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A lifeline to academics at risk since 1933

Cara Syria Programme

Round Table Record

Cara Round Table, 9th & 10th June 2016, Istanbul, Turkey.

Sustaining Syria's Intellectual Capital:

Academics as Agents for Change

Co-hosted and Co-funded by The Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul, The Swedish Research Institute Istanbul, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul and the Norwegian Embassy, Ankara.

Norwegian Embassy

Our Thanks

Cara is most grateful to the Round Table hosts and funders for facilitating the event; to its Syrian participants for sharing their stories, the challenges they face, their ideas and frustrations, and the initiatives they are driving to ensure continued delivery of higher education (HE) for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian students who have no access to HE and no certainty as to their future. Most importantly Cara thanks them for their patience and for enhancing the understanding and knowledge of their colleagues from the wider regional and international academic communities, as to their plight.

Cara is equally grateful to the Turkish and UK participants in the Round Table, for their demonstration of solidarity, for their practical approach and firm commitments of support, and for their contribution to the development of practical strategies to address some of the key challenges facing their Syrian colleagues, as well as to the Presenters, Chairs, Moderators and our Rapporteur, for guiding us through these two days to some very positive outcomes.

We also extend our gratitude to Professor Ustun Erguder, Emeritus Professor, Sabanci University, for his thoughtful and encouraging keynote speech given at the Round Table Bogazici Reception and Dinner, calling for solidarity and action from fellow Turkish academics and their institutions.

Our thanks must also go to Asu Nisa Kirdar and Didem Ozalp and Helin Topal for all their wonderful support in ensuring the smooth running of the Round Table, and last but certainly not least to Andrea Karlsson, who after all her brilliant efforts and act of faith in committing the Swedish Consulate General's support to the Cara Round Table, was sadly unable to join us for the two days**.**

Despite the human tragedy that is the Syrian Crisis, it is also an opportunity to connect Syrian academics with their counterparts within the region and beyond, connections that will prove to be invaluable in the task of rebuilding Syria's higher education and research sectors. An opportunity that must not be lost.

> ***"I thank the Turkish people for hosting us and providing schools for our children, housing and healthcare, at a time when all Arab and Muslim countries have turned their backs on us, even the Gulf States, despite their wealth."*** *(Dr AM)*

A massive thank you to you all for your time and energy. The task is but begun!

Background

Cara Organisational Background Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara) is a UK-registered charity founded in 1933 under the leadership of William Beveridge[1] to rescue academics suffering persecution as a result of the rise of Nazism, and facilitate their continued work in safety. Sixteen Cara Fellows from the 1930s and 1940s became Nobel Laureates, and many more innovators in their fields, including Ernst Chain, Nikolaus Pevsner, Lise Meitner, Max Born, Hans Krebs, Karl Popper and Sigmund Freud, with scientific legacies still in evidence today. Over the past 83 years, Cara has continued to offer a lifeline to academics at risk, as and when world events place them in the line of fire: Hungarian Uprising, Cold War, Apartheid South Africa, Latin American Junta, Vietnam, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sudan, Zimbabwe etc. and, more recently, Iraq, Yemen, Iran and Syria. Cara support is framed as temporary sanctuary at times of heightened risk. The *Cara Syria Programme* draws and builds on the *Cara Iraq Programme* (2006-12).

Cara Beneficiaries Academics at risk. An 'academic' is defined as someone who has held a paid post as a lecturer and/or researcher in a higher education institution or equivalent. Cara support is extended to the beneficiary's immediate dependents, ie. spouse and children.

Cara Syria Programme was launched in 2012 in response to the growing number of Syrian academics seeking its help as a result of the Syria crisis. Working initially through its core *Fellowship Programme* in partnership with the 115 universities that make up the *Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network*, Cara has secured over 150 placements in universities across the UK and beyond, as well as the funding to support them and approximately 300 dependents.

In late 2015, the Cara *Syria Programme* was extended into the region to reach Syrian academics who had sought safety in neighbouring countries. The initial focus was on Turkey, where the need is greatest and which boasts a number of world class universities. Cara is also exploring how to support those who remain at risk in Syria, who are working to sustain delivery of higher education within the liberated areas, or who are unable to leave despite the risks.

Overall Syria Programme Objective To sustain, strengthen and connect Syrian academics during this period of uncertainty, a group whose role will be vital to the rebuilding of Syria's higher education and research sectors, which has been all but ignored by crisis respondents.

Cara Round Table Objective *To facilitate continued academic engagement and contribution of Syrian academics during this period of uncertain*. The RT would provide a dedicated mechanism to give voice to Syria academics in exile and connect them to colleagues from the wider regional and international academic and scientific communities to develop practical strategies to address the challenges they faced.

'Academics as Agents for Change' applies as equally to Syrian academics in respect of their role in the delivery of higher education within Syria and in the rebuilding of Syria's higher education and research sectors, as it does to their regional and wider international colleagues who, with the support of their institutions, are in a position to sustain, facilitate and support their Syrian colleagues in the undertaking of their vital roles.

[1] Lord William Beveridge was Director of London School of Economics and Political Science from 1919 to 1937

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Sustaining Syria's Intellectual Capital: Academics as Agents for Change

1. Introduction

> ***"Science and knowledge remind us of our violated state. This [Assad] regime has stripped Syria of its beautiful culture."*** (*EAR)*

This Report captures the voices at the Round Table, highlighting key issues that emerged from the two-day discussion, as well as ideas, opportunities and strategies that Cara will seek to take forward in collaboration with its Syrian and non-Syrian partners in the region and beyond.

Day 1 was dedicated to **'Clarifying the Issues'**

Day 2 was dedicated to **'Opportunities, Support and Creative Strategies'**

Although the focus of this first Round Table was predominantly on Turkey where over 3 million Syrian refugees had sought safety, of which an estimated 500 to 700 Syrian academics, the *Syria Programme* would be rolled out to other receiving countries in the region where there was evident need, eg. Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, where Cara will again work with local higher education and research partners. Cara's regional office is in Amman, Jordan.

Participant Profiles Participants represented a wide range of disciplines across the natural and social sciences, arts and humanities, with representation from both Syrian male and female academics, established and early career academics, both employed and unemployed. They included ex-faculty from Al Baath, Aleppo, Damascus, Syrian Virtual University, Homs, Kalamoon, Tishreen and Yarmouk, and the current Rector of Sham International University. Four Turkish universities were represented: Bogazici, Medipol, Kadir Has and Hacettepe, as were five UK universities: Oxford, Middlesex, King's College London, Coventry and Leicester. Additional participants included representatives of the Turkish Prime Ministry, Lund University, the British Academy and the Open Society Foundation. ***See Annex 2. Participant List.***

The Round Table also provided the opportunity for Cara to share the core components of the ***Cara Syria Programme***, including the ***Syria Research Fellowship Programme*** *(SRFP)*. For this last, research will provide the vehicle through which the overall Programme objective will be achieved: building capabilities, facilitating active collaboration with, and connection to, colleagues from the wider regional and international academic communities, as well as delivering rigorous quality research of direct relevance to Syria and offering funding that acknowledged dependents. This partnering model, successfully implemented as part of the *Cara Iraq Programme (2006-12),* will facilitate 3-way research collaborations between experienced researchers from respected regional and wider international higher education and research institutions, and at least three Syrian academics in each of the core research teams. The number of Syrians involved would be grown as appropriate over the research period. Regional and international partners would offer Syrian colleagues institutional affiliation, as well as access to in-house resources from libraries to labs. The SRFP aimed to launch in August 2016 with an open call for proposals of direct relevance to Syria. **At least one member of each research team would be required to speak both Arabic and English to help overcome one of the immediate barriers to integration and employment.**

Although discussion into a broad range of issues was anticipated, participants were asked to remain mindful of Cara's mandate, and what was, or was not, within its gift.

Box 1.1 TURKEY: THE CONTEXT *(Dr. Murat Erdogan, Director HUGO, Hacettepe University)*

Putting the Numbers into Context From 1923 to 2011 Turkey received no more than 1.8 million refugees from the Balkans, Central Asia and Caucuses. Since 2011, it has received over 3 million predominantly Syrian migrants. As a geographically limited signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, Syrians fell outside its Convention obligations. In 2012, the Turkish Foreign Minister stated: "Refugees can't spend more than a few weeks in Turkey and we can't receive more than 100,000." By 2016, Turkey had become the biggest refugee-hosting country in the world. 2,743,000 were registered for temporary protection and ID cards. Only 264,000 (9%) were in Turkey's 25 camps, the rest were mostly 'urban' refugees, eg. 450,000 in Istanbul. Its 81 provinces had Syrians in every major city.

Social Acceptance Social acceptance was still very high amongst Turks, but for how long? There had been no debate. It was an issue that President Erdogan was trusted to deal with. Responses were instinctive and emotional. Five years on the crisis was still seen as temporary.

Work Permits A HUGO study looking at the Syrian refugee crisis through an economic lens had been influential in the decision in January 2016 to issue work permits to Syrians registered for temporary protection. However, unemployment amongst Turks stood at 10.8% (ie. >3 million). Currently, only around 10,000 Syrians worked in the formal sector, with a further 500,000+ working illegally as cheap labour.

Lack of Strategic Planning As a migration expert, I anticipated that 90% of Syrian refugees would remain in Turkey, with an estimated 35,000 births a year. Currently children born to Syrian refugees in Turkey were stateless. Citizenship would eventually have to be offered, despite resistance. There were 830,000 Syrians of school age (source: MoE), with only 75,000 accessing Turkish schools able to learn Turkish**.** It was a massive and urgent problem for which the Turkish Government had failed to make strategic plans. **The government needed to establish a central system, a dedicated ministry or under-secretary to address immediate challenges such as education, healthcare, integration, security and social tension.**

EU/Turkish 'New Deal' 3 Billion euros was nothing when you needed an estimated 500 million euros a year simply to cover the salaries of the additional 35,000 teachers required. The EU had discarded priorities such as human rights, freedom of the press etc. in the face of the threat of refugee flows to Europe, but in 2015 Syrians only made up 50% of refugees.

A Global Problem Syrian refugees now made up 3.5% of the Turkish population, 24% of the Lebanese population, 20% of the Jordanian population, but only 0.25% of the European population. The Syrian refugee crisis was a global problem.

Turkish Universities 193 universities in Turkey – 109 public, 84 foundation/private. 152,000 academics of which 3,500 'foreign' with 50% teaching English, reflecting the YOK quota of 2% on the employment of foreign academic staff. 220 Syrian academics were already working in universities out of an estimated 600 to 700.

Integration Turkey had no real need for more academics, but needed to see Syrian academics as contributors to a wider integration plan, not necessarily in academia. Strategic decisions on integration needed to be taken in collaboration with Syrians.

2. Round Table (RT) Day 1 *(see Annex 1. for full agenda, session objectives and presenters)*

Welcome by **Prof. Taner Bilgic** (Bogazici University Vice-Provost for International Relations) and Day 1 host, **Kate Robertson** (Cara Middle East Adviser) and **Prof. Mike Barer** as RT Chair.

DAY 1. Session I. Mapping Profiles & Groupings: Syrian Academics in Turkey

1.I.1 DATA In this type of situation data was often distorted and unreliable, as confirmed by the session presenters, despite multiple sources: Union of Free Syrian Academics (UFSA), Free Academic Council (FAC), Arabic Academics League (AAL), Syrian Society for Scientific Research (SSSR). Several had refused to share their data including the Syria Interim Government (SIG), much of which was also out of date, with inevitable duplication across the sources. Even the YOK Online Portal data, considered to be the most reliable, had not been made available since the transfer of responsibilities in late March 2016 to the new Secretariat at the Ankara 'Social Science Institute'. **The available data was, however, sufficient to provide clear evidence of need.**

> ***"I have a private database of 532 Syrian academics in Turkey, but when we tried to hold a meeting we didn't reach more than 28 of them."*** *(Dr AM)*

Box 1.2 ESTIMATE OF NEED **Pre-2011** there were **approximately 7,500 academic employed in 5 state universities, across the disciplines. An estimated 2,000 had fled since 2011**, several returning to universities where they had gained PhDs in Germany, France, Turkey etc. There were now an estimated 250 in Jordan and 600 in Turkey of which 300 were employed. Inside the Syrian liberated areas, there were around 500 unemployed academics. **(UFSA 2016)**

- **FAC** claimed 120 members evenly spread across the disciplines. 42 PhD holders of which only 35 had worked full-time in Syrian universities and 7 part-time. Only 12 of the master's degree holders had worked part-time in Syrian universities. FAC was in contact with members via email so that current locations were unknown. (NB. based on 2014 data)
- **SSSR** claimed 113 members of which 31 PhDs, 38 masters, the remainder were young graduates and school leavers looking to pursue higher education. Over 50% were in IT, electrical and electronic engineering, with the remainder spread evenly across a broad range of other disciplines. 46% were in Syria, approximately 25% in Europe or USA, with the balance in countries such as Japan, Turkey and Saudi.
- **AAL** claimed 600 members, of which 65% Syrian (approx. 400), of which 50% employed.
- **SIG** claimed to have an extensive database that it was "Keeping for a suitable occasion."
- **UFSA** claimed 300 members inside and outside Syria, spanning a range of disciplines, of which around 30% employed. Established in Turkey in 2013 with the support of Syrian academics who had held senior posts in the 5 main state universities, its aim was to serve Syrian academics inside and outside Syria, to defend and secure their rights, and to be a key player in the reconstruction of a democratic Syria. Dr Al Ibrahim was UFSA Director.

Box 1.3 UFSA DISCIPLINE CLUSTERS

Agriculture (8AP/3L); Arab Literature (5P/10L); Architecture (1AP/3L); Civil Engineering (3AP/1L); Data Engineering (3P/3L); Economics (4P/5AP/1L); Education (2AP/13L); Electrical Engineering (3P/2AP/2L); Engineering (2P/2AP/1L); English Literature (1AP/4L); French (1P/5L); Geography (2P/3AP/ 1L); Law (1P/4AP/5L); Mathematics (4P/5AP/1L); Political Sciences (3AP/2L); Social Sciences (4P/5AP/1L); Sharia Law (15P/20AP/5L).

P=Professor; AP=Assistant Prof. L=Lecturer

1.I.2 YOK ONLINE PORTAL

Development Dr Erdogan had worked in partnership with Dr Murtaza Yetis, Chief Adviser to the PM on Migration Matters until March 2016, to find solutions to the plight of Syrian academics in Turkey. In January 2016, Dr Yetis convened a meeting of representatives from YOK, SIG, AAL, and several Turkish university rectors, resulting in the issue of 300 work permits to Syrian Theology lecturers, a subject taught in Arabic in Turkish universities, and a further 15 work permits to university Arabic language teachers. A second meeting led to the set-up of the YOK On-line Portal, a mechanism open to all foreign academics seeking an academic post in Turkey. An 'Advisory Committee', including AAL representation and Dr Murat Erdogan, was also established to review submissions received through the Portal.

Submissions By late March, over 3,000 online submissions had been received, of which 1,286 that were deemed to be eligible. Only those holding PhDs (285) were initially considered for possible placements, the majority of whom were Syrians.

Dominant Disciplines Engineering, political economics and law.

Work Permits A further 130 permits were under consideration, of which 28 already issued to academics now in post in universities with English or Arabic Departments. Consideration was being given to opening more Arabic Departments to absorb more Syrian/Arabic speaking academics.

Box 1.4 A YOK PORTAL SUCCESS STORY *(Dr W T)*

"I've been working at Yıldırım Beyazıt in Ankara for a month, a post obtained through the YOK online portal. I registered on their official website and received a call from the university. Following a Skype interview I was offered an annual renewable contract. I was told that the university was contracting 5 Syrian academics, of which I was the first. They include holders of PhDs obtained outside Turkey and Syria, eg. Japan. My own PhD was from Poitiers. University staff have been very friendly."

Future Uncertainties Following the removal of the YOK Online Portal from Dr Yetis' portfolio and the creation of a dedicated Secretariat at the Institute in Ankara in late March 2016, clarification as to the future of the Portal was pending. Dr Murat Erdogan remained on the Portal Advisory Committee, but notice of a second meeting of the Committee was also pending.

It was an excellent idea from which several Syrian academics benefited over a brief period. However, the processing of submissions seemed to have halted since the transfer of responsibilities, no data had been shared since late March 2016, and applicants who had submitted in recent months had received no acknowledgement or response from YOK.

1.I.3 SESSION 1. PROPOSALS

- **Government to establish a dedicated office with responsibility for Syrian academics.**
- **Enhance Data.** Cara/Syrian academics to establish a working party to refine available data. *Dr Al Ibrahim, UFSA Director had since undertaken to update the UFSA database as a more effective tool that would also allow Syrian academic to organise themselves better.*
- **Influence Policy Makers** Important to incorporate political element into strategic thinking. Government actors, such as MoHE and YOK.

Better beneficiary profiling, eg. seniority, disciplines, dependents, as well as locations, would allow more targeted programme development. **However the 'open call' nature of the Cara SRFP, was designed to reach Syrian academics wherever and would likely support the capture of more accurate data and the development of discipline clusters.**

Box 1.5 STORY 1

"My name is Ayman Khosruf. I was born in 1983. I have a BSc in Pharmacy from Homs University (2005) coming top of my year, and an MSC in Laboratory diagnosis from Damascus University (2011). I also have several vocational diplomas in management (2007-2015). I have worked in pharmaceutical businesses, hospitals, drug industries and health marketing. For a Diploma in Hospital Management I developed a booklet on marketing health services, the first of its kind in Arabic. I also worked for 4 years at Homs University in Pharmaceutical Materials, the most difficult aspect of which were sectarian tensions, with up to 10 different sects in a class of 30.

Baba Umar, where I lived, was the first district to be bombed by the Regime. I left my home on 5th May 2011 moving from city to the city until 2013. My choice then was to continue teaching at Homs and be forced into military service, or to leave Syria. I was reported to the civil courts for leaving before official acceptance of my resignation, which took another year. The case against me and custodial sentencing is pending my return. I moved to Lebanon, then Jordan, applying for jobs in hospital, labs, drug factories and pharmacies, each rejected for a variety of reasons including **document authenticity,** despite my documents being stamped by the Syrian Foreign Ministry, **pharmaceutical profession restricted to home country nationals**, **lack of recognition of my MSc Lab diagnosis degree**, **inability to contact the Syrian authorities to verify my awards despite Syrian embassies still functioning.**

I sent thousands of emails to institutions in many countries in search of work, eliciting less than a 1% response and rejection due to the **ban on visas for Syrians**. In April 2014, I finally managed to get a job in Aden City, in Yemen, as the Administrative Director in charge of a laboratory at private hospital. Working conditions were awful and chaotic. There was no government, no security, no police, no unions. Any mistake with a patient led to threats from their family, and the conflict in Yemen was also escalating. With fewer and fewer services, the pressure on the hospital reached a catastrophic level. On one occasion, as a gun battle raged outside, over 50 bottles of blood were needed to treat the injured in just two hours.

There were around 100 Syrian doctors and pharmacists with families in Aden alone, and over 1,000 in total in Yemen. None of the embassies or consulates responded to our requests for help, not even the UN despite our holding UN protection documents. On my last night we were confronted by armed men firing guns in the hospital, a militia group looking kill an injured rival, which they did in the hospital's operating theatre. Staff were totally helpless and we fled the following morning, renting a mini bus to take us to Saudi Arabia. After a 48-hour journey, we received a 10-day visas at the border thanks to a Syrian guarantor who took responsibility for our departure. Despite meeting with the local Emir, without further guarantees my request to extend our stay was rejected. We travelled on to Turkey arriving in April 2015.

Since then, I have done a 3-month course in Gaziantep to update my management skills and a number of UN online courses, the most recent on Conflict Sensitivity. I also taught a courses in Syrian private institutes, eg. 'Project Management' being paid a pittance. Despite my degrees, the courses done, the conferences attended, I couldn't find pharmaceutical work in Turkey, which is restricted to Turkish nationals. On one course, I befriended a Turkish PhD holder working in a private Turkish university. He recommended me for a job in a relative's firm, where I am now on a six-month trial in charge of their foreign trade and marketing.

Two of us share this story. My wife has the same qualifications."

DAY 1. Session II. Expectations, Constraints, Challenges: Personal and Professional?

There was both frustration and expectation amongst Syrian participants, one of whom expressed the view that the ***"Turkish Government had a moral duty to help Syrians"*** raising the question as to whether the situation of Syrian academics had been **conceptualised as a humanitarian or developmental challenge?** Turkey's politicians still approached the problem as a short-term 'humanitarian crisis', which effectively allowed for second best responses. However, **people moving from country A to B did not in itself create a humanitarian crisis. This was a political crisis because politicians and policymakers had not engaged in finding longer-term solutions**.

Constraints and Challenges The constraints and challenges outlined included the bureaucratic (eg. document verification and equivalency, travel and entry permits); insecurity of status (eg. residency, employment); lack of language skills (Turkish and English) which was a major barrier to integration and employment; the absence of academic employment opportunities; overt exploitation; lack of political engagement to find solutions; academic skills deficits; lack of access to facilities eg. laboratories to be able to continue research or study; a culture of protectionism as exemplified by the Turkish government's 2% quota on the employment of all foreign academic staff; as well as the perception of a closed shop mind-set amongst Turkish research groups.

Box 1.6 SYRIAN ACADEMICS: PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY?

"The Turkish government regards the presence of Syrian academics as a problem rather than an opportunity to culturally and intellectually enrich their universities*. Thousands of dollars have been spent on our knowledge and skills, trained in excellent universities around the world. It is entirely illogical to let 3,000 Syrian academics pass through your country without at least thinking about what they have to offer. Not seeking to harness this knowledge is a waste.* ***Our message to the Turkish government:*** ***You are losing hundreds of qualified scientists who could enrich your universities****.* ***Help us to integrate."*** *(EAR)*

Bureaucratic constraints also affected Syrians who although in exile in Turkey, crossed the border to teach in the three functioning universities in the Northern liberated areas: the University of Aleppo in the Liberated Areas (UoA-LA) re-established in a number of locations in 2015, Idlib University (Idlib) since its liberation in 2015, and the new Sham International University (SHAM) which had just opened to male students, but whose Rector had been unable to negotiate border Turkish entry permits for his teaching staff, despite the number of organisations, traders and military that travelled daily to and from Turkey and the liberated areas: ***"Why not Syrian academics?"***

"With such basic obstacles, how can one envisage attracting and integrating academics?" *(Prof MAT)*

Box 1.7 SYRIAN ACADEMICS PRE-2011 *received* ***modest salaries, living from one pay-day to the next, with few savings.*** *They were not amongst the Syrian wealthy.* ***Academics also had no autonomy or*** *choice, they were simply assigned jobs after graduation, whether suitable or not. They were totally isolated from social, political and economic life.* ***Their only role was to teach.*** *Before 2011, those who chose to leave Syria had the choice to develop their own career paths. Several are internationally renowned, such as Professor Oussama Khatib, a world leader in robotics at Stanford. University. (Dr A Al/Dr AHAH)*

Female and Early Career Academics *"I've been here four years trying to find a scholarship. In March, the annual Turkish foreign student scholarships were announced, but there were none specifically for Syrians.* ***We are all awaiting for the promised Turkish Government Scholarship Scheme for Syrians, to be announced this month, but there will be thousands of applicants."***

> ***"As female academics we have lost so much, maybe more than men in terms of our scientific careers and the psychological trauma."*** *(AA)*

Box 1.8 STORY 2. PARALLELS WITH MAX PERUTZ

"My presence in Turkey is not solely as a victim of war, it is also for scholastic purposes for study in comparative literature and comparative culture. Chance led me to Bingol University where I have been able to complete my interrupted PhD. Bingol has been very supportive and has an Arabic Department that has allowed me to study in Arabic.

Max Perutz's book 'Is Science Necessary?' had a major impact on me when I first read the Arab translation in 2000. He was Austrian, but fled Austria in 1936 because of the Nazis. The coincidence is that having fled, he became a Cara Fellow. He wrote of the necessity of science, the philosophy of science. He worked in the field of Chemistry and was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1962. The book opens with a statement that has become my motto: "Science is the most important achievement of humanity and from its richness springs many good accomplishments." ***In my own words****:* ***"Those who work in science, restore human balance to the world when the world is controlled by those who carry rifles. Science, Art and Literature lessen the effect of human savagery and man's insistence on evoking his primitive state."*** *(EAR)*

1.II.1 BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS

Diploma Equivalency Making foreign academic appointments was usually a very long process. All new foreign appointments had to be approved by YOK. Fundamental to the process was establishing diploma equivalency, beginning with high school diplomas. Candidates from warn-torn countries such as Syria were often disadvantaged by incomplete documentation with Turkish universities unable to verify candidate status through home universities.

Qualification Recognition The Syrian medical qualifications across the medical disciplines and specialisations were not recognised in Turkey, leaving them unable to practice legally (see Box 1.10. Deskilling: Medics). Law faculty staff and graduates suffered a similar dilemma due to non-transferable skills where their areas of expertise lay in national Syrian Law.

Box 1.9 ENTRY AND TRAVEL PERMITS

"Syrian academics working at Sham International University, on the border strip on Syrian territory, need permits to leave and enter Syria to be able to teach. We have been unable to obtain entry permits for university staff. ***Our colleagues in Syria, Dr Mohammad al-Hajji and Dr Hasan Jobran could not attend this meeting because they were not granted entry permits."***

(Rector, Sham International University)

Legal Difficulties *"Our presence in Turkey is governed by political decisions.* ***Existing laws don't lend themselves to the reality of Syrians in Turkey.*** *New laws need to be introduced to clarify the status of Syrians. Many don't have residency permits, have expired passports. Even Syrian new-borns can't be registered in Turkey." (Dr AM).* Syrian academics risked losing their jobs or even being deported from the city they lived in when their residency permits expired.

*"Arab countries do not understand the concept of **'Knowledge Economy'** or of **Investment in Intellectual Capital**. I hope that the Turkey embraces both." (EAR)*

Box 1.10 DESKILLING: MEDICS

Those at greatest risk of deskilling in Turkey are from the medical and legal disciplines whose qualifications are either not recognised or non-transferable. There are a huge number of Syrian medical professionals, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, etc. in exile in Turkey who either need work or training, who are either qualified, or have yet to complete their PhDs or their training, including specialisation training. Many work illegally, some in the humanitarian sector offering their services for free.

No equivalency or transition exams. In a country with a huge educational structure, no mechanism exists to allow recognition of medical qualifications. Turkey needs an examination system such as the US Medical Licensing Examination, or the UK Plab 1 and 2 exams, to allow Syrian medics to demonstrate their qualifications and practice in Turkey. At the very least Turkey needs to grant Syrian medics work permits to work in the hospitals and centres that service the needs of over 3 million Syrian refugees.

Medical Centres for Syrians 200 centres are run by WHO, with currently 46 Syrian work permit applications under consideration. Only a few have been granted to date. Just one hospital for Syrians in Hatay has permission to function. The Ataturk University Medical School in Hatay has an Arabic Department in which Syrians are able to work.

Six months ago, the Mayor of Gaziantep told Syrian doctors: "Don't emigrate we will find a solution." The Head of Gaziantep Municipality said "We will employ Syrian medics." Two months ago they launched a website to allow medics to register. Yesterday (8th June 2016) the Turkish Minister of Health announced "We do not want to deal with the problem of physicians whether here or in Syria." [Source Dr AM]

Exploitation In Istanbul there are 50 Health Centres where Syrians work with no right to charge, although the centres charge TKY120 per patient. These Syrian health workers are classified as part of Turkey's PHC, but are not paid a single Lira. They are told they have to get a sponsor, but where from? This isn't the situation in Mersin, where there are health centres for Syrians run under the oversight of a Turkish doctor. [Source AK]

"If we can't work with interpreters and there are no specialist Turkish doctors who speak Arabic, then I need help to learn Turkish, to allow me to integrate."

A Syria Deprived of Medics: A Catastrophe in the Making Syria's 'so called' opposition areas have been deprived of medical services and training for 5 years. If we don't establish a system in Syria or Turkey to train medical clinicians and academics right now, Syria will face a catastrophic problem. In an area with a population of 30,000 there is only one female gynaecologist. **This is not just about integration into Turkey, but about developing qualified medical staff for Syria.** A few organisations are now trying to address the issue, including, a group of expat medics in the US and Canada looking to set up a facility in Syria to examine and accredit medics. *[Principle Source Dr MA]*

1.II.2 CULTURAL BARRIERS

Despite Turkish universities having Equality and Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility policies, there was little sense of 'responsibility' or 'solidarity' towards their Syrian colleagues to drive creative responses. It was suggested that Cara might try to identify sympathetic universities to create a consortium to lobby YOK and other Turkish authorities.

Protectionism was very strong in Turkey. Foreigners were on annual contracts, highlighted by the case of a French academic who remained on an annual contract after 15 years employment. The culture of protectionism was not, however, targeted at Syrian academics, although it clearly affected them. There was evidence of some confusion amongst both Syrian and Turkish participants as to the precise nature of the 2% quote, ie. whether it applied to each institution, or to the overall number of foreigners employed across the higher education sector? Current employment of foreign academics across the sector was said to be less than 1%. YOK had also discussed raising the quota in the case of Syrian academics. Although the outcome was not known, Zirve University had not renewed the contracts of a substantial number of its foreign academic staff in the past year, including Syrians, with the fate of those that remained unclear. Although Syrian participants holding academic posts in Turkey spoke of being well received and respected by their Turkish colleagues, they had **no security of employment**. There was also the question as to whether Turkish academics and medics wanted to open the doors to Syrian academics and medics, as potential competition in an already crowded market?

Connections Although in no way unique to Turkey, having a network of professional connections and levels of trust was central to securing work in Turkey. Syrian academics, who inevitably lacked such connections, complained about receiving few responses to unsolicited requests for work and CVs sent to senior university administrators. Dr Al Ibrahim noted that in 2013, a Union of Free Syrian Academics (UFSA) delegation had visited the eight Turkish universities located along the Turkish/Syrian border with bundles of UFSA members' CVs, a tour that had not resulted in any offers of support or employment.

Employment amongst the best universities in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, was highly competitive**,** competing against experienced connected Turkish colleagues, as well as recent Turkish graduates. The more senior the post, the higher the expectation including a record of publications in top indexed journals, which few Syrian academics were able to provide.

There were real tensions between the need for a mechanism of absorption and the current realities in Turkey, including the precarious economic, political and academic situation.

1.II.4 SKILLS GAPS INCLUDING LANGUAGE (ie. EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS)

The absence amongst many Syrian academics of fundamental skills (CV writing, writing for publication in a peer reviewed journal, how to publish, research methodologies, international standards in research and teaching, ethics etc.) and limited or no English or Turkish language skills, had combined to constrain integration as well as academic engagement and collaboration in Turkey and beyond. English Language, as the international language of science, was fundamental to facilitating those connection. The absence of languages had also constrained employment opportunities in Turkey. There were no official Turkish language programmes for Syrians other than for students and those run privately were extremely expensive.

> ***"When I went to learn Turkish, despite the approach being primitive and simplistic, I was charged USD100 for a month."*** *(EAR)*

"We approached Aksaray University regarding Turkish language training and access to the language department, but provision of Turkish Language training in universities along the Turkish/Syrian border is not well developed." *(Dr AAI)*

1.II.3 INFORMATION GAP

It was evident there was a considerable information gap in terms of available opportunities, whether work, internships, training, research opportunities, self-promotion or funding.

1.II.5 EXPLOITATION

"A number of private Jordanian universities attracted Syrian academics, but paid them a pittance. I refused a contract from the University of Jerash offering a monthly salary of JD900, which was insufficient to meet even day to day needs. The reason given: ***"Because you are a Syrian refugee, only in Jordan to survive".*** *In Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq it is the same. Some of our Syrian colleagues went to work in Erbil, but were paid half the salaries of their Iraqi colleagues. The problem is not just in Turkey. It extends to all Arab countries. Syrian academics deserve some respect, but our colleagues shun or exploit us." (AK, SAH)*

1.II.4 SESSION II PROPOSALS

- **Create a Consortium of Sympathetic Turkish Universities** to raise bureaucratic and Turkish language issues with YOK, to help integration into Turkish universities and research networks.
- **Scholarship Programme for Syrian Post-graduates.** Prioritise post-graduates given their existing knowledge, which would motivate recipients to conquer the language barrier.
- **Turkish University Sponsorship.** At the meeting convened by Dr Yetis in Ankara (26 Jan. 2016), it was suggested that unemployed Syrian academics be distributed across **Turkish universities that would sponsor a period of Turkish and English language training**, prior to the start of teaching contracts. Urfa and Harran universities had contracted two Syrian academics on that basis, who are not required to teach until September.
- **Arab Universities** Establish relations with Arab universities in the Gulf, Jordan, Lebanon and beyond, to overcome language issue and open opportunities for Arab speaking colleagues.

"The reality was that Syrians had been spurned by most Arab countries." *(AK)*

Box1.11 REFLECTIONS ON THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE *(Prof. Kevin McDonald)*

What did it mean to be an academic? There was a community dimension, being part of professional cultures and sharing values with colleagues, dimensions that were very important, but which could have negative characteristics, when they became closed and homogenous. At another level the academic experience was made up of opportunities, how we worked together and struggled around limited resources, our determination and ability to focus which could also come out in negative forms, ie. hierarchies of privilege. At a third level the academic experience involved knowledge and creativity, the pleasure of learning, the pleasure of discovery, the ethical basis of enquiry, the sense of being an agent in the world and responding to challenges and being part of a broader culture capable of constructing its history and telling its story.

These were all critical dimensions of what it meant to be an academic and needed to be reflected in the actions that come out of discussions.

DAY 1. Session III. Roles and Employment Opportunities in Exile: Issues Arising?

1.III.1 SUSTAINING SYRIA'S INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

Academic employment was not in itself the answer to sustaining Syria's intellectual capital. Many employed Syrian academics in Turkey had secured posts in some of its weakest universities, in the South-East. Whilst employment offered some security, including a salary and health insurance, it did not in itself prevent deskilling, where the institution, staff and students were all weak. These institutions had few if any research capacities. In the desire to have a local HE institution, private universities in Turkey had been allowed to proliferate over the past decade, many of them little more than glorified 6th form colleges.

Box 1.12 STORY 3

''I am working in a new private university. It has yet to build its reputation to be able to attract quality students. I face difficulties teaching weak students. Their English skills are also very weak. I cannot involve them in research, so I feel I have to give up. ***Yes, I am saving my family, I am feeding them, I am providing them with an education, but I am losing myself. I don't know if my university, will improve in two or three years, but if I wait to find out I will be lost as a researcher.*** *'' (Dr AHAH)*

Teaching Opportunities As noted, the majority of work permits issued by YOK had gone to Syrian Theology lecturers, a subject taught in Arabic in Turkish universities, and to Arabic teachers, although not without some questioning by Syrian colleagues as to the recipients' academic credentials. As noted, the **introduction of a greater number of Arabic Departments within Turkish universities** to help absorb more Syrian academics was under discussion.

Degree Courses Taught in Arabic (see Box 1.13) In Gaziantep University, the introduction of eight under-graduate (UG) degree courses taught in Arabic in the academic year 2015-16, ie. Arabic translations of accredited Turkish UG courses, was surrounded by controversy accused of opportunism and exploitation, cronyism and poor quality, of promoting segregation rather than integration, and of being driven by donor interests rather than need. Others challenged that it had not been conceived to aid integration, but rather to contribute to the rebuilding of Syria**.** The concept of maintaining a teaching environment in Arabic offering opportunities to both Syrian academics and students, was deemed of value within a multi-pronged integrated approach to overlapping issues, albeit severely undermined by questions of quality and transparency. These needed to be addressed prior to the planned roll out of the model to other Turkish universities in the area in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

"If we want to improve this generation of academics we need to engage them in research." *(Dr AAI)*

Research Opportunities There was a strong view that research would be central to enhancing the academic capabilities.

Access to Facilities The possibility of establishing research centres through which Syrian academics could be employed and be expected to publish in English, was also raised, with a view that these could also allow post-graduate students to complete interrupted degrees.

Where to Invest? Private Syrian universities in Turkey and universities in liberated areas offered a partial solution, a way to regenerate the education cycle inside Syria, but the lack of basic academic skills and language skills still needed to be addressed for the long-term benefit of Syria's higher education sector. ***"We need help to build those basic skills."*** *(Dr AHAH)*

1.III.2 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Positive Discrimination Employment of Syrian academics in Turkey was an issue of human capital for both Syrian and Turkish society. Dr Erdogan had already proposed to YOK that it create 5 places in each public university, effectively 500 places for Syrians. It was not easy for Syrians to compete in a competitive market, especially in better universities.

1.III.3 INVESTING IN OR OUT OF SYRIA?

A powerful view expressed by a Syrian participant involved in the delivery of HE in liberated areas was that investment needed to be made inside Syria.

"There was no need to plant a Syrian academic in each Turkish university. This would not benefit Syrian academia. The SHAM International University was the seed, providing an ideal solution for all. *Discussion about Syrian academics often gets drawn into peripheral issues that distract from the priorities. We have Syrian academics looking for jobs and Syrian students looking for study opportunities.* ***The ideal would be to focus on formal recognition and accreditation of Syrian universities in the liberated areas to offer a solution to both needs."*** *(Dr MAT)*

Cara Mandate and Framework

Dismissal of Round Table discussions as irrelevant to Syrian academics was firmly rebutted, with a reminder of Cara's mandate and the frame of reference within which it worked. Cara's ***Syria Research Fellowship Programme*** **was conceived around research to help build capabilities, connections and opportunities** for Syrian academics that would be vital to the future of higher education in Syria.

"These discussions are anything but peripheral." *(Prof Mike Barer)*

Box 1.13 UG COURSES TAUGHT IN ARABIC: INTEGRATION OR EXPLOITATION?

You can't create a society within a society. The introduction of UG courses taught in Arabic at Gaziantep University (2015-16) appeared to be a political decision. Teaching Syrian students in Arabic in a Turkish university was not about integration, nor about their future following graduation. There was a formal Turkish language course on which they were doing well, so why teach them in Arabic?

The initiative had involved the 7 new colleges: Education, Biology, Economics and Business Management, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Architecture, and Food Engineering, this last closed within six months due to supposed lack of qualified lecturers.

"I was the Deputy Dean of Food Engineering and could have taught the course, but frankly didn't wish to do so under the present university administration?" *(Dr AAI)*

Exploitation Students were charged fees ranging from USD1,500 to USD2,500, when most work in factories outside university hours for around 600-800 TKL/month. **Gaziantep University acted as if this was a private investment opportunity**. A Sharia (Theology) College was also due to be opened, but registered students could not afford the fees. Harran University also enrolled 60 Syrian students to study Theology, with all but 13 dropping out due to lack of funds. Grants offered by the Mayor of Urfa were insufficient.

"I collected the CVs of over 400 Syrian academics with PhDs looking to teach in Turkish state universities and help Syrian students unable to pay fees. Many appointed lecturers withdrew their services, including me." *(Dr YW)*

Financial and legal obstacles Six months the Syrians teaching the course had not been paid a single lira, due to bureaucratic rules. ***(NB. this last had since been resolved).***

[Principle source Dr AM]

Box. 1.14 A SYRIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"The Syrian revolution began in response to oppression and injustice. If we had figures on the Syrian academics tortured and killed in Syrian jails, they would be very high. I was one of them. Hundreds went through this. ***We started the revolution to gain our freedom. We want a higher education system based on freedom, justice, integrity and modernisation."*** *(Dr MAT)*

DAY 1. Sessions IV & V. The Current Situation of Higher Education in Syria. Initiatives Supporting Continued HE Delivery.

Box 1.15 STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIBERATED AREAS

Security, infrastructure, students and qualified teachers are basic requirements for an education system, whereas the past 5 years have seen military force used against civilians and civilian establishments including schools and universities, with resulting deaths, internal displacement and outward migration. An estimated 100,000+ students have 'dropped out' of higher education, fleeing Syria, or joining the fighting, or just trying to survive. Pre-2011, 20% of Syrians of university age attended universities. An estimated 2000+ academics have also fled Syria, approximately 30% of pre-2011 numbers.

In 2015, two meetings attended by an estimated 40 and 70 'Free Academics' respectively established a Higher Education Council of 7 senior PhD holders to oversee educational institutions in the liberated areas where three universities are now active. Their joint capacity of 7,600 falls way below the estimated 100,000+ university age population they seek to serve, which increases with every high school graduation. The aim is to re-establish HE in the liberated areas to encourage the return of Syrian academics and offer study opportunities. Many Syrian students were in their final year, or just needed resits.

- ***University of Aleppo in Liberated Areas*** *(UoA-LA), located in the Western Reef (countryside) of Aleppo, with a capacity of 2000 male and female students, has been operational since late 2015.*
- ***SHAM International University*** *(SHAM), is being built on 5 hectares of land on the Syrian side of the Turkish/Syrian border purchased by IHH*, SHAM's core funder. It has been operational since June 2016 with a capacity of 600 male students only.* ***Current Facilities*** *first-year classrooms, canteen, staff residences, 2 lecture theatres with capacities of 250 and 100.* ***Staffing*** *25, of which 16 academics (8 PhD/ 8 master's holders) and 9 administrators. IHH pays monthly bursaries to students (150TRY if married; 100TRY if single). Ongoing construction will allow female students and a student residential building.* ***Colleges*** *Law and Sharia, Economics, Political Sciences, and Engineering, this last including civil and data engineering, and physics and chemistry. Additional colleges are under consideration including a college for girls.* ***Courses*** *3 semesters a year to reduce graduation timeframe from 5 to 3 years.*
- ***Idlib University*** *re-established following the liberation of Idlib in 2015. The University had a capacity of 5000.*

The standard **Syrian Regime curriculum** is taught and a **symbolic annual fee of $100-$150 charged** as an attendance incentive, waived in year 2. Students coming top of their class are rewarded with a gift. *(*IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation based in Istanbul)*

"Turkey needed Syrian intellectuals to help with the integration of the wider refugee population, to ensure a peaceful future for Turks and Syrians together."

(Dr Murat Erdogan)

Box 1.16 STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REGIME CONTROLLED AREAS

Education in regime-controlled areas benefits at least from existing infrastructure, most of which remains intact. Reduced student numbers has eased the pressure although the exodus of academics from regime-controlled areas has forced those who remain to teach subject areas that are not within their areas of competence.

Specialisms have been merged and new degrees been created to compensate for the absence of expertise in certain subject areas. The result is a major negative impact on the quality of HE. Monthly academic salaries in regime-controlled areas are no more than USD150, which has been the case since Hafiz al-Assad came to power and another incentive to seek work outside Syria.

> ***"Syrian academics are everywhere in the Gulf, in America, in Europe. They have left their mark with inventions and research, but are now facing very hard times. Many of our colleagues are still inside unable to leave Syria."*** *(Dr YW)*

Those who could leave have so that many who remain are amongst the less able who have not been able to secure work outside Syria, or who for family or other reasons cannot leave. Many in Regime controlled areas do not remain there because of their allegiance to the Regime, but because they are amongst the safest areas in Syria.

It was important not to forget those delivering higher education in non-liberated areas of Syria that were currently under siege, eg. Ghouta (East Damascus) and Northern Homs.

Box 1.17 STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NON-LIBERATED AREAS UNDER SIEGE

Medical Academy in Ghouta has been operational since 2014, set up by medics and medical organisations in collaboration with the SIG. It began training nurses and has expended its capacities over the past two years, with the opening of **The Ghouta Medical Academy** in 2015. It is now training midwives, physiotherapists and lab technicians. Classrooms are underground for fear of bombings.

There is another Medical College in Northern Syria in the liberated areas, but these projects are scattered, with no umbrella organisation to help coordination. We are trying to grow the number inside Syria with medical qualifications, but we need a strategic plan.

Most NGOs operate outside Syria, but they also need to support medical training and build medical capacities inside Syria, given the acute shortage of qualified medical staff, whether at PhD or master's level, or specialists, or generalists.

Before 2011, 1,500 doctors graduated each year. The numbers are now in crisis.

"We are looking for a better future where academics are involved in all matters relating to society and responsible for finding solutions. The Syrian academic is a builder, not a destroyer, but his future is uncertain. There are many of our colleagues still inside Syria facing bombings from the Regime planes and those of their allies. We want to save what is left of our country and be a part of rebuilding it." *(Dr AIA)*

1.IV/V.1 CHALLENGES

Despite targeted Regime and Russian attacks on universities and teaching hospitals in Northern Syria, despite the lack of funds, the lack of international patronage and support from non-Syrian universities and ministries of higher education, the radicalisation of students recruited into the fighting, the mass exodus of intellectuals and resulting erosion of expertise and quality amongst

remaining teaching staff, despite the lack of higher education opportunities for students, eroding hope and a vision for the future, the lack of formal status for the 3 universities in the liberated areas, the delivery of unaccredited degrees, the general economic insecurity forcing Syrians of university age to work as part of the family's economic survival strategy, the poor living conditions, including camps that were not conducive to study… **despite all these constraints and challenges, higher education continued to be delivered inside Syria's 'liberated' areas, and students continued to attend against the odds, which was entirely admirable.**

Accreditation remained one of the most pressing challenges for those seeking to deliver higher education in the liberated and besieged areas of Syria. It was critical that 'students' were able to access good quality higher education and benefit from internationally recognised qualifications on completion. The newly formed 'Higher Education Council' in the liberated areas was looking at the possible set-up of a sister university in Urfa or Gaziantep as a means of gaining formal recognition from the Turkish authorities, that could be extended to universities in the liberated areas. If at all feasible, it would almost certainly require the adoption of the Turkish curriculum by all to allow for YOK accreditation.

Quality The exodus of expertise from Syria had impacted on the quality of higher education right across Syria, despite the myths being promulgated about the positive status of higher education in Regime-controlled areas.

Coordination? Although the rectors of the three universities in the liberated areas were said to be collaborating, they were almost inevitably competing, for staff, for funds, and for patronage. It was not clear to what extent the 'Higher Education Council' in the liberated areas was able to fulfil its mandate as a coordination body. Several participants complained of the lack of coordination and the lack of a coherent strategic plan for higher education in liberated areas.

Vocational Courses versus Degrees Some participants highlighted the advantages of vocational training over degrees, delivering qualified technicians, eg. assistant engineers, qualified to work after only 2 years. Establishing a university like Sham required a process of formal recognition and major capabilities. A basic foundation education was a pragmatic response to current realities. The standard could be raised to university level when security allowed.

IV/V.2 SESSIONS IV/V PROPOSALS

- **UN Security Council and International Community to establish safe zones**;
- **Improved salaries** to stem the brain drain from liberated areas;
- **Reprisals against those who target educational establishments** - academics describe the horror of days spent in underground shelters due to Regime and Russian bombings;
- **Investment in new educational infrastructure and long-term support**;
- **Neighbouring countries, Turkey in particular, to remove bureaucratic barriers to the delivery of higher education in liberated areas,** eg. cross-border permits, and legislate laws to protect academics and education;
- **Greater focus on vocational courses** taught by academics, to establish baseline skills and trained technicians in key areas such as engineering and medicine.

The lack of higher education provision for 18 to 30 had fed Daesh and others terrorist groups, and terrorism across continents responding to extremist ideologies. **Serious efforts had to be made to protect and maintain minimum access to education in the liberated areas**, **or the impact would be catastrophic, spilling over to neighbouring countries**

3. Round Table Day 2.

Welcome *by* ***Ambassador Consul General Jens Odlander*** *and* ***Prof. Johan Martelius, Director, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul****, where day 2 of the Round Table was hosted.*

Box 2.1 THE SWEDISH RESPONSE In absolute terms, Sweden was the fifth largest contributor to the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. Although intake was slowing, Sweden had received 160,000 Syrians in 2015 alone, with 60% of Syrian family reunification cases to Sweden being handled by the Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul.

> ***"Education is something beautiful, but what is the current standard and quality of Syrian education? What is the value of my degree? Quality and accreditation are both essential for higher education to be of value."*** *(AK)*

Day 1 Summary *(Prof. Kevin McDonald)* Day 1 sought to clarify issues, identify challenges and above all, define possibilities. Syria exemplified **a new kind of war one that didn't so much target armies but attempted to destroy societies, our capacity to live together, to have memory.** Hence the targeting of schools and hospitals and the basic infrastructure that allowed us to live together in communities. Yesterday we heard human stories. The struggle to maintain academic practice in Turkey, the challenge of language, the reality of isolation, the experience of deskilling, but also stories of resilience and personal determination. The generosity of Turkey had been well acknowledged, albeit frustrated by the lack of a strategic plan. There were challenges for government, but also around professional cultures, the way we understood nationality and diversity, and urgent issues of healthcare and security. Our Syrian colleagues were not just seeking help. They wished to be agents in shaping their futures and that of their country, and to remain active participants in knowledge production.

Cara Iraq Research Fellowship Programme (IRFP): A brief overview To help set the scene for day two of the Round Table, IRFP (2009-12) and discussions around solidarity and the opportunities offered by the *Cara Syria Programme*, Professor McDonald provided a brief overview of the *Cara Iraq Research Fellowship Programme* on which the Cara would build within the context of its *Syria Programme*. Iraqi academics in exile were integrated into research teams made up of scholars still in Iraq and senior academics from universities of international repute. The research framework offered opportunities to develop academic skills for immediate application as part of the research, as well as responding to urgent challenges facing Iraq, including public health, bias in school curriculum, reconstructing cities, the status of female academics, the realities of depleted uranium etc. As well as the impact on the scholars involved and on their broader context, including their academic units in Iraq and the professional networks they were part of, it brought on broader transformations through the research itself, as well as on university cultures. Cara is adopting a more strategic approach in its regional response to the Syrian crisis, to which regional HEI partners will be central to the longer-term outcomes for the Syrian academics.

Cara is not an organisation driven by a culture of humanitarian emergency, its focus is longer-term, looking at how to support Syrian academics to be part of reconstructing Syrian HE. The launch of the ***Syria Research Fellowship Programme*** will be marked by an open call for research proposals on the challenges facing Syria, which could encompass a whole range of issues and disciplines, a programme for which Cara is still in the process of securing funding for the project.

DAY 2. Session I. Solidarity-Driven Approaches and Initiatives: UK, France, Turkey

Box 2.2 SUPPORTING CARA'S WORK: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE (Prof. Mike Barer)

I wanted to share my experience of working with two Cara Fellows, an Iraqi and a Syrian academic, and to give you a sense of the highly competitive UK academic environment.

In late 2009, I received an email from a colleague at Liverpool University introducing Cara and asking me to look at a research proposal. When I finally looked at it I began to understand Cara's work. Like every colleague I have spoken to about it since, it was something I felt I should support. **There is a feeling of responsibility in the UK for some of the circumstances faced by Middle Eastern colleagues, so a strong motivation to help**.

However, in the aspiration to support Syrian colleagues we can't dismiss the development of our own academics. Everything we do has to contribute to our academic environment, and not diminish opportunity for our own academics. An unfortunate reality.

The proposal deployed advanced techniques to characterise occurrence of TB in Kerbala, Iraq, with interesting aspects, but in essence it appeared as if the author (Mohannad) had stuck advanced techniques to a problem, in the hope of achieving a presentable proposal. However, Cara's approach was to support the further development of research proposals with potential, so I invited Mohannad to visit my lab and learn a technique I thought would be applicable to his situation, eg. unreliable power supply, no sophisticated equipment. The main TB diagnostic test, invented in 1893, is still the most widely used worldwide.

Cara facilitated a workshop in Amman, in which the first 4 selected research groups came together. The expectation that two humanities groups and two laboratory sciences groups would make common progress was a completely novel experience for me. What that common discussion really allowed was to understand the problems that each faced.

Debate between very different disciplines has pretty much stopped in English academic life. The tendency is to focus on individuals demonstrating their strengths, which has also led to discipline groups being encouraged to work with groups outside rather than within their university. English academia is enormously research focused, with career progression almost entirely based on research activities. While teaching is essential, it has been relegated to second place for the last 20 years, although with a recent shift back.

Mohannad, who was not a medical doctor, was supported by senior medical colleagues at Kerbala University to access clinical samples. Attitudes to research at Kerbala were not positive, seen as personal advancement rather than contributing to the community, leading to an unstable policy on research. On one occasion, Mohannad returned to find that access to his laboratory had been removed. **Assurance from host universities that a project will be supported to its conclusion is critical.**

The technical delivery of the project was very successful. Mohannad was able to show the method had roughly twice the sensitivity of the traditional one. It provided clear evidence of TB in some who had previously tested negative, introducing our Iraqi colleagues to the complexities of the **ethics of research involving human subjects.** In England, if you introduce a new diagnostic test that hasn't been fully evaluated, you have to establish at the outset what you will do with the knowledge it reveals requiring an often complex framework.

Box 2.2 continued

With a disease like TB it is very serious as the person may be infecting others. **Our work led to the set-up of a local Medical Ethics Committee, just one example of the cultural consequences of engaging with research in different environments.**

Publication/Dissemination The research was totally publishable, but the timescale meant that by the time the results were fully available they were no longer competitive in an international environment. They were presented at an international meeting, with good dissemination and, in terms of the research practices, it enhanced Mohannad's understanding of the international environment. There were evident consequences for the authorities concerned because of the increased diagnostic rate of TB.

Politics We also engaged with the World Health Organisation (WHO), which promotes TB control, an experience that revealed the complexities of the politics involved in deploying disease control in different regions. This was a test that would have easily enhanced the diagnosis of TB across Iraq, which was never used because it didn't fit the political environment at the time. These are the realities one has to deal with. Probably most importantly was the discussion the research provoked, revealing the inadequacy of the existing diagnostic service, which I am convinced has been enhanced as a result.

Impact The final point is that because of my engagement with Mohannad there were discussions between our two universities about postgraduate and staff exchange and an MoU signed, but the practical commitment from Kerbala University was insufficient to follow through, with local politics far more important than international engagement.

Hosting a Cara Fellow My current engagement with a Syrian doctor is a rather different experience. He was a recently qualified medical doctor with academic aspirations, but no academic record. Cara asked me if there were any opportunities for him to do research at Leicester, where he is now studying as a post-graduate student for an MD with a full waiver of his tuition fees. Cara pays for his living expenses and we have paid for his research expenses through an internal charitable fund.

University Fund To illustrate the basic desire amongst the UK university community to support people in your situation, we have a fund that is contributed to by the graduates of our university. They donated funds to support him working in my laboratory and have been very excited by his work and the possibility of support similar hostings in future.

Progress I am very proud of his work. He has done the Syrian nation a great deal of credit by his hard work and his attention to detailed scholarship. What I particularly enjoy is that he argues with me. We have great disputes about what is the best thing to do with research. You want someone with independent ideas who you can guide to be more and more refined. This has been a very exciting association.

It speaks greatly for the background of Syrian Higher Education that he came with such an enquiring and thoughtful attitude towards research.

BOX 2.3 THE FRENCH RESPONSE (Dr Leila Vignal)

In France, we have no 'Cara', no permanent mechanism with a history of action to which universities and academics can turn at times of crisis. I am currently at Oxford University, which is a member of the *Cara Network*, and simply had to turn to Cara to identified suitable Fellowship candidates. **France and other European countries should consider extending the Cara model across European universities in a coordinated manner.**

What France has, however, is a long history of scientific collaboration with Syria. Through the *Institut Francais du Proche Orient* (IFPO), a French research centre that was based in Damascus, but which has now moved to Beirut. Hundreds of Syrian scholars did PhDs in France and all French universities were involved at some level.

The only French policy response I was able to identify was in the 1990s. During the Algerian war, when Algerian academics, intellectuals and journalists were at risk, the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CRNS), a major French research funding body, created a number of temporary posts.

France has only received 10,000 Syrians to date, with others due through the European distribution system, but there is a high awareness of the situation of the Syrian people. Universities are particularly sensitive to the situation of Syrian students and colleagues, but again, support has been *ad hoc*, driven by individuals or students who see it as their duty to reach out with programmes to facilitate the integration of Syrian students. Universities like Paris 1,one of the biggest Paris universities, has received funding from Qatar to establish a Fellowship Programme for 100 students, including language classes and a living allowance, but most programmes focus on those who are already in exile in France. In Lyons, for example one of my colleagues has secured local authority funding for thirty 3-year student fellowships, but there is **no coordinated strategic plan**.

In September 2015, the French university presidents' council declared that French universities wanted to be part of a solidarity movement in support of Syrian students and academics, but it has taken the whole year for the government to start mobilising human resources. A report has been commissioned by the MoHE to assess the current situation and needs, but in reality, French academics have not been very active. I have been part of a group that has been trying to push the issue for the last 3 years, but the institutional response has only just got underway.

I and concerned colleagues organised a 2-day conference in Paris in early May 2016, with many Syrians, allowing us to identify needs and the current situation. We are going to produce a report and recommendations in July to feed into the report for the MoHE. France a lot of local grass roots initiatives but is only now moving towards a more coherent framework.

I hope the France can also establish a permanent mechanism such as Cara, to allow us to respond more effectively to such needs in future.

DAY 2. Session II. The Role of Host Country Higher Education and Research Institutions: Constraints, Opportunities and Challenges?

Turkish Solidarity? Did the limited response by the Turkish higher education sector to its Syrian colleagues reflect a difficult political climate, a culture of protectionism and exclusion, or a limited understanding of the scale of the problems faced by Syrian academics in Turkey?

> ***"As a member of civil society and a private university, let me say that we have no problem sharing our land with others. This land is not a 'promised land' for Turks. We are happy to be here with you. This is the view of the majority of Turks."***
>
> *(Dr Can Ceylan, Medipol University)*

Box 2.4 KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY *(Dr Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe)*

Dr Sinem declared Kadir Has University's commitment to supporting its Syrian colleagues where possible, whilst reiterating employment constraints imposed by the YOK 2% quota on foreign academics and the difficulties of document verification and equivalency, for those from war torn countries. She also referred to the issue of entry permits with which Kadir Has was familiar due it efforts on behalf of Syrian students, **suggested that a coalition of 'sympathetic' Turkish universities might be formed to lobby YOK and other relevant authorities on the bureaucratic obstacles faced by Syrian academics**.

PhD Fellowships Kadir Has had a very straightforward application process for international students offering 50% PhD scholarships including health insurance and psychological support. **She suggested the remaining 50% and living costs might be addressed through a burden-sharing approach.** PhD students had a year's access to English language training through Kadi Has' Prep School and English writing training through its Writing Centre, facilities that a lot of other Turkish universities had available, which might also be tapped into. The scholarship included a compulsory module introducing Turkish politics, Turkish history and ways of living.

Legal Clinics for Syrians Kadir Has' Law Faculty was establishing a clinic on migration and other legal issues facing Syrians in particular. They would be offering their voluntarily services for free. **Other universities with law faculties and experts in international and migration law might also be encouraged to replicate this service.**

Opportunities Turkish university research centres, including the Kadir Has *Middle East & North Africa Research Centre*, which had developed a strong focus on Syria since 2013, might also offer opportunities to Syrian academics, since few Syrians were directly involved in programmes of research related to Syria.

English Language Kadir Has and Coventry would explore further how to build on their strategic partnership to support delivery of an English Language programme.

Funding Kadir Has would be **happy to join a consortium of universities on EU/EC funding bids and to lead on an Erasmus bid for a small scale language (English and Turkish) project for up to 3 years funding,** which should be favourably received. Kadir Has held an Erasmus Charter and she was already an Erasmus module holder. **The next call was in February/March 2017**

Kadir Has had also established an EU-funded **student internship consortium** through which it sent students on internships to Europe

BOX 2.5 MEDIPOL UNIVERSITY *(Dr Can Ceylan)*

He believed that the Turkish political authorities had some formal responsibility for Syrian academics. They had not been prepared to receive such huge numbers, but the experience of disasters, such as the 1999 Turkish earthquake, in which some 20,000 died, offered existing crisis-response strategies to draw on. The refugee camps were an example, well-designed with excellent infrastructure. There were also a large number of active civil society organisations.

Two weeks ago, the Medipol University Medipolis Mediterranean Research Centre, had organised a workshop to look at issues facing Arabic speaking academics in Turkey. It was attended by 30 to 35 academics from Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia, but mainly from Syria. Mr Omer Farouk Korkmaz, Senior Adviser to the PM, chaired the meeting and undertook to share the issues raised with the Prime Ministry. We are in contact with YOK, and our Rector is in contact with other authorities.

Medipol now aimed to open **two new departments one in 'International Relations' and the other in 'International Trade', in which teaching would be in Arabic.** We want to share your experiences. I have been to Damascus and Aleppo twice. We have much in common. When in Aleppo, people in the street were talking Turkish, they accepted the Turkish Lira and your bargaining style is similar to our own. This historical background will help us.

I want to suggest to my Rector and Trustees, that Medipol pilot a summer school for between 4 to 6 weeks, to demonstrate that we can collaborate and deliver initiatives, that we are doing something. This type of activity will show the way to the authorities.

Last year a group of Turkish businessmen in Gaziantep suggested founding an Arabic university, which they would fund, covering all the costs, but YOK refused because existing Turkish law did not allow it. We need a private public arrangement like that of the Turkish German University and Galatasaray. Maybe this will herald a fundamental change in YOK. **I hope a future Arabic University can be established in Turkey**.

Private vs. State Universities The employability of foreign academics will be easier through private universities since state universities are bound by more complex employment regulations

Medipol was also an Erasmus Charter holder, with an Erasmus exchange programme. It could also activate the **FARABI exchange programmes** in Islamic and Turkic countries.

2.II.1 WHAT CAN SYRIAN ACADEMICS CONTRIBUTE TO TURKISH ACADEMIA? *(Dr Seda Altug)*

Discussions so far had been framed in terms of solidarity and support from Turkish academics to Syrian colleagues, but what did Syrian academics have to offer? The Syrian HE system was very state centred. Most of the social sciences, arts and humanities research being done in Syria was on politically non-sensitive topics, eg. literature, language, ancient history, archaeology, theology, Arabic literature, ie. topics that excluded issues such as peace-building, transitional justice, or even recent history. Even first world war history was only covered by a couple of Syrian academics and then in a very mainstream way that conformed to the official Baath ideology, so that the research topics of say Bogazici's History Department did not fit easily with those of history departments at Aleppo or Damascus universities or other universities in Syria. **This constraint on the areas of specialisation of Syrian academics has existed since 1963, or even since independence in 1946, but ironically have led to the development of areas of specialisation of value to Turkish academics.** For instance, most history departments in Turkey focus on Ottoman history, which

Box 2.6 TURKISH UNIVERSITY GAP ANALYSIS

English universities undertook regular policy strategic level gap analyses, reviewing the global economy and advancing research areas in which they might not be well invested and might wish to encourage their researchers to pursue. Is there such an exercise in Turkish universities that might help to identify gaps relative to Syrian academics' strengths, ie. new areas of expertise? *(Prof. M Barer)*

they understand to be the present day Republic of Turkey. **There were very few Turkish academics working on Arab lands or Kurdish lands or Kurdish provinces under the Ottoman Empire, a missing area of expertise that Syrian historians would be well placed to fill**. Archaeology is another area to which Syrian academics could contribute, especially in relation to the North Eastern and coastal areas of Syria, where there have been lots of excavations and expertise developed that is missing in Turkey. Theology departments might also benefit from Syrian contributions. **It would be important to map these areas of opportunity where Syrians had something to add to Turkish academia.**

2.II.2 MAKING CONNECTIONS: PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT (Prof Kevin McDonald)

There would be enormous benefits to using this time to connect, so that you could return to Syria well-connected, as well as with new knowledge and understanding. However, integration into Turkish higher education would likely involve a longer-term pathway and a process. There was no central body in either the UK or Turkey through which university jobs were given. Securing a permanent post in a UK university could take years. You needed to create opportunities to help you to overcome professional isolation, using **approaches that may not be culturally familiar to you**, eg. a fellowship, a short-term contract, a visiting fellow placement possibly without salary, but that connected you to a department, or a research centre, or a specific research project

Box 2.7 BUILDING RELATIONS AND TRUST

"There are two people working in my laboratory with permanent jobs. They first approached me saying they had read some of my work, and asking if there would be an opportunity to work in my lab. This is more than 10 years ago. The first, an Indian, said she could work part-time. She did two research assistant posts on grants for me. When someone has worked for you for 6 months and you know they will deliver, it makes sense to use them rather than to advertise for someone new. She now has a permanent job and a PhD, and is a great strength in our department. The second was an Iranian with a master's degree. When I spoke to him I thought this is a clever guy. Now anybody who knows anything about biomedical research will know him, as he is now a lead bio-informatician. He is now on our PhD programme. Making that step to allow you to build that trust is incredibly important. Meeting with people face to face and letting them know that you could add to what they are doing, would elicit enthusiasm, I promise you."

(Prof. M Barer)

You needed first to identify who worked in your field to allow you to build relationships. Syrian scholars clearly had a contribution to make, in understanding new forms of migration and mobility, in literature and architecture etc., all critical areas. **Being clear about what you could contribute was the starting point.**

In Turkey, appointments were to a large extent built on personal networks, eg. "Are you somebody's students?" A cold approach saying: "I am a Syrian academic and I need work" was unlikely to be successful. Find out who they were, send them an email, ask for a meeting. Face to face contact and clarity on what you had to offer would increase your chances. **This was no different in the UK.** At the more senior level it was particularly important to make individual connections and to build trust. ***"Disciplines needed to be closely related to ensure that you were***

seen to be of value to their programmes of development. That was what would motivate, certainly UK- and US-based, academics to help you, ie. recognition that you had something to offer and would put effort into programmes that related to their own." *(Prof M Barer)*

Professional Societies/Groups would also offer visibility. For example, in the world of microbiology, there was the *Federation of European Microbiological Societies*. **They often had small amounts of funding to help people visit laboratories, or attend meetings, which would offer opportunities to make a peer to peer connections.** Find out about relevant conferences and possible financial support to participate and become part of those networks.

Professional associations could also play a role at the discipline level, eg. Sociology Society, to tap into as potential mediating institutions, opening them up to the Syrian experience?

2.II.3 ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY: BASIC SKILLS

Mentoring and Training. Cara envisaged the launch of the ***Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)*** with an open call for research proposals in the next couple of months following confirmation of funding. Capacity-building through research was central to the *SRFP*, putting ideas into action whilst building skills, capabilities and connections with colleagues from the region and beyond. Those networks would be critical offering opportunities not just to Syrians in exile, but to Syrians still in Syria.

Basic Employability Skills Course A short employability course would be invaluable.

"A CV plays such a significant role. When 70 applications are received with only 10 being shortlisted, you often look at how the CVs have been constructed."(*Dr A Ozerdem)*

Writing Skills – Publishing Aiming to publish a first article in an international journal was not realistic. **One of the proposed 'summer' schools might focus on a joint online article publication, as a learning process and confidence builder before raising the bar.** Something like *The Conversation* would require precise and concise communication skills for a 500 to 600 short opinion piece sharing data or personal experience. **Dr Ansems de Vries offered to approach *Open Democracy*, another useful online publication, with which she had good links.** There was a massive demand to understand the Syrian experience, with

Box 2.8 HOW TO PUBLISH *(Dr A Ozerdem)*

"Another useful topic, would be 'How to publish', ie. a short 'summer' school programme on: how to approach journals and publishing houses in the West, what they expect, what kind of credentials you need to compile, how to write a proposal etc. It may seem obvious, but one shouldn't assume academics knew how to publish.

I run a journal on conflict prevention, transformation and security. We provide extra support for researchers from conflict-affected environments in the South, because in most cases their papers would be rejected simply because of the way they are written. The content is not seen as important if not in the required style. Your employability will increase with your publications."

Box 2.9 PUBLISHING: BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

"The threshold for publication at international level in the Biomedical sciences was extremely high. We have been trying to publish two papers for two years, which we believe to be forefront research and which receive excellent reviews each time we submit, but fall short of publication. Getting old data into the public domain in an international context would be almost impossible. Chemistry was equally challenging. Physics might be slightly easier given the scale of collaboration." (Prof M Barer)

the EU funding major projects to try to understand what was happening amongst Syrian populations that had left Syria. A writing initiative would have to respond to different disciplines. How to write an academic funding proposal would be another helpful topic.

Summer Schools Dr Leila Vignal suggested contact be made with an initiative working in South-Eastern Turkey, in Lebanon and the liberated areas of Syria as a *'universite populaire',* running interdisciplinary workshops and building networks, with Syrian academics and international colleagues involved in the teaching of 3-week courses on topics allied to reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Box 2.10 JAMIYA: BLENDED-LEARNING UG PROGRAMME

Jamiya was the only higher education blended-learning initiative for UG students in exile that envisaged involving Syrian academics in its delivery. Its partnership model, currently with Gothenburg, overcame the problem of accreditation by using accredited Gothenberg UG courses translated into Arabic, with two modules due to be piloted (ICT and International studies) in Turkey and Jordan, facilitated by beneficiary access to Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) refugee camp computer hubs. However the pilot had been delayed due to a funding shortfall – OSF has committed but SIDA was prevaricating, and despite considerable thought being given to how to integrate Syrian academics in the teaching, that ambition had had to be revised to involving Arabic speaking academics whilst Jamiya worked out how to overcome the complexities associated with involving Syrian academics. Very promising although yet to be tried and tested. The Jamiya pilot was now set to run in August or September 2016 Hopefully after the pilot it would be in a position to engage Syrian academics.

Both Employability and English Language skills could be enhanced through collaborative regional/UK university partnerships, combining summer schools and online virtual courses. All Turkish universities had distance learning infrastructures and Syrians good access to smart phones and tablets, to support the delivery of courses throughout the year.

Virtual Learning**?** Virtual learning could also be part of the solution to delivering HE in the liberated areas. Initiatives like Sham International University were well intentioned, but without quality control and accreditation were flawed. An online blended learning approach had the advantage of minimal infrastructure requirement. This might be an area that Cara could explore using its Zimbabwe model, although what was possible would depend on connectivity.

2.II.4 MENTORING MODELS: OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES

Shadowing Established academics might be willing to share the experience of drafting and submitting papers with Syrians from the same disciplines allowing them to see for themselves the threshold required to publish internationally. If confidentiality could be sustained then Syrians could share in the experience of drafting manuscripts and how big journals respond.

The Coventry Model Coventry University had a 'mentor mentee' system to support early-career academics using the notion of 'gatekeepers', ie. established academics introducig younger academics to others who might be helpful eg. employment or research opportunities. The model could be applied in this context by enlisting volunteers amongst Turkish academics to take on the gatekeeper role for a Syrian from the same field.

The Cara Syria Research Fellowship Programme had an in-built mentoring model in the form of research collaborations/partnerships with established academics from universities of

international repute, aimed to facilitate academic skills development through research-driven action learning including publication.

Different models would need to be adopted to reflect profiles. For an established committed academic from a particular field, the most important thing was to connect to an academics prepared to offer some mentorship on career progression and provide opportunities to contribute to research programmes, even if remotely by doing computer analysis or assessing literature.

Box 2.11 META-ANALYSIS

"A big area of activity in my field is meta-analyses ie. the systematic review of existing literature, using a very specific set of rules, which ***can be done anywhere.***

For example, there may be 10 articles on remediation of a particular form of chemical damage, raising questions such as 'What evidence do they really provide?' and 'Do they meet international standards?' etc. ***There would be potential to join research teams if you offered your services."*** *(Prof M Barer)*

2.II.5 DISCIPLINE CLUSTERS

Establishing disciplinary groupings would clarify in crude terms the size and composition of Syrian academics in exile in Turkey. They needed to work together in a collective endeavour, to help gain access to useful institutions, including professional associations and local academics that might be helpful in connecting them to others. Geographic spread and difficulties travelling pointed to the **major benefit of an online platform to facilitate organisation, information sharing and communication.** A consortium of academic institutions or professional organisations might also be willing to lobby on their behalf to have funds dedicated to Syrian academics on a discipline basis. For example, **TUBITAK (Turkish Science and Research Foundation)** offered funding for a range of purposes from doctoral positions to sabbatical leave, as well as research funding. If discipline communities could be established and connect with relevant Turkish professional organisations as intermediaries, they could lobby TUBITAK or others to initiate discipline-related funding programmes.

2.II.6 FUNDING

Syrian Involvement in Research Major projects were being funded to help understand the experience of Syrian refugee populations, but few involved Syrian academics in the undertaking. Key funders such as the **EU, EC** (**Horizon 2020),** the **Economic and Social Research Council** amongst others, would favour consortium-led research projects on Syria (or the region) in which Syrian academics were involved. **Their earlier involvement would almost certainly have led to many more Syrian academics now being active in European universities**. The *Cara Syria Research Fellowship Programme* was conceived to facilitate that involvement. The EC and other funding orgs were looking for academics capable of working in teams, and interdisciplinary collaborations, who could mobilise networks beyond the academic world – civil society partners and business partners**. The Cara IRFP model focused largely on universities and they will be quite possibly be key partners again, but there will also be others.**

Business Partners Cara was invited to explore support from the business sector. Everything pointed to the need to develop a platform to facilitate delivery of courses, information and opportunity sharing, communication and organisation, discipline clusters, visibility etc. Facebook had philanthropic budgets to fund this type of activity.

"Thinking about Syria's future was also important for Turkey." *(Prof. A Ozerdem)*

UK Academies The British Academy (BA) had initiated discussion across the UK academies on possible support for those affected by the Syria crisis. The BA Senior International Policy Adviser had compiled a list of all funding opportunities available through the academies for researchers active in the social sciences and humanities, the engineering sciences, the medical sciences and the natural sciences, so effectively the full range of disciplines. These opportunities were only for post-doc and research collaborations for researchers overseas. The list would be circulated to participants via Cara.

Box 2.12 THE BRITISH ACADEMY

The British Academy was one of several UK national academies, a fellowship and funding organisation that championed the value of the social sciences and humanities and promoted international collaboration and mobility between the UK and countries around the world. *(Desislava Stoitchkova)*

2.II.7 TECHONOLOGY: ENABLING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Social Media Studies of Syrian refugees had underlined how vital social media and the mobile phone had been in their voyage, helping to build networks and an understanding of their environment. The enthusiasm of students to support those in refugee situations was enormous, coupled with knowledge of how to make social media work - invaluable if harnessed. **Creating a social media platform would allow Syrian academics to be part of existing discipline groupings.**

Box 2.13 HELPING OURSELVES: THE UNION OF FREE SYRIAN ACADEMICS (UFSA)

"We established our union in Antakya in 2013 with a small group of Syrian academics. We received minimal support to allow us to rent an office and cover some transport. We visited official institutions in Turkey including YOK, and Turkish universities along the Syrian border in Gaziantep, Kilis and Adana, but were not welcomed as academics should be welcomed. With Cara's help, we can reunify under the UFSA. The crisis has meant that Syrian academics are not organised. They need to organise. We ask our colleagues to help us." (Dr AAI)

A Resource Bank There was no 'one stop shop', no virtual place where Syrian academics could access essential factual non-political information. **Although not the full solution, everything discussed confirmed that a lack of information was a key part of the problem.** A dedicated website/online platform would act as a resource bank to allow Syrian academics to access the opportunities they had a right to. It would also allow them to organise/promote themselves. **This offered a simple strategy that just hadn't been pursued. Creating and managing a site would need organisation and financial support, but could easily be attached to an existing system**.

Distance Learning and Research Collaboration Web platforms and online aps would **democratise access to training**, supporting delivery of online modules for basic professional and language skills without the need and expense of travel to a physical delivery point. ***"For Cara and associated funders this should be the first investment made. It could also be used as to facilitate the Cara Syrian Research Programme call to allow it to connect with the maximum number of appropriate people."*** *(Prof K McDonald)*

Box 2.14 COLLABORATING AT A DISTANCE

"My PhD supervisor was Dr Charles Lemoyne from France whom I only met once in Syria. We used to communicate via email in English. Over the two-year period of his supervision, five joint papers were published in international journals and a further three in the Aleppo Research Journal. We can collaborate even at a distance." *(Dr GS)*

2.II.8 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

> ***"The one thing that was really striking from our discussions was how little had been done, despite the relatively small numbers – an intellectual resource that had just not been tapped into."*** *(Dr A Ozerdem)*

A growing number of institutions understood the importance of investing in academics who despite having lost so much, remained critical to the future rebuilding of their country and who, whilst in enforced exile, would enrich their host institutions. Below were a number of proposals emerging from the two-day Round Table.

- Turkish Government to establish dedicated Syria office.
- Enhance Union of Free Syrian Academics database to establish discipline clusters, research interests, profiles, employment status, dependents and locations.
- Target Turkish academics with existing Syria-related interests to yield immediate connections.
- Establish consortium of Turkish universities to lobby YOK and other relevant authorities on bureaucratic challenges/constraints facing Syrian academics including free Turkish language provision to aid integration – eg. expand Urfa and Harran sponsorship model (see 1.II.4 p.14)
- Target good universities outside the main cities where jobs would be less competitive. Several offered quality education and had a research presence, eg. Konya, Kayseri, Antalya, Adana.
- Target good universities outside main cities where fewer international partnerships, so more receptive to the benefits of the proposed 3-way Cara-facilitated research collaborations.
- Identify and build on existing strategic-university partnerships, such as that between Coventry and Kadir Has. These would also facilitate mobility for Syrian academics to the UK or other European countries. The *Cara Syria Programme* could be used to strengthen pre-existing collaborations, as well as helping to forge new ones.
- Include discipline-specific 'workshops' as well as generic workshops as part of proposed 'summer' schools, offered by partnering universities.
- Explore possible partnerships with Arab universities in the Gulf, Jordan, Lebanon and beyond, to overcome language issue and open up opportunities for Arab speaking colleagues.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with international institutions in Arabic countries, to help overcome language barriers and failure of Arabic countries to offer support.
- Cara to raise awareness of plight of Syrian academics amongst regional universities.
- Syrian academics employed in Turkish universities to form another effective pressure group.
- Approach the question of policy and influencing policy-makers within a European or wider international framework to circumnavigate local political difficulties.
- Provide hardship funding/medical insurance for unemployed: 1500-2000 TKY/month (£400).
- Form regional Advisory Committee composed of Syrian academics, local Syria experts and Cara representative to support Cara's work.
- Establish an online platform to deliver blended-learning courses to enhance academic and language skills, to be facilitated through local- and partner-university collaborations.
- Establish a dedicated web-platform as a communication, information-sharing, organising and promotion tool.
- Facilitate multidisciplinary as well as single discipline research collaborations.
- Explore partnerships in the business sector – eg. Google to support the online platform and social media engagement.
- Establish a funding consortium of UK/Turkish universities to develop a joint Erasmus proposal to support a language programme for Syrian academics in Turkey.

DAY 2 Session III. Role of Research: Cara Syria Research Fellowship Programme

The *Cara Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)* could overcome many of the issues that had been raised over the past two days. It allowed Syrian academics to engage in and contribute to meaningful research of relevance to Syria and/or Syrian populations in exile, growing skills and professional connections in the undertaking with resulting publications in respected peer-reviewed journals. The *SRFP* would connect Syrian academics with local, regional and international colleagues, facilitating mobility, affiliation and the development of longer-term opportunities, increasing in turn the likelihood of positive employment outcomes.

The *SRFP* would also reveal and nurture discipline clusters amongst Syrian academics and, by requiring at least one member of each research team to be fluent in both English and Arabic, would be inclusive regardless of limited English language skills at the outset.

Skills Development: SRFP Allied Discipline-Focused Action-Learning Programmes A complementary *SRFP* programme combining 'summer' schools, workshops, master classes etc. would support academic skills development, accompanied by a dedicated on-line platform to support delivery of blended-learning programmes regardless of location, with enhanced knowledge immediately applicable in the context of the *SRFP* research being undertaken. This would include a customised English for academic purposes (EAP) programme, incorporating strong discipline-specific strands to be facilitated by the research teams' principal investigators/mentors.

Institutional Affiliation and access to resources would be offered through non-Syrian research team members' institutions.

Enhanced Mobility Syrian research team members would benefit from academic visitor opportunities to partnering institutions outside the region.

SRFP Fellowships Participating Syrian research fellows would receive modest awards, sufficient to address financial needs, including those of dependents, over the research period.

Research Topics Participants were invited to consider thematic areas around which they might build research groups made up of Syrian scholars in exile, colleagues who remained in Syria, and regional and international scholars, ie. research topics within their own disciplines that might form the basis of an *SRFP* research proposal.

Box 2.15 RESEARCH TOPICS: MIGRATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

"Migration is central to my work and my field of TB. 90% of disease is imported. Leicester leads the world in how to work in a public health context to prevent the emergence of TB in migrating populations. Migration in public health is a major issue, eg. understanding underlying diseases, disease you are genetically predisposed to, what disease you might bring into the country. These are all really important issues that any proactive government trying to prevent disease rather than clean it up after the event, should be attending to urgently."

*"Migration also favoured **multidisciplinary approaches**, ie. teams of people from very different backgrounds and areas of expertise. This was very different to assembling discipline specific groups and had become an obsession in European research as well as appealing to some external funders."* *(Prof. M Barer)*

Box 2.16 CARA: AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Maintaining Independence and Neutrality Cara's autonomy and independence of action were critical to its ability to fulfil its mandate in often challenging and polarised environments. Overt engagement with political entities would not be necessary to the effective delivery of the *Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)*. As conceived, the *SRFP* research collaborations would exist at the individual academic, research group, department and institutional levels not at the ministry level. However, as with the Cara *Iraq Research Fellowship Programme* this would not preclude interaction with relevant authorities where beneficial to the Programme outcomes, nor the circulation of the *SRFP* call for submission through local higher education and research ministries.

An Academic Framework would reflect Cara's academic mandate and acknowledge the academic and scientific profiles of its Syrian participants, as well as limit the risk of the *SRFP* being hijacked by a highly polarised refugee narrative. **Cara's ambition remained to place its Fellows in universities where they would grow rather than stagnate or deskill**. **This period in limbo offered an incredibly important investment opportunity**

Beyond Turkey? The current focus on Turkey was because the available data pointed to Turkey as the country hosting the biggest cluster of Syrian academics in receiving countries in the region, but also because of the quality its universities. Although they spanned the full spectrum of poor to excellent, they included well-respected universities, both foundation and state, as well as a number that were prepared to defend their autonomy and academic integrity, the principles that underpinned Cara's own work. However, the **Cara *SRFP's* open call approach, would reach out to Syrian academics in exile wherever they were in the world, including in Syria.**

Regional Partners? Cara had good ties with universities in Lebanon and Iraqi Kurdistan, eg. American University in Beirut (AUB) and the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) and a number of international research institutes in Jordan. Each of which had confirmed its in-principle support for the *Cara Syria Programme*.

Programme Benefits? Increasing international collaboration opportunities would offer the incentive for host-country higher education and research institutions to engage, opening the way to new strategic partnerships with top UK universities within the *Cara Network*.

Cara Fellowships? All who met Cara's eligibility criteria – *ie. who had held a paid post as a lecturer and/or a researcher in a higher education institution or equivalent and who was unable to continue their work due to risk* – were in-principle eligible for support. However, the current pull on Cara's financial resources, with an average of 13 new requests for help a week, had limited its ability to respond, whether through placements in the UK, or receiving countries in the region, or beyond. Cara had increasingly turned to host institutions to help cover Fellows' living costs, in addition to waiving fees, to allow Cara to help as many as possible. At this time, there were around 100 eligible academics awaiting confirmation of placements, with an average of 2 dependents each. **In 2015, hosting universities, mainly in the UK, had provided support valued at over £2.5M estimated to rise to over £3M in 2016, so by no means insignificant, although still outweighed by need.**

Regional Placements: Maximising Limited Resources Cara support was only constrained by its resources, which was one reason why the regional dimensions of the *Syria Programme* were so valuable. Turkey offered solid academic opportunities, greater certainty for the future due to the right to citizenship after 5 years residency, in addition to living costs that were a quarter of those in the UK. **Regional connections established through the Cara *Syria Programme*, would also be invaluable in the task of rebuilding Syria's higher education sector, countering isolation on return.**

DAY 2 Session IV. Commitments, Highlights, Next Steps?

Syrian Academics: Contributors or Recipients? The extraordinary circumstances that Syrians faced would undoubtedly require a degree of external support, but it was also important to view Syrian academics in terms of what they could contribute. The *Cara Syria Programme* strategy didn't seek to create a culture of dependency, but rather to enable Syrian academics to become effective agents by facilitating research opportunities and professional connections. The **Syrian RT participants were clearly committed to remaining agents of their own destinies, as well as that of Syria, and deeply concerned about a generation without access to education and the heightened risk of radicalisation created by that vacuum**.

Box 2.17 HELPING OURSELVES: SYRIAN DENTISTS

"I am a dentist. We have Syrian hospitals on the borders with Turkey. We can use these hospitals to employ Master's graduates in dentistry and various other medical specialisations. A specialised dentist can also work with four Batchelor's dentistry graduates. After 2 years they can sit an SIG MoH exam and receive an SIG certificates to allow them to work inside Syria. Syrians won't return, or remain in Syria without a functioning health service. There are 5 'Syrian' medical centres treating 2,500 Syrian patients a month. I have worked at al Reyhaniye Medical Centre for 3 years and treated over 15,000 Syrian patients." (Dr MA)

The Need to Organise: Cara as Facilitator There were very clear messages about the potential of discipline groups and the need to have visibility and the strength to approach universities and professional groups linked to specific academic disciplines.

A Turkish University Consortium Turkish university representatives undertook to explore the possibility of establishing a consortium of universities prepared to lobby YOK to address the more bureaucratic constraints faced by Syrian academics and raise them with the relevant Turkish authorities, such as travel and entry permits and document equivalency.

"It would be important to have tangible results as soon as possible, to maintain hope and belief, by demonstrating credible outcomes." *(Prof A Ozerdem)*

Box 2.18 A 'RECIPROCAL' MODEL

Bath University had recently established a partnering programme with 2 Jordanian universities that were encouraged to offer Syrian academics research opportunities, in return for which Bath supported capacity-building within that partner institution. The model echoed the benefits local partners would gain from involvement in the *SRFP*.

2.IV.1 COMMITMENTS

i. <u>Coventry University</u> (Professor Alpaslan Ozerdem)

- Coventry (CU) and Kadir Has (KH) could use their strategic partnership to incubate research ideas and identify suitable researchers to spend time in Istanbul and in Coventry. The partnership already included a mobility programme. Prof Ozerdem thought that between the two universities they would be able to mobilise resources to start the process. However, external funds would be required to support a more comprehensive programme.
- CU could also contribute to an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course for Syrian academics accommodated by KH, with CU providing the teaching input. What was possible would however ultimately depend on the course duration and the size of the cohort.

- The CU *Centre for Peace, Trust and Social Relations* would also be able to host visiting researchers with an interest in development, migration, politics, or international relations or social sciences. The Centre offered MA and PhD scholarships and Visiting Fellowships.
- CU and KH also ran a joint summer school on peacebuilding and conflict resolution skills, a set of skills of particular value where tensions were likely, such as in the case of Syria and those of you involved in the reconstruction of HE in Syria.

ii. Leicester University (Professor Mike Barer)

- Professor Barer pledged his personal support to do everything he could. His was not a grand centre or programme, but he had a track record of assisting people from this region and was extremely interested in connecting people.
- He would also brief Leicester University senior management on his return to explore what it might be able to do to support the *Cara Syria Programme.*

iii. Kadir Has University (Dr Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe)

- Dr Akgül Açıkmeşe offered to lead an Erasmus+ application in March 2017 for 3 year's funding to support delivery of an EAP programme, which could also include a Turkish Language training dimension.
- She would discuss contribution to the programme with the KH English Language Centre, the Writing Centre and the Lifelong Learning Centre, as well as senior KH management.
- Dr Akgül Açıkmeşe also undertook to discuss the *Syria Programme* with Dr Ahmet Salih Bicakci, KH MENA Research Centre Director, which had been working on Syria for two years.
- KH would be happy to join a consortium of UK, Turkish and other EU universities to develop and submit bids to the EC/EU and other potential funders interested Syria related topics.
- Where a suitable fit, PhD scholarships (50% fee waivers) were available where the balance and the individual's living costs could be met from other sources.

iv. Medipol University (Dr Can Ceylan)

- Dr Ceylan would raise the possible hosting of summer schools with his Rector.
- The introduction of two new departments at Medipol to be staffed by Arabic speakers would open up potential employment opportunities.
- Many of the issues raised over the past two day had also been raised at the Medipolis Mediterranean Studies Centre hosted workshop (May 2016). The workshop report, including recommendations, would be presented to the PM and the President following completion. Dr Ceylan would also share the report with RT participants.
- Medipol had a distance learning infrastructure that might be able to support distance learning components allied to summer schools. He would explore what might be possible once summer schools had been confirmed.
- Dr Ceylan had also created a WhatsApp with about 40 Syrian academics and other Arabic speaking academics which the RT Syrian participants were invited to join.

Dr Leonie Ansems de Vries ***(King's College University of London)*** and Professor Kevin McDonald ***(Middlesex University)*** had each provided personal pledges of support and an undertaking to brief appropriate seniors within their respective institutions.

Professor Taner Bilgic ***(Bogazici University)***, although unable to join on Day 2, had since confirmed his in-principle interest in potential research collaborations.

2.IV.2 NEXT STEPS

Follow-on Meetings Cara was in discussion with King's College, University of London, and The British Academy, with regard to convening two follow-on meetings to the Istanbul Round Table in the UK – now likely to take place in September 2016.

The King's College meeting would bring together a core group of committed *Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network* universities to consider the issues arising from the Round Table and refocus the UK higher education sector on extending its support to Syrian academics in exile in the main receiving countries in the region, ideally in partnership with regional colleagues and higher education and research institutions. Amongst the issues for discussion, would be the role that UK universities might play in supporting the three Syrian universities delivering higher education in the liberated areas of Syria, and related questions of accreditation and quality. An immediate outcome of the King's College meeting would be to share the issues and recommendations with the full *Cara Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network*, 115 UK universities, and feed them into the planned British Academy/Cara Round Table in late September 2016. The meetings would also offer an opportunity for Cara to raise awareness of the forthcoming *Syria Research Fellowship Programme* and secure in-principle expressions of interest, as well as helping to identify existing strategic UK-Regional partnerships.

The British Academy meeting would bring together senior representatives from the UK Academies introducing a strong discipline perspective and potential interest in supporting related Syrian discipline clusters and discipline-related research, access to funding and potential business partners, as well as facilitating connection to their sister 'learned societies' in the region. These were influential bodies that might also take on a role in lobbying the UK government, where deemed beneficial.

> ***"The Poles did not wait to the end of WWII to start thinking about reconstruction. They were thinking about the reconstruction of Warsaw throughout WWII. This event is hugely significant in laying the foundations for the process of reconstruction."***
>
> *(Prof A Ozerdem)*

Both meetings would be invited to consider how they might contribute to strategic thinking and policy planning on the future of higher education in Syria, in addition to developing practical strategies for immediate implementation.

Rapporteur Report and Round Table Record Professor McDonald had kindly undertaken to draft a *Summary Rapporteur Report* to capture key themes and action points. A longer record of the Round Table would also be produced to capture voices and the essence of discussions, as well as emerging themes, issues, ideas and commitments made.

Both documents would be shared with participants for comment prior to being shared with funders and other stakeholders. Kate Robertson would also draft a briefing paper for consideration by the Cara Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) with recommendations on next steps for implementation, for which funding would need to be secured.

Thanks All were thanked on behalf of Cara for their time and contributions, Round Table hosts and funders for their support and hospitality, and co-chairs, moderators and the Round Table Rapporteur for skilfully guiding us through two days of discussion to some clear and positive pledges, and initiatives to be followed-up.

ANNEX 1. Round Table Agenda

8th June 2016. ***PARTICIPANT RECEPTION***

20:00 *Hosted by the the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII)*
Istiklal Caddesi 247, Tünel – Beyoglu, ISTANBUL *(Metro: 'Sishane' take Istiklal exit)*

9th June 2016. ***DAY1. CLARIFYING THE ISSUES***

Hosted by Boğaziçi University, Rectorate Conference Hall

Chairs/Moderators: *Prof. Mike Barer, Prof. Mine Eder, Prof. Kevin McDonald, Prof. Alpaslan Ozerdem, Dr Leila Vignal.*

10:45 Registration

11:15 Welcome and Introductions
Prof. Taner Bilgiç, Boğaziçi University; Kate Robertson, Cara Middle-East Adviser

Session I. Mapping Profiles and Groupings: Syrian Academics in Exile in Turkey
Objective. To clarify numbers, profiles and specific groupings therein, including discipline clusters, as revealed by the UFSA, YOK, Cara and SSSR databases.
Dr Ammar Al Ibrahim, Director Union Free Syrian Academics (UFSA)
Dr Abdulhafez Abdulhafez 'Syrian Society for Scientific Research (SSSR)'
Dr Murat Erdoğan, Director HUGO, Haceteppe University 'YOK Online Portal Applicants'
Ayman Khosruf 'Syrian Academics in Exile'

Session II. Expectations, Constraints and Challenges – Personal and Professional?
Objective. To clarify expectations, constraints and challenges faced by Syrian academics and particular groupings, e.g. family, finance, recognition of qualifications and equivalency, skills gaps, language barriers, career constraints for 'foreigners'.
Shady Haj Hasan, Abeer Amin, Eyass Al Rashed 'Early-Career Academics'
Dr Ghada Safi 'Female Academics'
Dr Abdulhafez Abdulhafez, Dr Adnan Mamo 'Employed Academics'
Dr Mahmoud Aswad 'Unrecognised Qualifications, Non-transferable Skills' (eg. medicine, law)

13:45-14.45 BREAK

Session III. Roles and Employment Opportunities in Exile: Issues Arising?
Objective. To clarify academic opportunities for Syrian in exile and associated controversies, eg. appointment processes, calibre, sense of culture of exclusion.
Dr Adnan Mamo 'Gaziantep University UG Courses Taught in Arabic'
Dr Murat Erdoğan, Director HUGO, Hacettepe University 'YOK online Portal'

Session IV. Current Situation of HE in Syria
Objective. To inform non-Syrian participants of current situation of HE in Syria in both regime and non-regime held areas
Dr Abdulhafez Abdulhafez, on behalf of Muhamed Al Hajji, Dean Faculty of Engineering, SHAM International University

Session V. Initiatives Supporting Continued HE Delivery: Issues Arising?
Objective. To map Syrian-led HE and research initiatives, in Syria and receiving countries in the region, eg. 'universities' in exile, and review issues arising, eg., quality, funding, security, sustainability, accreditation, affiliation.
Dr Ahmed AlTaan, Director Sham International University
Dr Mahmoud Aswad, Trustee, Ghouta Medical Academy

20:00-22:30 ***RECEPTION & DINNER*** *hosted by Boğaziçi University.* ***Speaker:*** *Prof. Üstün Ergüder*

For those not fasting, refreshments will be available throughout.

Round Table Agenda Day 2. *(NB. Sunset in Istanbul is at approximately 20:35)*

10th Jun. 2016. ***OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORT AND CREATIVE STRATEGIES***

Hosted by the Swedish Consulate General & Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.
Istiklal Caddesi 247, Tünel – Beyoglu, ISTANBUL

Co-Chairs/Moderators *Prof. Mike Barer, Dr Seda Altug, Prof. Kevin McDonald, Prof. Alpaslan Ozerdem, Dr Leila Vignal.*

08:30 Registration

09:00 Welcome & Day 1 Summary Emerging Issues, Needs, Opportunities
Ambassador Consul General Jens Odlander; Prof. Johan Martelius, Director, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Session I. Solidarity-Driven Approaches and Initiatives: UK and France

Objective. To share existing initiatives and approaches.

Dr Can Ceylan, Istanbul Medipol University
Prof. Mike Barer, Leicester University
Dr Leila Vignal, Oxford University/Paris Colloque 2/3 May 2016: 'La Cooperation Scientifique Franco-Syrienne: Penser avec la Syrie d'Aujourd'hui et Construire la Syrie de Demain' *(Franco-Syrian Scientific Cooperation: Think with Today's Syria to Build Tomorrow's Syria.)*

Session II. The Role of Host Country Higher Education and Research Institutions: Constraints, Opportunities and Challenges?

Objective. To understand the constraints to greater support; to encourage solidarity-driven creative approaches, eg. co-option into existing or planned research initiatives using existing databases to match research profiles, supporting/co-founding a virtual Research Centre dedicated to Syria-related issues, supporting discipline cluster…

Dr. Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe, Kadir Has University
Dr Can Ceylan, Istanbul Medipol University

13:00-13.45 BREAK

Session III. Role of Research: the Cara Syria Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP)

Objective. To share the forthcoming Cara SRFP initiative; to gauge research priorities/interests; to encourage collaboration and development of joint research proposals and submission etc. Involving academics in Syria?

Kate Robertson, Cara Middle-East Adviser
Prof. Kevin McDonald, Middlesex University
Prof. Mike Barer, Leicester University

Session IV. Commitments, Highlights, Next Steps?

17:00 CLOSE

Norwegian Embassy

ANNEX 2. Round Table Participants

Prof. Nermin ABADAN-UNAT
Professor of Political Science
Boğaziçi University
(Political Science / Women's Rights)

Dr. Abdulhafez ABDULHAFEZ
Assistant Professor
Hasan Kalyoncu University
ex-Damascus/ Virtual Syrian University
(Robotics)

Dr. Sinem AKGUL ACIKMESE
Associate Professor/Coordinator International Collaboration & Education Office
Kadir Has University
(International Relations)

Dr. Muhammad Ali AL HAJJI
Associate Professor/Dean Faculty of Engineering
SHAM International University
ex-Damascus and Yarmouk
(Physics)

Prof. Safar AL HILAL
Lecturer / Consulting member Syria Recovery Trust Fund
Zirve University
ex-Aleppo University
(Electronic Engineering / Power Systems Analysis)

Mr. Ziad AL IBRAHIM
ex-Kalamoon
(Haematology)

Dr. Ammar ALMOHAMAD ALIBRAHIM
Director Union of Free Syrian Academics *ex-Aleppo University*
(Agricultural Economics)

Mr. Eyass AL RASHED
Completing Interrupted PhD at Bingol University
ex-Damascus University
(Literary Criticism / Arab Literature)

Dr. Ahmed AL TAAN AL HAJ
Rector
SHAM International University
(Islamic Philosophy)

Dr. Seda ALTUĞ
Assistant Professor,
The Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
Bogazici University
(Modern Turkish History)

Ms. Abeer AMIN
ex-Aleppo University
(Physical Chemistry)

Dr. Leonie ANSEMS DE VRIES
Lecturer
King's College, University of London
(International Relations)

Mr. Shady ARAFA
Operations Manager
The Alexandria Trust
(n/a)

Dr. Mahmoud ASWAD
Health Coordinator / Trustee Ghouta Medical Academy
SEMA [Syria Expatriate Medical Association]
(Orthopaedic Surgery)

Prof. Mike BARER
Professor of Clinical Microbiology / Honorary Consultant Microbiologist
Leicester University
(Clinical Microbiology)

Ms. Genevieve BARRONS
Assistant to the Director
Open Society Foundation Higher Education Support Programme

Prof. Taner BİLGİÇ
Vice Provost for International Relations
Bogazici University
Industrial Engineering

Dr. Onver CETREZ
Deputy Director
Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul
(Psychology)

Dr. Can CEYLAN
Assistant Professor
Medipol University
(Social/Political Anthropology)

Prof. Mine EDER
Professor of Political Science
Bogazici University
(Political Science)

Dr. Murat ERDOĞAN
Director HUGO (Migration Policy Centre)
Hacettepe University
(Migration)

Dr. Matthew GOLDMAN
Visiting Academic
Boğaziçi University
(Middle-East Studies/Political Science)

Mr. Shady HAJ HASAN
Graduate Head Officer
Syrian Students Office for University Services (SSOUS)
(Applied Mathematics)

Dr. Ismael IBRAHEEM
ex-Researcher Ministry of Petroleum & Mineral Resources, ex-Lecturer Tishreen University
(Geophysics)

Dr. Hasan JOBRAN
Rector
University of Aleppo in the Liberated Areas
(Social Sciences)

Dr. Zeynep KADIBEYOGLU
Assistant Professor
Bogazici University
(Decentralization, Democratization and State-society relations)

Prof. Fuat KEYMAN
Director
Istanbul Policy Center
Sabanci University
(International Relations)

Mr. Ayman KHOSRUF
ex-Al Baath University
(Laboratory Diagnostics)

Prof. Johan MARTELIUS
Director
Swedish Research Institute Istanbul
(Architecture)

Prof. Kevin MCDONALD
Head, Department of Criminology and Sociology
Middlesex University
(Sociology)

Ms. Sena MELEMEZ
Advisor
Prime Ministry
(Analysis and Resolution/International Relations)

Prof. Alpaslan OZERDEM
Co-Director Centre for Peace Trust and Social Relations
Coventry University
(Peacebuilding)

Dr. Adnan RASHID MAMO
Lecturer
Harran and Gaziantep Universities ex-Aleppo
(History/Egyptology)

Ms. Kate ROBERTSON
Cara Middle East Adviser (Consultant)
Cara

Dr. Ghada SAFI
ex-Tishreen University
(Mathematics/Informatics/AI)

Prof. Leif STENBERG
Director Centre for Middle East Studies
Lund University
(Islamic Studies)

Dr. Desislava STOITCHKOVA
International Senior Policy Adviser
British Academy
(Conflict and Human Rights)

Dr. Wesam TALAB
Lecturer
Yildirim Beyazit University ex-Damascus University
(Mathematics)

Dr. Leila VIGNAL
Marie Curie Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre
Oxford University
(Refugee Studies)

Dr. Yahya WARDEH
ex-Aleppo University
(Environmental Protection/Water treatment)

Dr. Zafer YENAL
Associate Professor of Sociology
Boğaziçi University
(Politics of Agriculture and Food)