamwork and the support that is needed to enable this, including practical tools such as project planning and clarifying roles, responsibilities and expectations of each other as well as understanding of other disciplines.
 - The value of RIVs increase with their duration.
 - The value for UK academics to be informally buddied with an experienced facilitator in their first workshop.
 - The importance of support, including financial support to the dissemination/communication process undertaken by research teams (as well as Cara-facilitated communication processes) alongside research team’s production of reports and articles.
 - The value of a strong facilitator tasked to support mentors working with groups in research production and the potential for such a role to facilitate learning and discussion among PIs across research teams.
 - The need for a strategic and structured approach with a clear schedule to enable the participation of UK-based academics in the programme while maintaining a flexible approach in a volatile environment.
 - The value of close cooperation between EAP and ASD in delivering their programme inputs.
 - The value of a variety of online learning and academic engagement opportunities.

CARA SYRIA PROGRAMME

Impact

Contributions to improved policy and practice in Syria development in Higher Education (now and future) and other areas

Visibility, accessibility and engagement with programme participants by policy makers and practitioners interested to inform Syria-related policy, practice and future developments

Outcomes

High quality research products international collaboration enabled

produced through through the programme

Intermediate Outcomes

Programme participants have accessed opportunities for academic engagement through the programme

Programme participants have developed networks and connections between themselves and with other academics internationally

Outputs

Improved skills in English language for academic purposes and other academic skills

Intermediate research products- reports, policy briefs, learning, research proposals, papers

Portal and online platforms

Research Incubation visits

Webinars and e-soirees

Academic Partnerships through Cara brokering

Workshops (Istanbul) - EAP, ASD

One-to-one support (EAP tutoring)

Grants for research (group)

Round tables and wider advocacy to promote understanding of and action on education in Syria and other conflict-affected areas.

Activities

CARA roles

- Secure funding
- Recruit participants
- Develop networks of partner organisations and volunteers to provide EAP and ASD
- Organise workshops
- Identify hosts for and facilitate RIVs
- Brokers partners for research projects
- Runs communication and advocacy activities - round tables, meetings with key donors

Underlying principles

- Professional respect and equality between academics
- Care for the dignity of the participants
- Customisation of programme opportunities to meet individual priorities
- Responsiveness to opportunities and flexibility in programme evolution
- Partnership between individuals and organisations delivering the programme

4.2 Cara roles

72. Cara has taken on a range of roles in this phase of the Syria programme which go beyond the direct provision of opportunities through workshops, online tutoring and grants. Roles include:
- a) **Logistic support to enable like-minded initiatives** – Cara has provided logistical support for initiatives which involve the Syrian participants in activities which are in line with its aims. These include Round Tables on academic writing and education in conflict-affected countries funded by the British Academy.
 - b) **Brokering opportunities** – Cara has facilitated contact between Syrian and UK academics to enable them to work together in activities which are funded outside of the programme and in which Cara might continue to play a facilitatory role or no role. An example of this is the cooperation with Edinburgh University in which Cara enabled the Global Academy for Food and Agriculture to meet the Syrian academics, the Syrian participants' involvement in developing the agenda of the research and is continue to provide some logistical and possibly capacity building roles to support the initiative. In these examples UK academics noted the value of Cara's access to Syrian academics, the support the participants receive in terms of academic skills, logistics in bringing people together and also the University's confidence that any funds would be well managed and reported on to enable their management of the wider grants they are funded through.
 - c) **Providing a legal umbrella** – Cara enables UK universities to work with Syrians by providing a legal institution with which universities can partner and through which they can then access and engage with the Syrian participants. UK universities often have to engage with academics who are part of an institution and by definition the Syrian refugees do not have such affiliation, but Cara can provide this and universities value working with an NGO. This Cara role in particular is one that evaluation interviews found UK academics valued as they consider ways to continue their research in cooperation with their Syrian colleagues funded and operating outside of the Cara framework. In some of these cases the research funded under the Cara large grant in effect acts as the feasibility study or pilot project gathering evidence which may enable the UK academic to access larger funds from Research Councils and other donors. In these cases, the research is very clearly in line with the interests of the UK academics as well as the Syrians. The Syrian academic provides both access to the Syrian context which otherwise may be in accessible to UK academics (e.g. they cannot travel there for fears of restriction on US visas in the future, security) as well as skills as part of the team and their active engagement in the research, thus benefitting all parties.
73. The evolution of these less visible roles has created important pathways for some Syrian academics to move beyond the constraints of the Cara Syria programme to more sustainable academic engagement and indeed livelihood opportunities e.g. as part of GCRF and other funded large-scale projects. However, supporting these roles is also time consuming so needs to be built into programme plans as an explicit activity.
74. **A role that participants raised that they would like to see increase is Cara's support to increase their opportunities in Turkey.** Political developments in Turkey limited the original intention to have greater Turkish involvement in the programme but more recently there has been an increase in cooperation in a limited number of research grants with members of research teams from Turkish universities and some universities providing facilities e.g. laboratory facilities to projects.

75. For the majority of participants, the short-term future is in Turkey and so support to enable their ability to work from within Turkish academia as researchers and teachers within their own field. Constraints include political uncertainties in Turkey particularly in relation to universities as well as for refugees' ability to stay in-country, language requirements for academics (Turkish), legal status of refugees in relation to employment. The potential for Cara to support opportunities for academic engagement for Syrian refugees in Turkey is an area that would be useful to look into further and also to explore as a potential component for responses (opportunities in the host country).

76. Qualities that Cara brings to enable it to play this range of roles are varied and include:

- a) Contacts with and respect from UK universities particularly through the Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities network though the representatives of these in each university could be more closely linked to other people in the universities involved in the Syria programme e.g. as PIs, hosts, EAP tutors, other.
- b) Knowledge of the Middle East though this is largely held by the programme adviser.
- c) Flexibility to support the evolution of the programme in a volatile environment aided by supportive donors and also being a small organisation without multi-layered decision-making structures that can inhibit nimbleness of programme in response to opportunities.
- d) Legal status as UK NGO with a higher education focus and knowledge base
- e) Openness and attitude of being willing to involve others and provide them space to contribute to and create within the programme.
- f) Value given and focus on academics and their academic engagement and wellbeing as ends in themselves rather than instrumentalising higher education and academics to contribute to other aims, though this is also a benefit of the programme.

4.3 Identifying success

77. **Based on interviews, there is an overall consensus of aiming to enable participants' academic engagement.** The model above details the outcomes that the programme aims to achieve. There is some variation among stakeholders regarding the emphasis they give different outcomes and also outputs (skills developed) based in part on stakeholders' own area of involvement e.g. EAP tutors are most focused on the EAP skills developed rather than later research products. It could be a useful discussion to hold among stakeholders including Cara governance structures overseeing the programme if there is agreement in the articulation of outcomes using this model as a basis for discussion.
78. **As mentioned earlier Cara's monitoring of the programme's progress in some areas has improved.** There is good documentation for participants' engagement and the close tracking of research proposals and grants along with their products in terms of publications and conference papers. Initiatives such as the regular evaluations and also some of the academic articles drawing lessons from the programme are also valuable in articulating some of the lessons from the programme for how and why outcomes are or are not achieved.
79. **There are important areas where more systematic monitoring can provide data to build the evidence base and learning from the programme as well as data to enable analysis and decision-making.** Areas where there is room to develop and value in developing more systematic processes to track the programme's progress towards outcomes are in:
- a. skills development in both EAP and ASD
 - b. impact of research including its uptake and use

- c. outcomes for participants which are relevant to teaching
- d. use of university affiliations.

It may be useful to present reports on the programme's progress more in relation to their achievement of outcomes as well as the description of activities undertaken, value though there is in this data.

4.4 Future options for Cara in crisis response in Syria and beyond

80. **Building on experience to date, Cara has options in relation to the future development of the Syria programme and also in relation to future crises.** Cara has undertaken programmes in response to three crises which go beyond the Cara core Fellowship Programme and involve activities in countries outside of the UK, in response to crises in Zimbabwe, Iraq and Syria. Through these programmes Cara has built up a body of expertise though expertise and experience that is largely undocumented and held by a small group of key individuals from within and outside of Cara.

81. Regional response programme as core?

There is discussion within Cara as to whether the Cara Syria programme and responses to crisis of this type (i.e. support to academics at risk through activities and to academics who continue to be based outside of the UK) should be seen as core business rather than stand-alone satellite projects to Cara's core function

The benefits of being core business could be:

- a) resources (including staff) could be shared across the organisation e.g. Cara staff on other activities be drawn on for the Syria programme when needed, synergies between the different programmes be identified, explored and capitalised upon e.g. learning on EAP be transferred to the fellowship programme
- b) fellowships be provided as an option for Syrian academics in Turkey in some instances
- c) the options and programme components provided in Turkey could be considered for academics at risk in other countries to individuals and/or groups
- d) knowledge of the programme approach would be held at a more corporate level
- e) Cara adoption of the programme could provide more financial stability to the programme and enable a broadening of its financial base
- f) Planning and work to prepare for future proposals.

It is not clear what are the disadvantages of the Syria or similarly focused programmes being considered core unless it reduces the flexibility of the programme or places time demands upon it and the SP team.

82. Organisational readiness to take on other crises?

The regional programmes have developed a menu of options which support academics in exile to continue academic engagement. Each component of the Cara Syria programme as well as the new roles that are evolving can to some extent stand alone, though have greatest impact when combined. They provide a menu of options to consider when designing a future response to a crisis which would need to be based on an assessment of needs and opportunities in the particular context of that crisis.

Skills and resources needed in Cara to enable a readiness to support such programmes in other locations include:

- a) Knowledge on distance learning including through evolving technology for remote teaching and learning (useful for current SP too)
- b) More institutionalised knowledge and skills on network and partner development currently held primarily by the programme adviser
- c) More systematic systems processes to enable UK university participation – interviewees suggested i) ways to smooth the universities participation in the project e.g. in managing grants which some universities have found difficult and time-consuming given their small size and differences from their usual grants ii) clarity in expectations of inputs and time commitment of UK academics to ensure expectations are managed on all sides.
- d) More systematic process to make visible and recognise UK universities' contribution such as i) greater public recognition of UK universities contributions through publicity and possibly even a prize; ii) systematic gathering of evidence of the impact of individual academics and universities involvement in the programme be that for Syria, an academic field, refugees or other communities;

Products based on the Syria programme experience which would support any future programmes include:

- a) Guide on how to assess the feasibility of a response – what factors to look for in terms of need, opportunities and risks; who to engage with and how.
- b) Resource pack which collates the materials used as content for EAP and ASD in an accessible pack which could be used in the future workshops. This would be a detailed curriculum of what has been followed as well as resources from individual sessions. Many of these currently sit on a wide range of people's computer hard drives and are at risk of being lost.
- c) Lessons on *how to do* certain activities – a guide to design and implement a programme.

83. **The continued need for the Syria programme is evidenced in the numbers still joining the programme newly, the ongoing conflict and the skills levels and capacity building needs of the participants.** Options for the future are largely based choices about the scope and scale of the programme, Cara roles and how far to support individual participants. New ideas are also likely to emerge as the context evolves.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The programme has clearly achieved considerable results as detailed in the sections above dealing with outcomes. This has been in the midst of a complex environment with a volatile operational context in Turkey and Syria during the period considered in this evaluation. This evaluation focuses on the period up to end of October 2019, but it is noted that there have been some developments since then in programme activities, only some noted here in footnotes. The programme continues to evolve and respond to opportunities. The main conclusions and recommendations are detailed below.

5.1 Conclusions with SWOT analysis

The evaluation conclusions are based on an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the programme aims (achievement of outcomes) identified in the findings presented in this report. These are summarised below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong network of partners delivering the Syria programme central to which are UK universities • Relevant programme of skills development to support participants • Tailored approach to support participants' • The partnership approach to research production involving UK-based academics as PIs and mentors with Syrian academics. • Relevance of research products to Syria and other conflict-affected contexts • Enabling opportunities for publication for participants • Breadth of network of UK academics involved and supported. • Scale of volunteer inputs and resources leveraged by the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small administrative team supporting the programme with few at senior level • Mixed views regarding the priority results of the programme in particular regarding the quality of research v capacity building of participants. • More limited attention and very limited data on benefits for and of participants active in teaching. • Limited support to participants in Turkish context. • Gender imbalance
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK-based academics continuing work with participants without Cara funding or direct management • More active linking of participants to policy and practice stakeholders who may use research and/or involve participants (thus providing livelihood support) • Increase connectivity between Cara other programmes and Syria programme • Increase connectively between Cara network of contacts at universities through e.g. the Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities network with the individuals involved in the Syria programme including EAP tutors and academics. • Raise the profile and document the impact of the UK universities' support to and participation in the Syria programme. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited monitoring of longer-term results reduces the evidence base for the programme's results which in turn may prompt more understanding of why certain strategies are or are not successful. • Limited funding base makes the programme vulnerable to delays in decision making and changes in donor strategies or priorities. • Limited options for participants' livelihoods within academia in Turkey. • Challenges to a structured approach usually due to breaks in funding which in turn can limit UK academics' engagement • Lack of connectivity with core Cara work limited organisational commitment to and understanding of the programme. • Limited exposure of participants and partners to Cara beyond the Syria programme adviser reduces the strength of the relationship with Cara.

84. **The Cara Syria Programme has achieved significant results in terms of its intended outputs and towards outcomes though there is some tension between outcomes.** The programme has resulted in improved skills and networks among academics and in particular in its intention to enable academic engagement by Syria academics in exile in Turkey. There is also emerging evidence of relevant, high quality research outputs with potential to make contributions to Syria's future in higher education and other areas, in the support for and promotion of a cadre of academics with expertise relevant to policy and practice in Syria now and in the future. There is some tension between the programme's aims to build participants' academic skills capacity and to aim to produce publication of high-quality research.

The Cara Syria Programme has continued relevance to Syrian academics in exile in Turkey as evidenced by their continued engagement in it and the continued need due to conflict and risks for these academics if they return. It is clear there is a continuing need for the opportunities the Cara SP provides evidenced by both the numbers of new people approaching Cara, the continuity of existing participants' involvement and also the skills levels demonstrated by participants to date which, for many show scope for further development. The activities undertaken by the programme are appreciated by participants and are relevant to the intended outcomes. Key features of the programme are its flexibility for participants which gives them some control over their level and focus of participation and also its multiple strands which respond to the range of different learning styles across participants as well as the need for reinforcement of learning over time.

85. **The programme also has relevance for future programmes Cara may run in response to other conflicts.** While any future programme would need to be designed in relation to the particular features of a new context the strands and roles Cara has taken are all relevant. Factors which may make a context relevant include a) the scale of the conflict and extent to which academics are affected and b) likely duration of a crisis (the programme is a long-term programme, not a rapid response).
86. **The programme has grown in scope and scale and this has implications for how it is organised to enable the inputs of so many different actors and ensure the programmes' outcomes can be maximised.** The programme has grown in the numbers of participants involved, the number of activities run under the programme, the number of individuals involved as partners in the programme delivery and the range of roles that Cara is undertaking. At the same time the programme has held on to an approach which customises support to participants, which is a key strength but time demanding. Implications for the increased scope and scale include the requirement for more formal articulation of expectations of contributors as hosts, mentors, facilitators and PIs as well as guidance for how to navigate challenges.
87. **The initial phases of the Syria Programme have benefitted from the flexibility and independence that its structure, run as a relatively separate entity under Cara has enabled. The greater scope and scale of the programme, as well as the significant experience being gained in the programme relevant to Cara's future work, suggest the benefit of close integration with the core Cara work and team for Cara.**
88. **The programme demonstrates strong value for money but there are areas for improvement to ensure cost effectiveness is maximised.** The programme has made considerable achievements in an extremely difficult context due largely to the commitment, flexibility and innovativeness of the Cara Syria Programme team and its partners working to develop and deliver the programme. Some

external factors have made planning difficult but more stable funding, a longer-term outlook and continuing to improve internal administrative and team working systems can help support greater efficiency and structure in the programme.

5.2 Recommendations

89. **Recommendation 1: Develop a management response to the evaluation** recommendations stating if they are accepted or rejected (with a rationale). If accepted, develop a plan with named person and timings for implementing recommendations.
90. **Recommendation 2: Develop a longer-term strategy for the Syria Programme and within this resolve some existing tensions.** This should include:
 - a) A comprehensive 3-year annual budget that can be revised at regular periods.
 - b) A funding strategy to expand the resource base of the programme.
 - c) An articulation of the Syria Programme's links and relationship with Cara core work.
 - d) Explicit articulation of the balance between programmes aims to build capacity and produce and publish high quality of research.
 - e) A vision of the scale of the future programme, any limits to individuals' participation based on i) lack of progress and/or commitment ii) achievement of high levels of skills so with the potential to be independent of it and/or iii) caps on resources or numbers of opportunities available to an individual participant.
 - f) Clarify and (re)communicate eligibility criteria particularly in relation to potential participants with Master's degrees qualifications and also those with international academic experience outside of Syria.
91. **Recommendation 3: Build the evidence base to support learning, fundraising and provide a resource for future programme development in Syria and beyond.** Include a more systematic method to track progress in skills development (EAP and ASD e.g. through self-assessment, tutor assessment and more systematic and comprehensive use of tools such as APTIS); impact of research (including its longer term communication); participants' use of available resources and their benefits eg of university of affiliation and; teaching-related results of the programme and impact. Capture and shared learning e.g. through commissioning outputs to collect learning on a) methods to undertake research in volatile contexts and b) learning on ethics procedures in conflict areas.
92. **Recommendation 4: Develop an online resource which can be used in future programmes bringing together the experience of the Syria programme.** This includes curriculum and structure of strands including workshops as well as key resources to be drawn on in delivery of workshops and tutorials (EAP and ASD) as well as an outline description or other guidance of other inputs e.g. portals, RIVs guidance. Bring these together into a package which is a Guide and Resources to support academics in exile. Keep this as a dynamic resource bringing in new guidance as activities evolve but an accessible package that is user friendly.
93. **Recommendation 5: Consider options for alternative support to female academics** through a research project to identify needs, priorities and means to engage female Syrian academics who are based in Turkey and possibly in Syria if at risk.

94. **Recommendation 6: Formalise Cara’s expanded roles in brokering, partnering and making visible to policymakers and practitioners the Syrian academic community in Turkey and Syria and develop strategies to including for resourcing to support these.** These roles are time consuming and so should be built into programme plans as well as maintaining the culture which is responsive to opportunities which emerge.
95. **Recommendation 7: Increase the attention and support given to the communication of Cara-supported research** by individual research teams as well as through Cara-facilitated processes and go beyond communication in published articles and presentation academic conferences. Activities might include capacity development inputs to communication planning and related skills as well as resourcing and facilitation of public, policy and practice engagement.
96. **Recommendation 8: Hold strategic discussion involving Cara management and governance and possibly key partners involved in developing and delivering the programme to discuss and make decisions on key issues** including a) entry and exit pathways for participants b) aims and strategy for influencing policy on HE in Syria c) programme outcomes and aims possibly using the model used in this evaluation to discuss the hierarchy of aims. Ensure these decisions are known across the programme.
97. **Recommendation 9: Increase the transparency of decision-making in the programme.** This should include the following:
- a) Broaden the Cara presence and visibility to participants and partners beyond the Syria Programme team.
 - b) Clarity and (re) communication regarding criteria for eligibility to participate in the programme and any caps on levels of individuals’ participation or resourcing.
 - c) Sharing the full list of research projects and team members involved among the whole group considered and which rejected and accepted.
 - d) Develop the new initiative to discuss feedback on rejected proposals.
98. **Recommendation 10: Build on the lessons regarding how to maximise programme effectiveness including:**
- a. more structure and time in preparation for RIVs which should be maintained at the original plan of 6-8 weeks unless there is a specific short-term task to complete and agreed by host and visiting participant(s).
 - b. include more formalised milestones for larger grants (and some small grants) to enable a structured review of the process and products involving at least the PI and Cara SP team and if appropriate any revision of team composition, intended products (e.g. if publication not feasible this is an option) and to provide a means to track progress of the collective body of work.
 - c. more structure and formal agreements and guidance to academics involved in the programme on their role.
 - d. more in-depth discussion around feedback on failed proposals with the whole team involved in submissions
 - e. consider options for more intensive EAP support to enable accelerated progress.
99. **Recommendation 11: Develop processes and guidance to support and ease university involvement in the Syria programme.** Steps include a) guidance and tips on managing Cara grants within university systems b) processes to enable high profile recognition of individual university’s

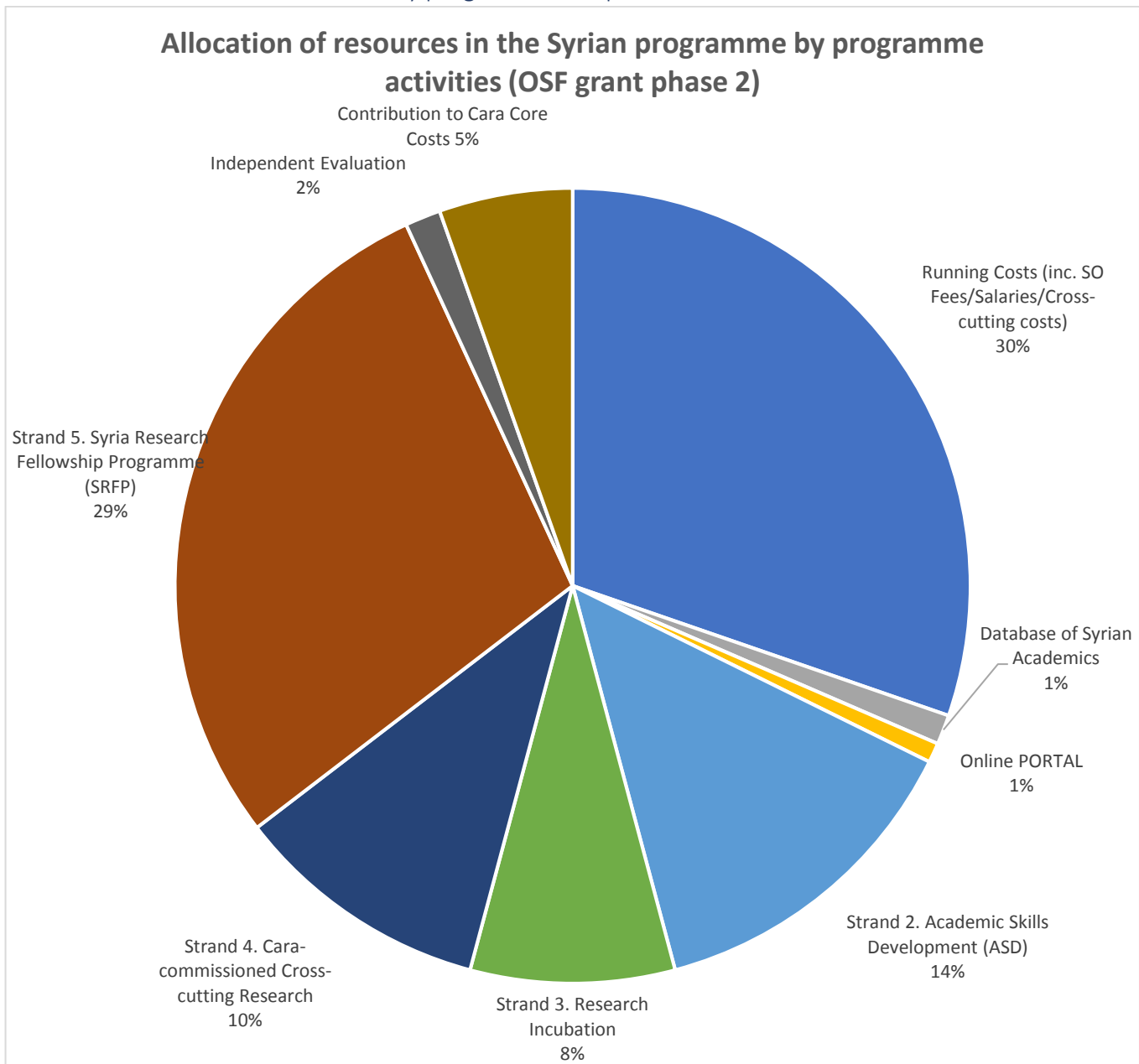
contribution to the Syria programme c) gathering and communicating back to universities evidence of the impact of the Syria programme and the activities or projects supported by the university in particular d) bringing together the different people involved in individual universities with whom Cara has contact across its programmes.

Annex 1 Participant engagement rates in the programme

Activity	Number of participants	Comments
Participants in 1 or more strand	149	149
Number of female participants	18	12%
Female participation		Only 3 receive SG or LG from OSF
EAP participants online	68	30 more have registered for EAP online but await matching with a tutor. 12 of the 30 are now matched to begin online tutorials in 2020.
EAP participants workshops	96	Average of 31 per workshop
Number showing improvement - APTIS	24	
Number showing no progress	0	
Number who have regressed	6	
Other progress- EAP		Over the reporting period, 11 participants were promoted to the new Level 4; with a further 5 transitioning from EAP Level 2 to Level 3; and 4 from EAP Level 1 to Level 2.1
Total attending 1 or more e-soirée	75	E soiree ranges from 17-35 with average of 31
Participants at ASD workshops		Average attendance 45.
Webinar attendance per participant		Highest number per participant = 33; most much fewer than this - 10 or fewer
Webinar attendance per webinar		Average 12 ranging from 5 to 19
Strand 4 participants phase 1		15
Strand 4 participants phase 2		24
Small grants- OSF and A H pilot		40
Large grants - OSF and A H pilot		19
Total participants involved in grants/research teams		53
University affiliation		USW-Cara Syria Programme Fellowship Scheme, with the support of the Vice Chancellor. The scheme will offer 5-year renewable USW 'Honorary Fellow' affiliation to up to 20 Syria Programme participants with sufficient English to benefit from access to USW's online resources. Plus 5 in other places following RIV
Expert network		Over 160 university education and discipline experts were registered with the Syria Programme by the end of the reporting period. The number has since risen to over 225 - [from report to OSF, details in database].

Annex 2 Financial analysis

2.1 Allocation of resources by programme component



2.2 Cost per beneficiary

OSF Phase 2¹⁴

LINE ITEM	total expenditure UK£	Number benefitting	Cost per benefitting participants (not including Cara costs except in total) UK£
Running Costs (inc. SO Fees/Salaries/Cross-cutting costs)	168715		
Strand 1: EAP total (OSF)	114949	108	1064
Database of Syrian Academics	6720	N/A	
Online PORTAL	4450	149	30
Strand 2. Academic Skills Development (ASD)	75461	88	858
Strand 3. Research Incubation	46248	16	2891
Strand 4. Cara-commissioned Cross-cutting Research	58146	24	2423
Strand 5. Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)	158900	53	2998
Independent Evaluation	8060	N/A	N/a
Contribution to Cara Core Costs 5%	30225		N/a
Total	786,824	149	5281

¹⁴ Figures based on Actual expenditure 31st July 2019 and estimated expenditure to 31st December.

2.3 Further financial analysis

Syria Programme Expenditure- Phase 2 – OSF grant

Exchange rate

0.7882289

LINE ITEM	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE 1	ESTIMATED EXPEND.	BALANCE 1	Total exp	Total expenditure US\$	total expenditure UK£	Number benefitting	Cost per benefitting participants (not including Cara costs except in total) UK	Expenditure as % of whole	Comment
	\$	1Oct17-31Jul19	as at 31st July 19	1Aug-31 Dec2019	as at 31st Dec. 19							
Running Costs (inc. SO Fees/Salaries/Cross-cutting costs)	\$202,505	-161179	41326	-52863	-11538	-214043	214043	168715			25	
Strand 1: EAP total (OSF)	\$161,180	-\$145,832	\$15,348	\$0	\$15,348	-\$145,832	\$145,832	114949	108	1064		
Database of Syrian Academics	\$5,113	-8525	-3412	0	-3412	-8525	8525	6720	N/A		1	
Online PORTAL	\$5,113	-5646	-533	0	-533	-5646	5646	4450	149	30	1	
Strand 2. Academic Skills Development (ASD)	\$87,314	-95735	-8421	0	-8421	-95735	95735	75461	88	858	11	Does not include new additions in 12/19 workshops
Strand 3. Research Incubation	\$63,398	-53407	9991	-5267	4724	-58674	58674	46248	16	2891	7	Number (16) may include some participants

													in A and H workshop
Strand 4. Cara-commissioned Cross-cutting Research	\$73,573	-73138	435	-630	-195	-73768	73768	58146	24	2423	9		
Strand 5. Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)	\$187,895	-117727	70168	-83864	-13696	-201591	201591	158900	53	2998	24		Numbers (53) benefitting may include some from A and H pilot
Independent Evaluation	\$10,226	-6683	3543	-3543	0	-10226	10226	8060	N/A	N/a	1		
Contribution to Cara Core Costs 5%	\$38,346	-38346	0	0	0	-38346	38346	30225		N/a	4		
Total	\$850,000	-706,219	143,781	-146,167	-2,385	<i>Cara to cover overspend</i>	852,386	786,824	149	5281	100		

Cara Syria Programme – Arts and Humanities pilot Mellon grant expenditure - pilot phase	Budget UK£	Expenditure UK£	Cost per beneficiary participant n=48
Salaries - fellowships and residencies	12000	11657	243
salaries and wages - programme	26074	26301	548
Salaries and wages- administration	10469	10427	217
Benefits (pension)	2240	2573	54
Travel x 9 workshops	142338	62422	1300
Catering x 9 workshops	53864	38411	800
equipment and supplies	937	3602	75
Consultancies/translation and interpreters	64700	46220	963
Sub grants	9000	8196	171
Occupancy costs- towards Cara core 5%	16649	16650	347
Evaluation	3330	3330	69
Professional association membership fees - x 5 estimate	880	0	0
Total pilot	342481	229789	4787

- **Combined cost of Mellon pilot phase and OSF phase 2 = UK£342,481 + 786,824 = UK£ 1,129,305**
- This produces a **cost per participant** (based on 149 participants) of UK£ **UK£7579 per participant (n=149)**.
- Considering only those involved in research outputs (Strand 4 (24), 5 and 6 (53) =77) produces a **cost per participant with “high level benefits”** of UK£ 14,666.¹⁵
- To some extent phase 1 costs should also be considered to genuinely reflect the cost of outcomes given that the outcomes are the result of the collective set of activities from the beginning of the programme. This has not been completed here.

¹⁵ Total cost of the programme (OSF phase 2 and A and H pilot) divided by the number of participants in research – 791611 /77.

Annex 3 Research outputs

#	Publications	Strands and co-authors							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	Syrian	Turkish
	PRESENTED, PUBLISHED OR IN PRESS								
1	Abdullateef, S. and Parkinson, T. (2017). 'Securing Syria's academic knowledge and industrial future through participatory action research: a case study of agricultural engineering education'. <i>Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) Annual Conference</i> , Newport, 7th December 2017.		1					1	
2	Abdullateef, S. and Parkinson, T. (2018). 'Higher education via distance learning for student populations inside Syria'. Invited talk for the <i>Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) Digital Literacies Special Interest Group</i> , London, July 20, 2018.		1					1	
3	Al Haj Omar, F. (2018). 'Performance Evaluation of P&O, IC and FL Algorithms used in Maximum Power Point Tracking Systems'. <i>International Conference on Engineering Technologies. International Conference on Engineering Technologies, ICENTE 2018 Proceedings</i> . (26-28 th Oct. 2018) pp. 286-289.					1		1	
4	Dillabough JA., Fimyar O., McLaughlin C., Al Azmeh Z., Abdullateef S., Abedtalas M., (2018). 'Conflict, insecurity and the political economies of higher education: The case of Syria post-2011'. <i>International Journal of Comparative Education and Development (IJCED)</i> , Vol 20 Issue 3/4, pp. 176-196.				1			2 (15 Syrians were involved but only 2 were named.)	
5	McLaughlin C., Dillabough JA., Fimyar A., Al Azmeh Z., Abdullateef S., Abedtalas M., (2018). 'Professional identity in exile: A case study of Syrian displaced academics in Turkey'. In: <i>ECER 2018 Conference 'Inclusion and Exclusion, Resources for Educational Research'</i> (4-7 Sept. 2018). Bolzano.				1			2 (15 Syrians were involved but only 2 were named.)	
6	Parkinson T., Jenkins M., Brewer S., Camps C., Robertson K., Turner J., Whiteside K., Zoubir T., (2018). 'Supporting Syrian academics to be agents of change: The role of UK universities.' In: <i>Educational Developments Magazine, Staff and Educational Development Ass. (SEDA)</i> .	1	1					n/a	

7	Parkinson T., Zoubir T., Abdullateef S., Abedtallas M., Al Ibrahim Z., Al Haj Omar F., Al Husni M., Allito H., Ghada S., Hamoud Haj H., Iboor F., Jenkins M., Rashwani A., Sennuo A, Shaban F., (2018). 'We are still here: The stories of Syrian academics in exile'. <i>International Journal of Comparative Education and Development (IJCED)</i> , Vol 20 Issue 3/4, pp. 132-147.		1						12	
8	Al Azmeh Z., et al (2019), 'Cultural trauma and the politics of access to higher education in Syria'. <i>Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education. In Press.</i>				1				12	
9	Abdotalas M., Toprak L., Alokiah W., Alawak A., Aljaseem A., Aykol S., (2020), 'The Determinants of Economic Adaption of Refugees in Midyat Camp'. <i>Journal of Refugee Studies. In Review</i>					1			4	2
10	Al Haj Omar F., Kulaksiz A., (2019). 'Artificial intelligence-based maximum power point tracking controller for PV Modules'. <i>International Journal of Renewable Energy Research. In Press.</i>					1			1	1
11	Al Haj Omar F., Gökkuş, G., Kulaksiz, A., (2019). 'Şebekeden Bağımsız Fv Sistemde Maksimum Güç Noktasi Takip Algoritmalarının Değişken Hava Şartları Altında Karşılaştırmalı Analizi'. <i>Konya Mühendislik Bilimleri Dergisi 7, pp. 585-594.</i>					1			1	2
12	Lakmes A., Jhar A., (2019). 'The Expression and Inheritance of 100 Seed Weight and Growth Habit of Ten Wild Crossed with Cultivated Chickpea (NAM) Advanced Generation Populations'. In: <i>1st International Gobeklipepe Agriculture Congress (25-27 Nov). Sanliurfa.</i>					1			2	1
13	Brewer S., Whiteside K., (2019). 'The Cara Syria Programme: Combining teaching of English for academic purposes and academic and research skills development'. <i>Language Learning in Higher Education.</i>		1							
14	Hutton W., (2019). 'The Cara Syria Programme, investing in Syria's intellectual capital: Creating pathways to the future, academics as agents for change'. <i>IATEFL Global Issues SIG Newsletter, Issue 39: February 2019.</i>	1								
15	Jenkins M., Brewer S., Read D., Whiteside K., (2019). EAP for Syrian academics at Risk: Facilitating engagement and collaboration. <i>British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP 2019) Innovation, Exploration and Transformation. (12-14 April 2019) Leeds.</i>	1								
16	Parkinson T., (2019). 'Reconceptualising academic development as community development: lessons from working with Syrian academics in exile'. <i>The Higher Education Journal.</i>		1							
2. IN REVIEW										
			1	2	3	4	5	6		
17	Abdotalas M., Alawak A., Aljaseem A., Alokiah W., Sarmini I. (2019) 'Syrian Higher education and social capital (in times of conflict)', <i>Education and Conflict Review. In Review.</i>				1				5	

18	Abdullateef S., Alabboud A., Albayoush A., Assaf M., Machkor E., Saleh B., (2019) 'Higher Education, Food Security and Knowledge Exchange' <i>Education and Conflict Review</i> . In Review.				1			6	
19	Ahmed W., Alabdullah S., Abdullah A., Chikhou R., Rashid Mamo A., 'Higher Education, Cultural Heritage and Reconstruction' <i>Education and Conflict Review</i> . In Review.				1			5	
20	Alhaj Omar F., Farzat A., Hussian A., Mahmoud I., Omaish H., (2019) 'Higher Education and Energy security: solar alternatives' <i>Education and Conflict Review</i> . In Review.				1			5	
21	Al Mohammad A., Baird J. (2019). 'Destruction of cultural heritage sites and monuments by ISIS in Manbij and its countryside'. <i>International Journal of Cultural Property</i> . In Review.						1	1	
22	Sarmini I., Topcu E., (2019) 'Integrating Syrian Refugee Children in Turkey: the role of Turkish language skills (a case study in Gaziantep)' <i>Education and Conflict Review</i> . In Review.					1		1	1
23	Shaban F., (2019) 'Higher Education Accreditation in areas unsupported by ministries. <i>Education and Conflict Review</i> . In Review.				1			1	

3. PENDING SUBMISSION/RESUBMISSION

		1	2	3	4	5	6		
24	McLaughlin, C., (a) and Al Azmeh, Z., (a) Abdullateef, S., Alabdullah, S., AlHusien Y., Allbrahim Z., AlOklah, W. and AlMohamad Al Ibrahim A., Barmu, T., Dillabough, J., (a) Fimyar, O. (a), and Rashid Mamo, A., (2019), 'Journeys into displacement: Syrian displaced academics, agency and professional identity'. Pending submission to 'Migration and Society' TBC				1			8	
25	Fimyar O, Dillabough JA, McLaughlin C, Al Azmeh Z, Abdulatteef S, Abedtalas M, Rashwani Abdul Kader, Kadan B, Shaban F, Senuo A, Haj Hamoud H. 'Socio-political landscape of Syrian higher education before and after the conflict' Rejected by Compare				1			7	

4. REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

		1	2	3	4	5	6		

26	Dillabough, J., Fimyar, O., McLaughlin, C., Al Azmeh, Z. and Jebril, M. (2019) <i>Syrian Higher Education pre 2011</i> . British Council, London.				1			13	
27	Dillabough, J., Fimyar, O., McLaughlin, C., Al Azmeh, Z. and Jebril, M. (2019) <i>Syrian Higher Education post 2011: Immediate and Future Challenges</i> . Cara London.				1			13	
28	Millican J., Abdulhafiz A., Abdullateef S., Abedtallas M., Al Abdullah S., Al Ibrahim Z., Al Mohamad Al Ibrahim A., Al Oklah W., Barmu T., Kadan B., Rashid Mamo A., Shaban F. , Policy Brief (2019) ' <i>Syrian Higher Education: Immediate and Future Challenges</i> '. London, UK: Cara.				1			11	

Annex 4 Evaluation interviews

Participants

Abdul Muhaimen	Aldershewi
Abdulkarim	Lakmes
Abdulkader	Rashwani
Abdullah	Jhar
Abdulnaser	Aljasem
Adnan	Almohammad
Adnan	Rashid Mamo
Abdullah	Jhar
Ahmad	Khalil
Bakry	Kadan
Fateh	Shaban
Hanadi	Omaish
Melhem	Alabdullah
Muhammed	Assaf
Mona	Sulimi
Rida	Anis
Musallam	Abedtalas
Sepehr Seyedian	Choubi
Wael	Ahmad
Wisam	Aloklah
Yousef	Alhammoudi

UK-based academics and EAP coordinators involved in the programme

Adrian	Brennan	University Durham	RIV host and PI
Cath	Camps	USW	ASD facilitator
David	Read	University of Sheffield	EAP coordinator
Gary	Watmough	University of Edinburgh	Mentor
Jen	Baird	University of London	Mentor 2
John	PROVIS	University of	PI
Juliet	Millican	University of Sussex	ASD /Strand 4 lead
Karin	Whiteside	Reading University	EAP
Lisa	Boden	University of Edinburgh	ASD facilitator

Marion	Heron	University of Surrey	ASD Facilitator
Maurizio	Guadagnini	University of Sheffield	PI
Michael	Jenkins	Edinburgh University	EAP Coordinator
Nasrin	AKTHER	University of Edinburgh	EAP Facilitator
Shelagh	Kell	Birmingham	Large grant PI 2 (not in Istanbul)
Teije	Donker	University of Sheffield	PI
Tom	Parkinson	University of Kent	Mentor, ASD facilitator and steering group member
Will	Hutton	QMUL	EAP
Yafa	Shanneik	Birmingham	Mentor 1

Cara

Kate	Robertson	Programme Adviser
Stephen	Wordsworth	Executive Director
Michael	Worton	Chair of Syria Programme and grants selection committee
Ipek	Velioglu Melis	Programme Administrator (finance/events)

Donor

Dianne	Harris	Mellon Foundation
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Annex 5 Documents reviewed

Original Filename

190905_Database INDEX
 190912_Participnt ENGAGMNT
 FGPC 13 September 2019 - 7 - Syria Programme
 ANNEX 3_PrelimTimeline_MELLON_15Aug2018
 InterimFinanceRprtMellon_24Jun2019
 MellonF_InterimRprt_17Jun2019
 MellonF_Narrative_21AUG2018_FINAL
 190220_A&H_SG_MATRIX
 190305_SPSC Feedback A&H Small Grants
 190305_SPSC Feedback_Unsuccessful
 181120_SelectionCOMMITTEE_LARGE Grant Awards
 SG Guide&Application_LOCKed_2May2018
 181203_MASTER-WorkDoc_Strand5
 181230_SmallGrantGuidanceForm_ENG
 190228_Ph2-2_Expnd_1Oct2018-28Feb2019
 ANNEX7 Phase2_Mar2019_PrjctdExpnd
 ANALYSIS_SG Application Matrix_190806
 ANX8 Ph2_Budget-Expend VARIATIONS
 Bdg Narratives OnlineApplication_2018
 Call+Guidance_1stOct2018_NewSubmissionDeadline
 Cara 2017-19_USD850K RprtNarrative_FNL
 190825_SmallGrantGuid&ApplicForm_ENG
 DataProtectionChecklist FNL_ENG
 Budget Template_Aug2019
 Ethics Review Form_ENG PROTECTED
 Risk Assessment_ENG PROTECTED
 October 2018 REPORT Narrative_10Nov18
 190707_PostRIV Report-Adnan
 ALMOHAMAD_Birkbeck&DurhamUniversity
 VISIT REPORT final MarwanHUSSAIN_17 Sept 2018
 Phase 2_Bdgt-Expnd_1Oct17-30Sep2018_SENT
 Summary Application form_30Sept2018 ENG
 Ph3SG_IndependentExpertForm

Description

Database of Syrian Academics. Personal Info
 Database of Syrian Academics' Engagement with the program
 KR latest report for F&GPC
 Timeline for Mellon Foundation Funding
 Interim Finance Spreadsheet for Mellon Foundation
 Interim Report for Mellon Foundation
 Narrative report for Mellon Foundation
 Matrix of all A&H Small Grant Applications
 Syria Programme Selection Committee Feedback on A&H Sm
 Syria Programme Selection Committee Feedback on Unsucce
 Selection Committee Feedback on Larger Grants Awarded
 Small Grants Guidance and Application
 Matrix of Phase 2 Larger Grants
 A&H Small Grants Guidance Form
 Phase 2 Budget October 2018 - February 2019
 Phase 2 Budget Expansion March 2019
 Small Grants Applications Matrix
 Phase 2 Budget variations
 Budget Narrative
 Strand 5 Call and Guidance
 Narrative Report for OSF
 July2019 Small Grant Call Docs
 July2019 Small Grant Call Docs
 July2019 Small Grant Call Docs
 July2019 Small Grant Call Docs
 July2019 Small Grant Call Docs
 Report for OSF
 Adnan Almohamad Post RIV Report
 Marwan Hussain Post RIV Report
 Phase 2 Budget Sent
 Grant Call Application Form
 Phase 3 Small Grants Independent Reviewer Feedback Form

Annex 6 Terms of reference

Syria Programme Independent Evaluation Period 1st June 2018 to 31st October 2019.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

This period covers the OSF-funded Phase 2 Part 2 (1st Jun. 2018 to 31st Jul. 2019) and the first 3 months of a 5-month no-cost extension (1st Aug. to Dec. 2019), as well as the 10-month Arts & Humanities-dedicated Mellon Foundation-funded Strand 6 Pilot (1st Nov. 2018 to 31st Jul. 2019).

Overall Syria Programme Aims To nurture, sustain Syrian academics and facilitate future opportunities by strengthening and connecting them and enabling their continued academic engagement [and contribution] as a group that is vital to the future of Syria. *This will be achieved by* supporting professional development and facilitating research collaborations amongst Syrian academics in exile and with colleagues from the wider international academic/scientific communities.

Research Outputs Rigorous quality research and outputs including publication of findings and recommendations in peer-reviewed journals and presentation at international conferences, are central to Cara's dissemination strategy.

Independent Evaluation Aim

To evaluate the effectiveness, including cost effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Syria Programme activities over the defined period, with a particular focus on to the outputs and emerging outcomes of the research-related strands: *Strand 3. 'Research Incubation Visits' (RIV); Strand 4. 'Cara Commissioned Research'; and Strand 5. 'Syria Research Fellowship Scheme'*, funded by both OSF and Mellon, with reference to the overall Syria Programme aims.

The independent evaluation should also consider

- the value of the Syria Programme (SP) or individual SP activities as part of a Cara 'emergency response' model or tool kit that can be drawn on to support academics affected by future comparable crises; **and reflect and comment on**
- the growing brokering role that Cara is playing, not just in terms of connecting Syrian academics to each other and colleagues within higher education sectors (UK and host country), but also in terms of efforts to increase the visibility of, and accessibility to, Syrian academics in exile, to highlight the significance of their local knowledge, expertise and reach to networks inside Syria, and to facilitate discussion, engagement and collaboration with key international responders to the Syria crisis;
- the importance of Cara's role as a legal umbrella and its 'partnering model' in engendering a necessary level of credibility amongst Syria academics and confidence amongst key responders to the crisis that Syrian-led research will deliver enriched rigorous quality research outputs.
- the ongoing need for and the continued relevance of the Syria Programme, as it enters its fourth year with a view to expanding its funder base and its brokering role to facilitate increasingly Syrian academic-led initiatives – e.g. Syrian Research Centre.

Questions that spring from the above:

- Does Cara occupy a unique space and have access to unique resources (e.g. Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network) that allow it to deliver this type of programme?
- What constitutes success in the context of the Syria Programme's aims?
- Do primary and secondary stakeholders/partners have a shared understanding of the aims and outcomes of the SP?

Tasks

- i. Review documentation and data captured over the agreed period, including focus group transcripts (Dec.18 and Aug.19) and Istanbul Workshop and RIV participant and host feedback.
- ii. Review a selection of research outputs.
- iii. Review proposals and reports to the Programme's principal funders: Open Society Foundation and Mellon Foundation.
- iv. Interview a selection of Syria Programme participants.
- v. Interview a selection of 'partners' – e.g. mentors, principal investigators, RIV hosts, AD Steering Group members.
- vi. Interview the Cara Syria Programme Chair, who also chairs the Syria Programme Steering and Selection committees.
- vii. Interview the Cara Middle East Programme Adviser.
- viii. Review expenditure relative to the budget, to evaluate 'cost effectiveness'/'value for money'.
- ix. A SWAT analysis to highlight areas of weakness and challenges in addition to strengths.

Independent Evaluation Outputs

Draft report (20th Dec. 2019) and final report (31st Jan. 2019) to include recommendations on an expanding role and areas for further development or reconsideration.

Timeframe

Up to 15 days between April and May 2018.

Fee and Expenses

£500/day up to a maximum of £7,000, plus agreed expenses to be paid on submission of original receipts.

The Fee will be paid in three instalments: the first £2,000 on signing of contract, the second £2,000 to be paid following delivery of the draft report and the third and final balance to be paid following delivery of the final report.

Cara Support

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

Annex 7 Methodology

7.1 Evaluation matrix

Evaluation matrix- Independent evaluation of CARA Syria Pilot Programme

Evaluation question	Indicators	Source and method
<p>Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the scale of outputs and outcomes to date of the overall programme (phase 1 and 2 combined) and how do these compare to planned results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and range of outputs in relation to planned quantity (workshops, activities, number of participants for different strands, objective benefits for participants e.g. improved English, academic skills; felt benefits for participants e.g. contact, support; RIV, research projects, successful research proposals, other)¹⁶ Evidence of Syrian academics accessing opportunities for academic engagement through (directly or indirectly) the CARA programme (include A and H) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of programme reports against plan Analysis of EAP data to assess progress and lessons on how to do this. (also interviews with key tutors – one per level-3) Interviews with participants and international academics partnered with through RIV, research grants, receiving feedback on proposals

-
- a) ¹⁶ Possibly use last evaluation's list - 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional emerging outcomes can be identified (if any)? • What does the programme experience tell us about how success can be predicted and assessed in such a programme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of developing and strengthened connections and networks among programme participants and also with academics [others?] outside of the programme e.g. UK • High quality products e.g. peer reviewed journal articles as a result of collaboration between programme participants and academics outside and that it produces • Evidence of programme products (research) contribution (including potential contribution) to Syria’s future development in a) Higher Education and b) other areas. (reach key audiences, viewed as relevant, used) • Evidence of increased visibility of and access to Syrian academics by international academia, policy makers and practitioners (key responders) including those concerned with future HE in Syria. <p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning on pace and scale of results that is feasible and optimal. • Consistency across participants of perspectives on programme aims (short and longer-term) 	<p>including failed proposals on value, other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of communication of Syrian HE researches products, feedback and Interviews with key leads of research and target audience. • Portal Google analytics data including repeat visits, duration, level of participation. • Round Table list of participants, feedback, contact details - Istanbul and London launches of Cambridge and other research • S4 -List of who Cambridge research and Round Table papers/report sent to along with any feedback particularly relating to use • S3 - Details of products of each of the RIVs and detail of which RIV participants have continued access to university resources/other support following RIV • Full list of a) mentors b) RIV hosts c) PIs and other academics actively linked to participants with details for each of their link and activity. • List of all small and large grants awarded with details of subject, participants in group, progress, products (organised by grant). • FGD transcripts with participants and any analysis/overall report.
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<p>Value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How efficiently has the programme been run? • To what extent does it provide value for money (evidence of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity) • What are the key enablers and inhibitors to its value for money performance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of implementation in line with planned schedule • Evidence that resource inputs are maximised in terms of outputs and outcomes achieved • Evidence of appropriate distribution of resources across activities and that activities contribution to outcomes • Evidence of equity being considered in the programme design, implementation and adaptation including in relation to how benefits of it are accessible across men/women, English/non-English speakers and other lines including consideration of how resources are spread across participants • Evidence of additional resources leveraged and their appropriateness and added value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail budget by component of actual expenditure for a) Phase 1 b) Phase 2 including all grants. • Analysis of resource allocation • Cost per output and outcome • Interviews with key budget holders • Analysis of activities against plan • Interviews – programme staff and participants regarding equity • Some costing of additional resources leveraged
<p>01. Relevance of programme design and components for an emergency response model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the contribution of different strands towards the programme outcomes? Do they have other results? • Comment on their relative weight and their inter-relationship. • How have and can the strand synergies be maximised? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the foundation components (EAP, ASD) lead to academic engagement and opportunities for Syrian participants. • Quality of research products (acceptance in journals) • Relevance of research products to their target audience (and evidence of a resourced strategy to reach them) • Knowledge of Strand leaders of other strands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant interviews • Strand facilitator interviews • Round Table reports including list of participants • Round table monitoring feedback

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent can any (or a combination) of programme component/strand stand alone to provide a valuable contribution to the programme outcomes and CARA aims in a crisis? • What can enable/hinder these components relevance to future crises as part of a CARA emergency response model? 		
<p>CARA role- broker, legal umbrella</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do external stakeholder recognise and value CARA's role as legal umbrella, facilitator, broker and partner? • What factors enable and/or inhibit CARA's fulfilment of these roles e.g. resources (such as networks), values, structure, other • What lessons are there regarding how these roles can be done well, any limits and choices for CARA? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External stakeholder IVs – donors, implementing partners (universities?), A and H • Interviews – CARA

<p>Programme future options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some future options for the programme and the current strengths and weaknesses in the programme framework (structure, partnerships, resourcing other) to support its further development (with particular reference to CARA's role)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration with programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with stakeholders and analysis based on above • SWOT analysis
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7.2 Interview checklist

This is a generic checklist adapted for different stakeholders and used as a basis for semi-structured interviews. A limited number of questions (approx. 10) is likely but points below will help with follow up questions. The checklist will be adapted over the course of the evaluation in line with experience.

Introduction

- Introduce evaluation and its aims - Both an assessment but also a process to capture the programme's evolution and lessons for its further development and potentially to use it as a basis for work in other countries in the future.
- Explain interviews are confidential

Option

- Share draft model of programme and ask which of these outcomes they observe.
- What has been most useful in enabling it?
- Describe the path of change from beginning to now
 - a. for you individually
 - b. for the group (participants)
 - c. programme?
 - d. Other beneficiaries/networks/groups?

Participants-general

1. Please summarise your involvement in the programme. How has it changed over time?
2. What are the key aims of the programme? And what are your personal aims in participating in it?
3. What parts of the programme have you enjoyed most? What have you found most useful?
4. How has the EAP helped? What aspect of it?
5. How has the programme evolved (what's got better, more relevant, lost, other)?

Areas of enquiry

Research

6. What is your role in the research funded under the small/large grants?
7. How did you identify the subject? Who is the audience for it?
8. How have opportunities to participate in research matched with your area of expertise and interest?
9. What was your role in developing the research /grant proposal? Did you find any of the earlier webinars and workshops (other) useful to do this? What went well in the proposal development process? What was difficult? What would help?
10. Did you receive feedback on the proposal? How did you respond to this? Your role?
11. Is there evidence that the research produced so far has reached important audiences or had any impact on policy or practice? What could help it do this better. Consider the Round Tables.

Skills development

12. How has your participation in the programme been of benefit to you e.g. in terms of developing skills, opportunities, other? What was most useful. Any parts less useful?

13. How have your academic skills developed; engagement; What helped most, least, what more would be useful. (consider presentations, RIV, research grants, S4 research (Cambridge/Ed'bro), soirees
14. How do you plan to use new skills in the future including in Syria if appropriate?
15. What has been least relevant or useful for you? Details (why, could it have been more useful)
16. In what ways have your academic skills developed due to the programme (if at all)?
17. Have you submitted proposals which have not received funding?
18. What is your opinion on the feedback you received on your proposal? What was useful/what now? What did you do with it?
19. Have you submitted articles for publication? With what result? (papers to present)
20. What is your opinion on the content of workshops and webinars in terms of its relevance for you? In what ways has content been specific to your subject area? Has this changed over the past two years?

Networks

21. What connections have you made with other academia – Syrians, international? To what extent and how are these sustained? What difference do they make to you?
22. In what ways has it enabled academic engagement? What helped this?

Programme – lessons, recommendations, future

23. How could the programme be improved?
24. There are a number of different elements or strands to the programme- EAP, ASD, RIV, participation in group research led by international academics, team research based on grants. Could some of these stand alone or are they an interlinked package needing all components?
25. Have there been any unexpected benefits from the programme for you?
26. Are there benefits you expected that have not been realised?
27. What are some future options for the programme to develop? What role do you foresee for CARA? What strengths and challenges are there?
28. One emerging aim for the programme is to promote engagement with the participants by international academics to see them as consultants, a resource. How can this be well done? Are there risks? How to guard against them?
29. Are you aware of any other initiatives that provide support or opportunities to this programme? How do they compare?
30. How can its impact be assessed? As a whole? For you personally?
31. Is it relevant to other countries which have experienced conflict and where academics are in exile? Are there particular characteristics of Syria that have shaped this programme? What would be important to consider if setting up something similar again?
32. Recommendations to CARA for the future for the Syria Programme? For its replication?