

cara

ANNUAL REPORT | 2022-23



2023 | **90th** anniversary



FOREWORD

Ninety years since it was founded, Cara is busier than ever, working with its principal partners, the UK universities, research institutes and their staff, to provide support and, where possible, sanctuary for those academics who are in peril or fleeing conflict anywhere in the world. That is our mission, as memorably expressed in the 1933 founding statement of our progenitor, the Academic Assistance Council, “.....to prevent the waste of exceptional abilities exceptionally trained ... Our only aims are the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science”. A mission that is impressively delivered by the Cara team of just over twenty staff, working with the Cara University and Research Network that now numbers 135 institutions. Compare that to ten years ago, in our 80th year, when the Network comprised just 74 universities and our team just four full-time and two part-time staff.

At the heart of our work are our UK-based Fellowship Programme that is supporting over 200 fellows and their families, and a regional Programme helping over 200 Syrian academics in exile, based mainly in Turkey. The third vital component of the partnership that makes all of this possible is of course our body of funders - individuals, foundations and the universities and research institutes themselves, to all of whom we are indebted. Cara works closely with its institutional partners to produce the support framework, but it is the individual academic supervisors, tutors and mentors drawn from right across the UK higher education sector who, through their endeavour given freely and voluntarily, really enable both the Cara Fellowship

and Regional Programmes to flourish as they do today.

Already in 2023, as I write, there are fresh conflicts on the global stage, sadly adding emphasis to the continuing demand for Cara's services – applications to our Fellowship Programme alone increased tenfold in 2022 to over 1,000 individual cases. We continue to work closely with our Network partners to provide a nimble response to crises as they emerge. That is exemplified by our ongoing collaboration on the placement of Cara Fellows from Afghanistan and Ukraine, and I want to pay tribute to the speed with which both individuals and institutions responded to our emergency call for help to provide personal support for our community of Cara Syria Programme participants made homeless in the aftermath of the Syria/Turkey earthquakes.

Cara's 90th anniversary was recognised at an event at the Royal Society on 11 September, which also provided the backdrop for a House of Commons debate on UK support for at-risk academics the following day. Both the event and the debate reinforced the commitment of Cara and its partners to continue providing refuge to academics and their families in distress, and to develop new ways of pursuing that goal.

Professor Alan McCarthy
Chair of Trustees

“A short thank you is truly not enough for the efforts that the Cara team put into the continuation of my studies and my family's future.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

A VICE-CHANCELLOR'S VIEW

Cardiff Metropolitan University's origins date to 1865; its Welsh motto, 'Gorau Meddiant Gwybodaeth', translates into English as 'The most valuable possession is knowledge'.

Our Cara Fellows and Scholars, together with our bursary-funded Sanctuary Scholars from around the world, know the meaning of this motto only too well. Our first Cara Scholar arrived in Cardiff in the first week of January 2022, alone and with just a suitcase. She had spent the previous six months trying to flee Afghanistan while simultaneously seeking to retain her life as an academic after the Taliban forced her out of her job as a university lecturer in economics. To leave one's family, home and possessions is to give knowledge and freedom a new-found value.

A second Afghan female academic joined her in September 2022.

At Cardiff Met, working with Cara has been a natural step in our journey as an international values-driven university. The university now has as many students studying Cardiff Met degrees with our 13 partner colleges around the world as on our two campuses in Cardiff. The flow of staff, students and knowledge between the UK and our partners has helped our university grow in size, reach, compassion and impact to create a truly international community.

The ability to welcome staff and students from countries where war and persecution have damaged the education system and the lives of individual academics and their families is one of



Cardiff Met VC Cara Aitchison 'in conversation' with Cara Director and Cardiff Met Chancellor, Stephen Wordsworth, at Cardiff Met's Strategy Launch, December 2022

the longstanding hallmarks of British universities. At Cardiff Met, receiving those seeking refuge and asylum has been a source of enormous pride to our community of staff, students and partners. In 2018, in addition to joining Cara, the university became the first in Wales to become a designated University of Sanctuary with full undergraduate and postgraduate Sanctuary Scholarships. In 2022 Cardiff Met twinned with H S Skovoroda National Pedagogic University in Kharkiv to provide access to Cardiff Met's learning and research resources and opportunities in a bid to sustain higher education in Ukraine. Student work from both Skovoroda and Lviv National Academy of Arts in Ukraine featured in Cardiff School of Art and Design's Summer Show and Exhibition in both 2022 and 2023. In addition, athletes from Ukraine's national athletics team have worked with staff and students in Cardiff School of Sport and Health

Sciences to train at the university's indoor and outdoor 400m tracks, and gymnasts from both Skovoroda and the national team trained in our university facilities in 2022 and 2023.

Becoming an active member of Cara has undoubtedly strengthened our values-driven approach and our international outlook. All staff and students have benefitted from our increasing internationalisation and the university's support for Wales in becoming a Nation of Sanctuary.

I would strongly encourage all universities to become involved in the work of Cara.

Professor Cara Aitchison / Yr Athro Cara Aitchison FAcSS FRGS FHEA FLSW

President and Vice-Chancellor / Llywydd ac Is-Ganghellor

“This is once in a lifetime opportunity that has enabled not just my personal professional growth but also safety for myself and my sons here in the UK. I am more than grateful for this!”

Cara Fellow from Ukraine

“I just wanted to inform you that my Global Talent visa application has been successful. Thank you and to Cara for the encouragement and support you have provided throughout the process.”

Cara Fellow from Turkey

2022-23: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It is now 90 years since 41 of the leading academics, scientists and public figures in the UK at that time came together to set up what is known today as Cara – the Council for At-Risk Academics. Our Founding Statement was launched from ‘the Rooms of the Royal Society’, then in Burlington House, where space had been found for us up in the attic. Against the backdrop of the Nazis’ rise to power and the dismissal of ‘non-Aryans’ from their academic posts in Germany, our founders defined their mission as *‘the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science’*.

90 years on, that mission continues. Around the world, many thousands of academics are still being forced to abandon their jobs and homes to seek safety elsewhere, often abroad, as a result of war, repression or prejudice. They frequently travel with close family members, but with little else – except for the knowledge and skills they have patiently acquired and are desperate to use and develop further.

Some of them already have connections and can use them, but many do not. Without support, their talents and the contribution that they hoped to make to their fields of study and to society as a whole would be lost. We help as many as we can.

But the challenge is huge. In the last two years our Fellowship Programme has been working with very large numbers of applicants from Afghanistan and Ukraine, and most recently also with a growing number from Sudan. And this is on top of those still coming to us from the Middle East, particularly Yemen and Syria, and from elsewhere; and in the months ahead, depending on how the situation in and around Gaza develops, we may receive many more applications from Palestinians too. Fortunately, we have been able to take on some additional staff; but the pressure on them is unrelenting.

Meanwhile, our Syria Programme has been continuing its work with over 200 Syrian academics in exile in the region, mostly in Turkey. For some weeks in early 2023 this work was severely disrupted by the devastating earthquakes in south-

eastern Turkey, where many of our Programme participants are based, which left many of them destitute and homeless. Fortunately, our university and other partners and many individuals responded generously to our appeal for funds, contributing over £140,000 in just a few weeks. This made it possible for us to provide much-needed emergency support for the most-seriously affected and their families, in four funding rounds, until the wider relief efforts kicked in. There is more about the work of both our Programmes below.

“Many thanks are offered to you for all your efforts, attention, and time in dealing with/resolving issues I faced during my study. I am very much grateful.”

Cara Fellow from Iraq

In 2022-23 we also continued our work with the British Academy-led ‘Researchers at Risk’ programme for Ukraine-based academics, managing the award payments to almost 180 researchers who are now in the UK. The special visa schemes available to those coming from Ukraine played a large part in that programme's success, and also made it much easier for us to help our own Fellowship Programme's applicants from Ukraine. We would very much like to see similar visa arrangements adopted more widely in future for those from crisis- and conflict-affected areas, which would help us to bring many more highly-talented individuals to temporary refuge in the UK.

In the face of all the last year's challenges, the support we had from our colleagues in UK higher education and research, and from our many other donors and friends, was rapid and generous. We thank them all for their help and were glad that around 200 of them were able to join us at our

90th anniversary 'event' in September 2023, which – going back to our roots – we held at the Royal Society, who were generous co-hosts. There is more on that further on in this Report.

As we move further into 2023-24, the crises we faced last year are continuing, even as new ones develop. A slide towards even worse conflict in some regions seems all too possible. Against such a dark background, it is hard to be sure of many things. But we will do what we can. Despite the many challenges last year, we still helped to change

the lives of many threatened academics, and their families, for the better; people are now safe and productive again, who might otherwise have been locked up, injured, even killed. And so we aim to do the same again this year, and in the years to come, for *'the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science'*.

Stephen Wordsworth
Executive Director

“As my Cara fellowship has recently come to a close, I wanted to thank you for the incredible support I received over the past two years. I'm very thankful for the opportunity and the continuous support since my very first day in the UK.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

“I feel honoured and grateful to have been selected as a recipient of the Cara Fellowship. I want to thank you for your generosity in realizing my admission to a UK University from the scratch and funding this scholarship. No words could possibly express how happy I was when I received the offer letter. This is a lot to my depressed soul and helps me realize my academic goals. It is like reborn to me.”

Cara Fellow from Ethiopia

In last year's Annual Report we drew attention to the surge we had seen in the number of people turning to us for help, with applications rising from 160 in 2020/21 to 1,105 in 2021/22. The 'surge' was very largely the result of the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, which respectively accounted for around 63% and 19% of the new applications.

As events moved on, the number of new applications from Afghanistan in particular dropped back significantly in 2022-23, bringing the total number of new applications in the year down to 547. Even this, however, at an average of over ten per week, is over three times the pre-2021 figure; and, towards the end of 2022-23, a new conflict erupted in Sudan. Some academics have apparently sought refuge in remote areas of the country, where they may be safer but find it difficult to contact the outside world; others have tried to get away altogether but face the usual problems over documents and visas. Others were already abroad and due to return home but cannot now do so. In September 2023, we received twice as many new applications from Sudanese academics as from Ukraine; and we are watching developments in Gaza closely.

Meanwhile, as our 'Enquiries' and 'New Fellows' teams work their way carefully through the many applications we have been receiving and match applicants with places offered by our partners, the focus has been switching to our 'Active Fellows' team, who take over responsibility for our Fellows once they have arrived and settled in. They monitor our Fellows' progress and provide them with individual support as and when needed, and also arrange webinars on relevant topics, access to a well-established mentoring scheme and wellbeing and family support. By June 2023 the number of Active Fellows, almost all of whom come on placements for two years or longer, and usually with their families, had risen from 115 at the beginning of the year to 149. By September 2023 it had risen further, to 170, with the top two nationalities being Afghan (25%) and Ukrainian (23%), both overtaking our previously largest single

group, our Syrians (now 21%). The gender ratio among our Active Fellows, traditionally around 60/40 male/female, came almost into balance, at 50.5%/49.5% male/female, reflecting the fact that well over 84% of our Ukrainian Fellows are female.

With the Enquiries and New Fellows teams each working on 80-90 cases at a time, the number of Active Fellows seems likely only to grow in the year ahead. We owe a great debt to our University and Research Network partners, many of whom have increased the number of places and the funding they are offering and are moving increasingly to setting up dedicated multi-year funding 'pots' for Cara Fellows – an extremely positive trend, since almost all our Fellowship commitments are multi-year. We work closely with our partners also to secure UK visas for our Fellows, and are very pleased that, thanks to this cooperation, our Fellows continue to have a 100% UK visa success rate. In 2022-23 our Fellows continued also to enjoy a 100% success rate in securing Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificates, where these are required.

Looking ahead, rising costs are one of our biggest concerns. Not all our partners can fully fund the placements they offer, particularly where there are families involved or where they are already hosting one or more of our Fellows. In such cases, Cara's contribution, which quite recently was still around £5,000 per year, has risen sharply, and can often now reach £10,000 or more. The expected increase next year in the immigration health surcharge, which will go up from £624 to £1,035 per year for post-doctoral Fellows and their partners, with smaller but still substantial increases for accompanying dependants and for postgraduate students, payable in advance for each individual for the full duration of the visa, will lead to a sharp increase in the total up-front costs, on top of the increase in visa fees in October 2023. We are more than ever grateful to our many donors, some of whom are listed elsewhere in this Report, whose generosity makes it possible for us to 'bridge the gap', where there is one, and continue to get

CARA VIDEOS

Our 2023 Fellowship Programme video is now available at <https://bit.ly/FPVid23>. Cara Fellows from Afghanistan, Ukraine and Syria tell their stories, while host university partners from Durham and Edinburgh explain why they feel it is so important to support Cara's work.

In a short animated story, a recently-arrived Cara Fellow from Afghanistan talks about her feelings when Kabul fell to the Taliban, her efforts to escape and her eventual successful journey, with Cara's help, via Iran to the UK - <https://bit.ly/FLPAnim>

threatened academics and their families to safety.

Despite these concerns, however, we look forward to the coming years with confidence. While the Programme teams' work is detailed and painstaking, and quite often stressful, we get immense satisfaction from seeing our Fellows and their families finally reach safety, often after long and difficult journeys, and settle in and start to rebuild their lives. Most still want to go home, when they can do so safely, but in the meantime they are sharing their skills and experience, making their vital contributions in their chosen fields; twelve were granted prestigious 'Global Talent' visas in 2022–23. The list on page 12 gives a few chosen examples of the year's 'highlights'; but we could have chosen so many more.

Zeid Al-Bayaty
Deputy Director/Fellowship Programme Manager

“Throughout my PhD journey, you've been a beacon of support, particularly during the challenging moments ... Your steadfast encouragement has meant the world to me.”

Cara Fellow from Iran

“I am sending to tell you that I passed my viva today. Thanks so much for your support over my study, it is really appreciated. Huge thanks to Cara for giving me this opportunity.”

Cara Fellow from Syria



The Mohamed Omer Bashir Centre for Sudanese studies,
Omdurman Ahlia University, 2023

Photo: The Ayin Network

“I could finally start thinking: ‘what do I want to do next?’”

Ahmed* was a computer science graduate without a computer.

“After the sanctions after the war in 1990, getting a computer was nearly impossible,” he says. “It was just too expensive. You would have had to sell your house.”

“I remember the first time I connected my PC to the internet,” he says. “It was 2007.”

Before university, his plan had been a career in engineering. But to pursue that dream, he would have had to leave the family home – which, at that time, his family considered too perilous.

“I was forced by my family not to go beyond the city – my hometown – because it was too risky,” he says. “So I wasn’t able to pursue my dream of being an engineer. So I had to deal with it.”

Studying for a degree in computer science was his means of ‘dealing with it.’ But while it kept him at home with his family and nominally safe, the course really served only to push the problem down the road. After graduating, he found himself with a degree in computing in a country practically devoid of computers.

“Computers were thought of as a tool that you used to play games, or maybe to send an e-mail,” he recalls. “There was no programming, no web design: [computing] was limited to trivial work with Excel spreadsheets. Iraq was – Iraq is – a developing country, not a developed one. The perception of computer science was very low; it wasn’t the start of a promising career for anyone.”

At no point in our conversation does he ever seem even to have considered a life without a continuing higher education. That owning a computer and a house might have been an either-or question for other people in his position; that he wouldn’t even connect to the internet for the first time until partway through his degree. He presents these as hurdles rather than brick walls. If the universe was trying to tell him something, he doesn’t seem to have heard.

“There was no hope to develop yourself further

– no way to enhance your life or find a career – apart from doing another degree somewhere else,” he says. “Even if I had decided to do my Master’s in Iraq, I wouldn’t have had the resources: not the internet connectivity, not even the library books.”

Instead, he was accepted onto a Master’s course in London. But on graduating for a second time, he was turned down for what few job openings he found.

“There was no option for me to stay in the UK legally,” he says. “I applied for a few positions, but I wasn’t able to find a job. I was left with no option but to go back to Iraq. I began working professionally as a lecturer at a university there, but after a year, I said, ‘I’ve had enough.’ I wasn’t able to cope, mentally.”

Iraq, as he remembers it, was changing – and not for the better.

“After 2003, everything changed,” he says. “The culture, the perception of freedom of speech, the perception of ‘being yourself’... It was a culture of control, and that culture dominated everything. I wasn’t able to be the person that I wanted to be.”

“The government relies on religion – regardless of what the religion is,” he explains. “The rules, the law - they are always acquired from or based on religion. You can’t express yourself freely because you think, ‘If I do this, it’s not going to just affect me; it’s going to affect my family as well. It’s never just one person’s activity that’s being judged - they consider the whole family, even if you aren’t close. They consider each family as one bubble.”

After a year of teaching, he began searching for a way out - and found Cara.

“I explained why I wanted to come to the UK, why I needed support,” he says. “And we went through several interviews, verification, all those sorts of things. And then I got a scholarship to do my Ph.D.”

“My God, it was one of the happiest days of my life,” he recalls. “When I got the email from Cara saying it was willing to help, it was such a big relief

for me. It was kind of, you know, like seeing a light at the end of the tunnel - even though it was so small. I didn’t know how far I might have to go to reach the end of the tunnel, but it was life-changing for me. I could finally start thinking: ‘what do I want to do next?’”

“Next” was a position lecturing in computing and cyber-security at a university in the southeast of England. He has no plans to return to Iraq.

“I sacrificed a lot,” he says. “My journey wasn’t the easiest one, but I’m settled now. I built something here, made good friends and I’m a valuable, functional member of the community here at the university. This is where I feel I belong.”

“It’s the last thing I’ll mention, but I want to emphasise it again: I owe Cara my life. They rescued me. They offered so much support. I can’t ever pay them back, but I will never forget it.”

(* Ahmed is a pseudonym)

“After 2003, everything changed,” he says. “The culture, the perception of freedom of speech, the perception of ‘being yourself’... It was a culture of control, and that culture dominated everything. I wasn’t able to be the person that I wanted to be.”

CARA FELLOWS – RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Many of our Cara Fellows are high achievers. Among many successes this year:

- A Syrian Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Surrey secured a Global Talent visa and has taken up a position as a Research Fellow at Cranfield University;
- An Ethiopian Postdoctoral Fellow at SOAS, University of London, secured a permanent lecturing position at the University of York;
- A Syrian PhD Fellow at the University of Bath was granted a ‘Skilled Worker’ Visa upon completion of their PhD. The Fellow has now taken up a position as Lead Scientist at Vectura, a pharmaceuticals company in Chippenham;
- An Afghan Visiting Fellow at City, University of London started a Fellowship in Legal Education at the University upon the completion of their placement, on a ‘Skilled Worker’ visa;
- A Syrian PhD Fellow at University College London (UCL) secured a position as a Project Coordinator for the International Pharmaceutical Federation;
- A Syrian alumna has taken up a job as Senior Lecturer at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden;
- A Syrian Postdoctoral Fellow secured a Global Talent visa and has taken up a University Research Associate position at the University of Cambridge;
- An Azerbaijani alumnus has been invited to be a Visiting Scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University;
- A Syrian alumnus who completed a Visiting Fellowship at Northumbria University secured a job at Heriot-Watt University;
- A Ukrainian postdoctoral Fellow at UCL took part in a conference in May 2023 organised by the Royal Society, the Universities Policy Engagement Network and the Fund of the President of Ukraine for Education, Science and Sports, on ‘Ukraine’s Recovery: Rebuilding with Research’;
- Since August 2022, 10 Fellows have been granted the prestigious UK Global Talent Visas, with two more expected to receive Global Talent Visas very shortly.

CARA’S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 2013 the Royal Society has hosted our annual ‘Science and Civilisation’ Lecture, but in our 90th year we decided to do something a bit different. With the Royal Society as generous co-hosts, we decided to hold an anniversary ‘event’ on the theme of ‘*Cara, Past, Present and Future*’. The Royal Society’s Treasurer, Professor Jon Keating, opened and closed the event. Professor Robin Perutz FRS spoke movingly about ‘Cara Past’, and the experiences of his father, Max Perutz FRS, later a Nobel Prize winner, who met his future wife who was working in what was then our office. This was followed by ‘Cara Present’, four short presentations by Cara Fellows from Afghanistan and Myanmar, by a Ukrainian Fellow of the British Academy-led ‘Researchers at Risk’ programme, and by the President of Al-Sham University in north-west Syria, an area outside regime control, who is working with our Syria Programme. He outlined the importance of the Programme’s work in enhancing the calibre of his University’s educational and research programmes.

Our Chair, Professor Alan McCarthy, rounded off the presentations with his vision of ‘Cara Future’, and Jon Keating closed with a call for support for our work before inviting the roughly 200 guests to the follow-on reception. Hetan Shah, the Chief Executive of the British Academy, later generously hosted a separate dinner for a group of the guests, many with particular connections to the signatories of our 1933 Founding Statement.



Cara’s 90th anniversary event, at the Royal Society

All the presentations were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel:

Professor Robin Perutz – <https://bit.ly/C90-2>

Shahira Shahir, Cara Fellow from Afghanistan – <https://bit.ly/C90-3>

Khin Thet San, Cara Fellow from Myanmar – <https://bit.ly/C90-4>

Professor Iryna Starovoyt, Researchers at Risk Fellow from Ukraine – <https://bit.ly/C90-5ST>

Professor Miassar Alhasan, Cara Syria Programme participant and President of Al-Sham University – <https://bit.ly/C90-6>

Professor Alan McCarthy, Cara’s Chair – <https://bit.ly/C90-7>

Closing remarks by Professor Jon Keating – <https://bit.ly/C90-8>

The whole event – <https://bit.ly/C90all>

2023 has been another productive year for our Syria Programme (SP) colleagues; but not an easy one. The earthquakes in February along the Turkish/Syrian border devastated areas that are heavily populated by displaced Syrians, including SP participants. We are extremely grateful to our university partners and to many individual SP supporters for their contributions to our emergency Earthquake Appeal, which raised over £145,000. With these funds, and a contribution from our own reserves, we were able to make immediate hardship payments to 88 SP Fellows and their dependents who had been directly affected, with three additional payment rounds over the following three months.

Unfortunately, post-earthquake rent increases, rampant inflation and some hostile rhetoric towards Syrians in the run-up to the June elections in Turkey all made daily life increasingly difficult. Restrictions on the movement of Syrians within Turkey were reinstated, so any who are found outside the Governorate in which they are registered risk being returned to Syria. Restrictions on new applications for citizenship and on the duration of residency permits have further heightened fear and uncertainty; yet going home is still impossible for most because of the renewed unrest in parts of Syria, including the bombing of Idlib governorate by the Assad regime and its Russian backers.

Despite these problems, the SP has continued to generate new opportunities and skills, enhancing visibility by encouraging the publication of research and promoting professional connections, many of which have developed into longer-term collaborations. Nine workshops were held in Turkey in 2023 to support academic writing, and the SP facilitated another thirteen publications in respected peer-reviewed journals, with six more under review. A growing number of SP publications are being cited by others. A pilot with Sham University faculty in the non-regime north-west of Syria went ahead, to help show evidence of their adherence to European Standards and Guidelines in



SP Participants Ms Hussein and Dr Anis at the Intangible Cultural Heritage Event, Turkey

the absence of formal accreditation. 2023 also saw six SP participants submit successful applications for HEA Fellowships, supported by colleagues from the universities of Surrey, Kent and South Wales. Another fifteen SP participants are preparing AdvanceHE Fellowship applications for submission in 2024; and the SP continues to benefit from twelve AdvanceHE fee waivers a year.

A further seventeen SP research grants were awarded in 2023; 50 SP participants were supported by 26 mentors, from the proposal development phase through to the write-up of final outputs for publication. Our weekly online academic skills development E-learn Soirée series, presented mainly by UK-based academic volunteers, has continued to focus on research- and teaching-related topics, as have ad hoc online training courses, the latest of which was a twelve-week course focusing on qualitative data analysis. A British Academy (BA)-funded series of monthly online workshops was launched in July 2023 to enhance the academic writing skills of alumni from previous SP-related BA writing grants,

to be followed by two in-person workshops in Turkey in 2024. The BA award was just one of several secured by individual SP supporters in 2023 to increase capacity-building and research opportunities for SP participants.

Seven SP research incubation visits (RIVs) were hosted in 2023 by the universities of Anglia Ruskin, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Leicester, Surrey and The Courtauld Institute of Art. An eighth RIV unfortunately failed when the researcher was prevented from leaving Turkey, but one more, hosted by the University of Edinburgh, will take place in late 2023. Edinburgh also continues to provide access to its PhD student online in-session courses for four SP participants per semester. RIVs offer up to two years' institutional affiliation, which makes it possible for the researcher to have continued access to the host institutions' online resources and to continue collaborative research. A hosting by The Courtauld resulted in a fully-funded invitation from the Victoria & Albert Museum for the SP participant to return to London in June 2023 to present his work on Ottoman buildings in Aleppo City, as part of the V&A's contribution to the London Festival of Architecture.

New SP partnerships established in 2023 include English Language Testing Ltd, Oxford University Press, and My Learning. Cambridge University Press has also approved a new Elements series on 'Higher Education and Forced Displacement', following positive reviewers' responses about the need for and timeliness of the series; this will focus initially on the Cara SP, and also provide an output for SP-supported research.

The promotion of collaborative developmental partnerships with UK universities is continuing, allied to the higher education quality-enhancement pilot with Sham University faculty. SP participants cross the border daily to help sustain access to higher education for local communities and the many Syrians displaced to this non-regime area, offering hope to a generation whose lives have been blighted by the crisis.

The SP continues to rely heavily on Cara Network institutions and individual volunteers to deliver its activities. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to all those who give their time so freely and generously in solidarity with their Syrian colleagues.

A new Cara SP-related site was launched in October 2023 to capture the Programme past and present in its entirety:

<https://cara-syria.org/>.

Kate Robertson
Cara Middle East Adviser

Go to <https://bit.ly/CSPBklt> to read a new collection of stories by 12 Syrian academics in exile who are participating in our Syria Programme, and by 7 of their mentors. The booklet was launched at our 90th anniversary event at the Royal Society on 11 September 2023, and the narratives capture the essence of the collaborative partnerships that lie at the heart of Cara's country programmes. Many thanks to all those who contributed, and also to the hundreds of others who work with us in the Programme, whether as participants or as supporters.

SYRIA PROGRAMME INTERVIEW

'During the earthquake, I felt this humanitarian approach. Definitely. That's something I'll always remember.'

For students at the small independent universities in the non-regime north of Syria, a university education is something which happens in spite of, not thanks to, the country's government. Many have been displaced from other parts of the country by the long-running conflict. They arrive, often with their school education incomplete, at universities that are under-equipped and understaffed, and they study against a background of continuing threat. Once they graduate, they face a final indignity: in many cases, their degrees are not recognised anywhere outside of northern Syria.

Dr Umut*, a participant in Cara's Syria Programme, has long been concerned about the mismatch between the regulations of the Higher Education Council of the opposition Syrian Interim Government and international higher education standards. She strongly believes that people studying at universities in northern Syria should end up with a qualification that means something in the outside world.

"The universities are set up to fail. They are unable to provide fully-equipped labs for their students, they have limited human resources. Because of the poor context, the brain drain in the region, not all the staff are as qualified as one would expect. University lecturers and those who are well qualified and have PhDs are located in Turkey and cross the border on a weekly basis to provide the teaching."

"The most important issue is the lack of accreditation of these universities. This is definitely affecting employability and the ability for students to transfer abroad. Certificates issued by these universities are recognised only within the north of Syria. They are not recognised by the regime, they are not recognised in Turkey or in other countries. A graduate of medical school would be considered a doctor only in north Syria."

"But universities in northern Syria are essential and indispensable, having graduated thousands

of students into the workforce, particularly in professional and computer-related fields. There is currently no alternative, especially considering they operate in the local language, are nearly free, and consistently strive for improvement. Recognition is the only missing element, and once achieved, it will enhance their appeal and empower them to further develop their capabilities."

The lack of accreditation also underlies these universities' ability to attract staff. As Dr Umut points out, qualified lecturers are not keen on working in the independent universities because it does not count towards their professional experience. For students, on the other hand, the main problem now seems not to be accreditation, but simply the availability of suitable jobs within the immediate area.

"In fact, I was surprised when I was talking to university students when I asked them about accreditation. It seems that they don't care at all about that. Their main concern is employability. Gradually, job opportunities are getting more difficult to secure, so that's the main concern for the students. It's not accreditation, but the ability to find a job after graduation."

But Dr Umut's work to improve the prospects for her fellow Syrians was brutally interrupted in February 2023, when a series of earthquakes devastated south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria. Some two-thirds of the participants in Cara's Syria Programme were based in the worst earthquake-affected areas around Antakya, Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep. Dr Umut and her family were caught up in the destruction.

"When the earthquake hit, we witnessed so many people dying around us," she says. "Entire families died. Before the earthquake, we had always been concerned with what we were going to purchase for the house: furniture and clothes or saving to buy a car. Our perspective changed after the earthquake. We have different priorities now."

"Now we live in constant fear. We are always expecting a disaster to happen. When the earthquake hit, it was a rainy day. A thunderstorm was hitting at the same time. So now whenever there is rain or we hear thunder, we feel afraid as if we are going through the earthquake again. We can't do anything, but we just pray that we survive."

"It was a very difficult time for me. I was in my home with my family. We have a family of five and my sister lived next to me, but in a different building. She has a baby and two other children. Their building collapsed. They were homeless. At the time of the earthquake, my mom and my other sister were visiting me. So it was already crowded. My building did not collapse entirely, but the wall fell down and it was no longer safe to be in the building. It was not inhabitable and we did not have any money. And at the time it was very expensive to move outside the area, getting a car which cost at least \$1,000 and we did not have that."

Cara launched an emergency appeal, and with generous support from institutional partners and individual donors, and some money of its own, was able to provide a series of emergency grants.

"When Cara contacted us, they understood our situation and they sent us money. First of all, money to help us move away from the severely damaged area. And then another instalment was sent to us to help us with the rent, because even then we did not have enough resources to cover that. So during the earthquake, I felt this humanitarian approach. Definitely. That's something I'll always remember."

* Dr Umut is a pseudonym

"The universities are set up to fail. They are unable to provide fully-equipped labs for their students, they have limited human resources. Because of the poor context, the brain drain in the region, not all the staff are as qualified as one would expect. University lecturers and those who are well qualified and have PhDs are located in Turkey and cross the border on a weekly basis to provide the teaching."



Al-Sham University in Azaz, Aleppo Province, northwest Syria

FROM DAMASCUS TO LONDON

– Cara Fellow Alaa Zam

In the ever-evolving landscape of academia, there are times when scholars find themselves navigating treacherous waters due to political unrest, violence, and conflict. My own academic journey in Syria was not devoid of such challenges, and it was during a particularly precarious period that I first encountered the invaluable support of Cara.

Back in my homeland, I was an academic with a passion for studying the application of nanomedicine in cancer research. However, my relentless pursuit of knowledge faced multiple challenges due to the escalating tension and violence in Syria. With the lack of essential resources, including access to basic necessities like water and electricity, and the crumbling infrastructure of the nation, my ability to conduct research and pursue my dreams was regrettably hampered.

Upon stepping into the vibrant embrace of my new university, King's College London, I eagerly seized the exciting prospects of an unfamiliar academic environment. I started taking on the challenges of immersing myself in a diverse educational system, rich culture, and a language I was enthusiastic to master. During this transformative phase, I was warmly welcomed into the fold of Cara, an organisation with an inspiring dedication to supporting academics coming from areas of conflict.

One of the most remarkable aspects of King's College London and Cara's support was their commitment to preserving my academic identity. With their help, I was able to resume my research, secure funding for my project, and collaborate with like-minded scholars who shared my passion for positive change. With the years passing, I am beginning to see the positive outcomes of this support firsthand. My research gained recognition on the international stage, and I was invited to participate in conferences and contribute to publications. I am no longer feeling hopeless, in fact,



Alaa Zam

I am starting to become an integral part of a global academic community.

In the end, my story is one of many and it reflects the experiences of countless real-life scholars who have found refuge and renewed hope through Cara. Their unwavering dedication to at-risk academics has transformed my academic journey from one of despair to one of resilience and achievement. Cara's support has not only enabled me to pursue my academic passions but has also reaffirmed the profound impact of education and research in advancing knowledge and solving the world's most pressing challenges. Through Cara's support, I am not only surviving but thriving in academia, proving that, even in the face of adversity, the human spirit and the pursuit of knowledge can prevail.

FROM KYIV TO BIRMINGHAM

– Cara Fellow Olga Brieieva

The first days of Russia's full-scale invasion of my home country of Ukraine were the most shocking days of my life. Like many citizens of Kyiv, I spent my nights in a bomb shelter, and during the day I tried to get scarce food products, periodically hiding in the subway during air raids. Unsurprisingly, the Institute where I worked as a cancer researcher suspended all work.

In this situation of chaos, panic and fear, I received an email detailing dozens of laboratories around the world offering support and placements to Ukrainian researchers. My attention was drawn to the laboratory of Dr Martin Higgs from the University of Birmingham. Their research was close to my interests, especially to my latest project in Kyiv. Considering the deteriorating situation in Ukraine, I contacted Martin about the possibility of a placement in his lab. After several online meetings with Martin and Cara, the process of securing this position began, including preparing all the necessary documents. This was the moment when I truly realized how important and valuable Cara is. I am sincerely grateful to Cara, as well as to all the staff at the University of Birmingham for their professionalism and patience in organising my postdoctoral position. Thanks to their efforts, I travelled to the UK in autumn 2022 to join Martin's lab.

I am also deeply grateful to everyone in Martin's lab and department for their support from the day I arrived. This started with hosting me for the first weeks of my stay in Birmingham, and they continued to help me on a daily basis to adapt quickly to my new environment. I have always enjoyed research work, and it was a really great pleasure to be in a lab again. Here at Birmingham, I have been granted access to high quality, modern equipment and methods. I have received plenty of support on mastering new techniques, planning and performing experiments, and analysing results from Martin and from my colleagues. Further, I have been



Olga Brieieva and Martin Higgs

able significantly to expand my understanding of current trends in cancer research and genomics by participating in weekly lab meetings, seminars and conferences with world class scientists.

Throughout my time at Birmingham, I have continued to feel supported by Cara. I have taken part in Cara's workshops on a wide range of topics, from improving academic English skills to fostering mental health, which has greatly helped me to integrate into new scientific community.

I have been in Birmingham for almost a year now, and I really like this city with its diversity of cultures, architecture, and picturesque cycle paths along the canals. Sometimes I call my friends who stayed in Ukraine to support them. Despite the complexity of the situation, they try to be optimistic and positive. Their current joke is a reply to the standard job interview question of, "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?" with the answer "Look, I'm just trying to make it to Friday", which has now become especially popular.

I am eternally grateful to all the people who have made it possible for me to be safe and have given me the opportunity to continue doing research, the work that I have always loved. Thank you for everything.

FROM DONETSK TO GLASGOW

– Cara Fellow Olena Taukchi

I lived in the city of Horlivka, Donetsk Region, and worked at the Horlivka Institute for Foreign Languages. After the armed conflict in the Donetsk Region began, my family and I spent nine months in the war zone without regular electricity, tap water and food supply. The city was occupied by Russian troops, and many of my colleagues, former students and neighbours were killed.

In December 2014, I moved to Bakhmut, a territory controlled by Ukrainian governmental forces, where my institution was relocated. I went on working at the Institute for Foreign Languages until my husband landed a job in Kharkiv. I joined him there in September 2020 and taught English at the Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogics Academy.

My husband and I lived happily and felt at home until 24 February 2022, when Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. Kharkiv is located only 30 km (19 miles) south of the Russia-Ukraine border. It is Ukraine's second largest city, making it a major target for the Russian military early in the invasion. Kharkiv's residential districts, schools, hospitals and universities were shelled and bombed daily from the ground and the air. From 1 March we had to get by without heating, even though the temperature was still at minus. Food was not always guaranteed because of constant air raid alerts. It was the same with medicine and petrol. We also had to spend every other night in a bunker or a subway with thousands of other people.

It was then that I started browsing for information about placements provided for Ukrainian academics in the UK and the EU. I did not know much about Cara and its activities when I first applied but, being a teacher of English, I had always dreamt of having a chance to work and do my research at a British university. So, I decided to try my luck and was successful.

I would like to emphasise that I do appreciate the time and effort that the Cara team invested in providing a placement for me. They are efficient,



Olena Taukchi

patient, tactful, and true professionals.

I currently live in the immediate vicinity of Glasgow and teach at the University of Glasgow. I also do research and am happy to contribute to shaping young minds and inspiring them to become productive and successful. I also travel the country together with my host family, who are my best friends now. Life must go on, no matter what; being twice a refugee, I realise how true this is. Thank you, Cara.

FROM ALEPPO TO EDINBURGH

– Cara Fellow Mohamad Ali Kamel

'Cara, the magical name that changed my whole life forever'

I arrived in the UK in 2016. The direct reason for me and my family to be here in the UK is Cara.

When I was living in Syria, I was working as a pharmacist, and as an academic researcher at one of the Syrian universities. I was happy with my life before 2011, but when the war started, I was scared of many things such as arbitrary detention, killing, losing a member of my family or even my whole family. Every day I had to face these terrible challenges which were pushing me to take action to save my family from a very dangerous future.

My friend who was living in Manchester advised me to contact an organisation called 'Cara'. I did not have any idea what Cara was, this was the first time I had heard their name. I still remember when I called them, they were, and still are, so friendly and professional with me. The call lasted less than five minutes but after that, I got a glimmer of hope to rescue myself and my family from what felt like hell.

Immediately after the call, Cara sent me an email to let me know that if I was deemed eligible for their support, they would facilitate my journey to the UK to undertake an academic placement. One of the big challenges was that I needed to travel to one of the neighbouring countries of Syria to take an English language exam, and this journey was full of dangers. However, I got the required mark and Cara was able to secure me a Master's place at Edinburgh Napier University.

Cara helped with all the complex logistical matters, both for me and my family. Following the successful completion of my Master's, I was able to transfer to a PhD, thanks to the support from the University and Cara. I am very grateful to the University for all their support during my studies, and for the help in settling in my family in Edinburgh.



Mohamad Ali Kamel at his PhD graduation, July 2023

I think Cara was for us like a gift from God. I am so grateful to Cara, as it is the direct reason for me and my family's safe presence here in the UK and for supporting me, together with Napier, to complete my study successfully. I will never forget the name 'Cara' as long as I live.

FROM HERAT TO PRESTON

– Cara Fellow Abdul Saboor Matin

‘A Year in the UK as a CARA Fellow: A Story of Resilience, Retrieving, and Thriving’

Imagine sitting down to breakfast with your family on a regular Sunday morning. Then, a simple question changes everything. “Do you know what day it will be three days from now?”, I ask. At first, the responses are typical, just another Wednesday. But after a moment of thought, the realisation dawns on everyone: Wednesday, September 19th marks the first anniversary of our family’s arrival in the UK; a journey filled with professional growth, access to plentiful resources, valuable networks, and a new way of life.

However, it wasn’t all smooth sailing for us. Our journey to the UK was filled with layers of trauma. We had to leave Afghanistan, our native country, and seek refuge in a third country before finally settling here. This transition came with its own set of challenges, from uncertainty and language barriers to adjusting to British society and navigating family dynamics. Despite these obstacles, my family persevered.

During our breakfast conversation, we discussed how we have been learning the language, adapting to the culture, finding stable jobs, and making new friends, and proudly shared some tangible achievements. Our daughters have been granted the invaluable opportunity to receive a standard education here in the UK, while their friends back in Afghanistan are denied this basic right. Our eldest son’s journey has been equally inspiring, as he has enrolled in Cardinal Newman College - one of the top three Sixth Form institutions in the UK - to pursue Accounting and Business studies.

My wife’s progress has been remarkable too. She has started college and has taken up going to the gym and beauty salons - activities that symbolise empowerment and hope - at a time when women and girls back in Afghanistan are often confined to their homes.



Abdul Saboor Matin

When it comes to my academic professional milestones I, as a Cara Fellow, have the privilege of joining esteemed communities of scholars. The doors of the School of Law and Policing at University of Central Lancashire swung open to welcome me, allowing me not only to share my knowledge but also to absorb wisdom from others. This reinforced my belief in the power of education to bridge cultural divides. I’m actively engaged in teaching, tutoring, community engagement, and inclusive teaching efforts. I’ve also become an accredited mediator through the Civil Mediation Council and International Mediation Institute.

As closing thoughts, I am reminded that hope and willpower are the forces that shape our destinies. I have emerged as an academic eager to make a difference, as a parent determined to secure his children’s future, and as an individual who believes in the boundless possibilities of a new world. As I look ahead, I carry the profound belief that, indeed, where there is hope, there is life, and where there is a will, there is always a way.

CARA SCOTLAND AND THE NORTH CONFERENCE 2023

On Tuesday 23 May 2023 the University of Glasgow hosted the first in-person ‘Cara Scotland and the North Conference’ since 2019. The date of the conference held special significance, being 90 years and a day since the founding of what is now known as Cara.

We were delighted to be joined by Cara Fellows and British Academy ‘Researchers at Risk’ Fellows from Ukraine, as well as by their supervisors, University leaders, supporters, and other friends of Cara - including colleagues from the Universities of Sanctuary, Universities Scotland, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In 1933 the then Principals of the Universities of Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews were among the 41 signatories of the Founding Statement of what is now Cara, so it was wonderful to be hosted by Glasgow and to hear ‘Welcome remarks’ from the present Principal of St Andrews, Professor Sally Mapstone, and Senior Vice-Principal of Aberdeen, Professor Karl Leydecker.

Topics on the day included Cara’s response to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine and the work of Cara’s Syria Programme, as well as practical sessions on navigating the UK academic job market and good practice in hosting a Cara

Cara Scotland and the North Conference:
Professor Mapstone’s Welcoming Remarks –
<https://bit.ly/CScotSM>

Cara Scotland and the North Conference:
Professor Leydecker’s Welcoming Remarks –
<https://bit.ly/CScotKL>

Fellow. The final words of the conference were from ‘Researchers at Risk’ fellow at Glasgow, Alla Kurzenkova, who spoke movingly of her experiences.

We were very grateful for the kind hospitality of the University of Glasgow in hosting the conference and providing the wonderful venue and catering, and most importantly a space for these important conversations; and we thank all those who generously gave their time to take part. A special mention goes to Tessa Bell, our ‘Scotland Manager’, based at the University of Edinburgh, for organising the event. We very much look forward to our next ‘Scotland and the North’ conference, which the University of Dundee has already generously offered to host.



Pictured from left to right: Rachel Sandison (Glasgow), Christian Harding (St Andrews), Zeid Al-Bayaty (Cara), Sharon Cassidy (Aberdeen)

Since September 2022, we have been the lead on Work Package 2, 'Guidance for Researchers at Risk', in the second phase (2022-2025) of the EU's Inspireurope+ programme. This programme supports at-risk academics who have found refuge across Europe, as one of the EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). Brexit-related complications had prevented us from participating in Phase 1 (2019-2022), so we were glad to join Phase 2, and even more pleased to be asked to lead one of the Work Packages, providing six webinars and six training sessions over the three years.

As of October 2023, we have hosted three webinars and two training sessions. Our first webinar, on 'Publication Strategies for Researchers at Risk', was held on 6 December 2022, the second, 'Understanding Research Ethics and Integrity for Researchers at Risk', was held on 21 April, and the most recent, 'The Power of Networking', was held on 17 October. The first two are now available online, and the links are below.

Over the course of the next two years, we will be hosting the remaining three webinars and four training sessions. The target set was to reach over 300 researchers at risk over the three-year period through the combination of these interactive trainings and the webinars, which we have already exceeded.

6 December 2022 webinar, 'Publication Strategies for Researchers at Risk' – <https://bit.ly/InspPubStr>

21 April 2023 webinar, 'Understanding Research Ethics and Integrity for Researchers at Risk' – <https://bit.ly/InspResInt>

"I was thinking to leave you a Thank You note for your unwavering support during the last couple of months. It is greatly appreciated. You are such an amazing and wonderful person."

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan



We also attended the 'Philipp Schwartz/ Inspireurope+ Stakeholder Forum' in Berlin in May 2023, where we had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with all other project partners. The first day of the event was, as it happened, the exact anniversary of our founding, on 22 May 1933, and our Philipp Schwartz Initiative hosts very kindly surprised us with a 'birthday cake', incorporating our 90th anniversary logo.

Antony Gormley first donated a work to be auctioned to raise funds for us in 2016, and the video of his 2018 interview with Cara Patron Jon Snow, in which he explained why he supported our work, is still available on Cara's website at – <https://bit.ly/2018SnGo>

So we were delighted when we learned earlier this year that Antony wished to make a further donation to Cara, with his drawing 'Connect VI' (below). The Studio's accompanying text for the auction catalogue described how the work reflected "...one of the charity's goals – the development of interpersonal and institutional links on an international level. Two silhouettes coalesce on the blank picture plane. Earth-hued roots connect them, as if hinting both at existing and potential growth, and as such, to greater networks of human connectivity. In this way, 'Connect VI' becomes a visual metaphor for Cara's work; creating links between academic institutions



across the globe in order to safeguard the world's higher education institutions, and the education they provide to future generations."

As in 2016 the auction house Phillips managed the sale, and generously waived their usual fees. We are very grateful to Antony, and to Phillips, for their tremendous support.

CARA IN PARLIAMENT

Sir Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East, first came into contact with Cara during the fall of Kabul in 2021, when a constituent sought his help to bring her sister-in-law, an academic opposed to the Taliban, to safety in the UK and to a Cara Fellowship at the University of Southampton. Happily, the story ended well.

Since then, Sir Julian has drawn the attention of the House to our work several times in debates. To mark our actual anniversary, on 22 May, he tabled an Early-Day Motion, with the backing of 20 more MPs on both sides of the House, "That this House celebrates the 90th anniversary of the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)...". He followed this by applying successfully to the Speaker for a well-attended Westminster Hall debate on 'At-risk Academics: UK Support', which took place on 12 September, the day after our Royal Society 'event'. After outlining Cara's history and current work, and Cara's experience of the more recent 'Researchers at Risk' programme, he expressed the hope that the Government would learn from the programme's undoubted success and be prepared to consider a longer-term follow-on scheme, open to academics at risk around the world. This would, he argued, ensure that the United Kingdom remained a global leader in this field. Responding for the Home Office, Sarah Dines MP affirmed that the Government was "committed to the cause of academic freedom globally and to ensuring that at-risk academics have a place of safety in which to study, teach and carry out research, including within the UK."

We are grateful to Sir Julian for his support and look forward to working with him in the coming year.

UK PARTNERSHIPS

Our key relationship in 2022-23 was again with all the members of our 'UK Universities and Research Network', without whose practical and financial support we simply couldn't function. In the course of 2022-23 we welcomed four more universities to the UK Network – Cranfield; St George's, University of London; University for the Creative Arts (UCA); and Harper Adams. A full list of the Network members is on page 30.

In April 2022, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the British Academy and the other UK National Academies asked us to work with them in developing the 'Researchers at Risk' Programme, funded over the course of the following year with £12.8m from the UK Government and £0.55m from other donors. In addition to sitting on the Selection Panel, we took on responsibility for paying the awards granted under the scheme to the Ukraine-based researchers who had been proposed by UK universities and research institutes. In all, 180 awards were made, all but a handful for 24 months.

In October 2022 the British Academy announced the launch of the British Academy/Cara/Leverhulme 'Researchers at Risk' Research Support Grants programme, under which the Leverhulme Trust is providing funding of £1,000,000 over five years to support researchers at risk. Grant applicants must be award holders through Cara's Fellowship Programme or the British Academy's 'Researchers at Risk' Programme, or be in the process of applying to those programmes, in which case the awards are paid once those applications are confirmed as successful. Grants of up to £10,000 each are available to support research project activities for eligible researchers in all disciplines except medical and health sciences. The first round was held in late 2022, and the second round of applications closed in September 2023.

We were invited by Times Higher Education (THE) to be the 'Charity Partner' at their November 2022 awards ceremony. A recently-arrived Cara Fellow from Ukraine, Igor Kotsiuba, spoke movingly about his experiences, and a table collection raised

almost £3,500 to support Cara's work. To mark our 90th anniversary year, THE have generously renewed the invitation to us to be their Charity Partner at the 2023 awards too, in December.

In June 2023 Cumberland House invited us to nominate our seventh 'Cumberland Lodge Scholar', for their 2023-25 Fellowship. Cumberland Lodge, an educational foundation in Windsor Great Park, offered in 2017 to accept a Cara PhD student each year for a two-year scholarship, inspired by our shared history as organisations founded in response to the rise of Nazism in 1930s Germany. As a result, at any given time two Cara PhD Fellows benefit from the Lodge's programme, practising valuable skills in critical thinking, communications, networking and public engagement.

We are very grateful also to Goodenough College and to International Student House, who provide generous scholarships to cover accommodation costs for Cara Fellows in London.

We continued our close collaboration with the Trustees of the Sir Hans Krebs Trust in 2022-23, for an eighth year. The late Sir Hans Krebs was a Nobel Prize winner who was supported by Cara in the 1930s when he was forced to leave Nazi Germany, and the Trust's awards are funded from the sale, by his family, of his Nobel Prize medal. Six Cara Fellows benefited from Sir Hans Krebs Trust/Cara Fellowships this year, which help to ensure that future generations of biomedical scientists who are prevented from carrying out research in their own country because of persecution or oppression have the opportunity to continue their important work.

In 2022-23 we also continued our cooperation with Springer Nature, through the Springer Nature-Cara Fellowship Awards, which will help fund three Cara Fellows over three years, and with the Northern Consortium, which generously provides funding support each year for Cara Fellowships at Northern Consortium member universities.

Throughout 2023 Cara's Syria Programme (SP) has continued to receive considerable support from Cara's Network institutions, including for Research Incubation Visits, which lead to continuing

institutional affiliation and access to host university resources and so promote longer-term research collaborations and opportunities. We are grateful also to many other committed SP partners, including to AdvanceHE, for offering fee waivers for up to twelve participants a year; to the British Council, for their support of English language Aptis testing at cost; as well as to all our new SP partners, listed on page 15. We are also grateful to all those journals and conference organisers who so kindly waive fees or open access costs.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

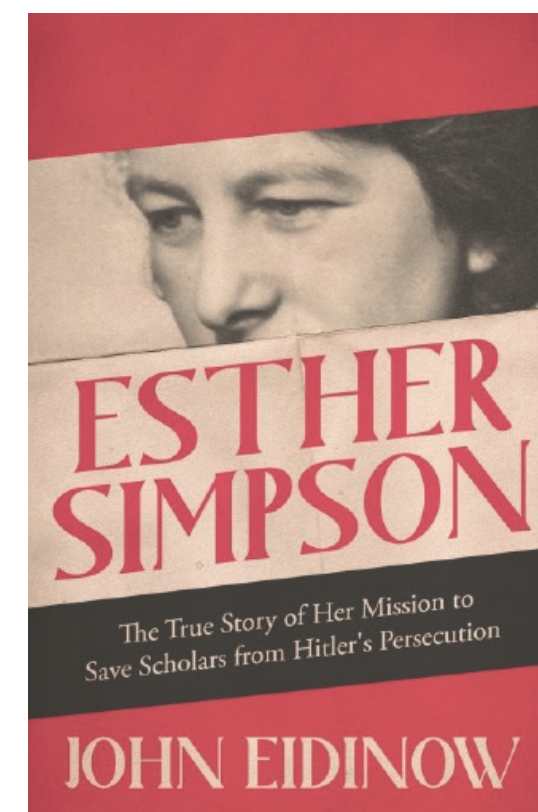
We work with a wide range of like-minded international partners, including our two US counterparts, the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF). Although the organisations are quite separate, we are in regular touch with both SAR and SRF, and we fund and support placements jointly in the UK and elsewhere.

In 2022-23 we also continued our engagement with the *Philipp Schwartz Initiative* (PSI), run by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation with support from the German Foreign Ministry and a number of German foundations, which helps at-risk academics to find places at German universities. So far, we have supported 54 successful PSI applications in twelve rounds, and we look forward to hearing the result of the 13th round. Several of our Cara Fellows and SP participants have been successful in winning PSI-funded places.

We also developed our partnership with the Open Society University Network. We are already hosting several Fellows supported through their 'Threatened Scholars Initiative', and in 2022-23 three of our Afghan Fellows received grants under their new 'Afghan Challenge Fund'.

ESTHER SIMPSON BIOGRAPHY

In our 90th anniversary year we were very pleased to welcome a new biography by John Eidinow of the redoubtable Esther ('Tess') Simpson, who was recruited as the 'Assistant Secretary' of the Academic Assistance Council (now Cara) in the 1930s, and did so much to save so many. It was published by Robinson in July 2023.



UK UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH NETWORK, 2022-23

Network members generously offer fee waivers and often accommodation and financial support for Cara Fellows and their families. Over a hundred contribute a voluntary annual subscription too, to help cover our running costs. We thank them all.

Equally, we thank those many members of their staffs, who give so generously of their time, *pro bono*, to help our Fellows and to support our Syria Programme. Our work would be impossible without their enthusiasm and commitment.

Aberdeen | Abertay | Aberystwyth | Anglia Ruskin | Aston | Bangor | Bath | Bath Spa | Bedfordshire | Birkbeck | Birmingham | Birmingham City | Bournemouth | Bradford | Brighton | Bristol | British Institute of International and Comparative Law | Brunel | Buckingham | Buckinghamshire New | Cambridge | Canterbury Christ Church | Cardiff | Cardiff Metropolitan | Central Lancashire | Chester | Chichester | City University London | City & Guilds of London Art School | Courtauld Institute | Coventry | Cranfield | Cumbria | De Montfort | Derby | Dundee | Durham | East Anglia | East London | Edinburgh | Edinburgh Napier | Essex | Exeter | Glasgow | Glasgow Caledonian | Glasgow School of Art | Gloucestershire | Goldsmiths College | Goodenough College | Greenwich | Harper Adams | Heriot Watt | Hertfordshire | Highlands and Islands | Huddersfield | Hull | Imperial College | Kent | Keele | King's College London | Kingston | Lancaster | Leeds | Leeds Beckett | Leeds Trinity | Leicester | Lincoln | Liverpool | Liverpool Hope | Liverpool John Moores | Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine | London | London Business School | London Metropolitan | London School of Economics | London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine | London South Bank | Loughborough | Manchester | Manchester Metropolitan | Middlesex | Newcastle | Newman University Birmingham | Northampton | Northumbria University Newcastle | Nottingham | Nottingham Trent | Open | Oxford | Oxford Brookes | Plymouth | Portsmouth | Queen Margaret | Queen Mary | Queen's Belfast | Ravensbourne | Reading | Regent's | Robert Gordon | Roehampton | Royal Central School of Speech & Drama | Royal Holloway | Royal Veterinary College | Salford | Sheffield | Sheffield Hallam | SOAS | Solent | Southampton | South Wales | Staffordshire | St Andrews | St George's | Stirling | Strathclyde | Sunderland | Surrey | Sussex | Swansea | Teesside | University of the Arts London | University for the Creative Arts | University College London | Ulster | Warwick | Wellcome Sanger Institute | Westminster | West of England | West of Scotland | Winchester | Wolverhampton | Worcester | Wrexham | Glyndŵr | York | York St John

FUNDRAISING

We have to raise new funds every year to be able to continue our work; but we are lucky to have strong relationships with the UK higher education sector and with key donors. Over 100 UK universities continued their support for our running costs in 2022-23 by paying voluntary annual subscriptions; many very kindly increased their subscription amounts in response to the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises, and some also made one-off extra payments to help with Fellowship Programme-related costs. As a result, our total subscription income in 2022 totalled £506,050 (2021: £389,950). We also received many generous regular and one-off donations. As noted above, universities, other institutions and individuals responded particularly generously to our Emergency Appeal to help participants in our Syria Programme who had been left homeless or in distress by the Turkey/Syria earthquakes in February 2023, contributing over £140,000 in just a few weeks.

In the course of 2022-23 we continued to submit funding applications to a wide range of existing and potential institutional supporters; most were successful. Some donors prefer to remain anonymous, but those who are happy to be acknowledged are shown below:

- April Trust
- British Academy
- Central European University (on behalf of Open Society University Network)
- Dowager Countess Eleanor Peel Trust
- Eddie Dinshaw Foundation
- Fondation Liber
- French Huguenot Church of London Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Harbour Foundation
- Mellon Foundation
- Microsoft
- Northern Consortium
- Open Society Foundations
- Rob Granieri Fund
- Sir Hans Krebs Trust
- Sir Joseph Hotung Charitable Settlement
- Springer Nature Limited
- Texel Foundation
- UKRI, for InspirEurope+
- Wellcome Trust
- Whitaker Charitable Trust
- Wolfson Foundation
- Worshipful Company of World Traders
- Y-Tree

“I am really very honoured to receive such positive application outcome from Cara. I sincerely thank you and your supervisors and your entire team for the meticulous support throughout my application.”

Cara Fellow from Sudan

Around the world, the liberty of many academics and even their lives are in danger. Their hard-earned skills risk being lost.

Since 1933, Cara has helped thousands of them to escape. We are working to rescue many more now.

But we need your help to do it; please click here **DONATE** to help us to get them to safety.



Kharkiv National University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Ukraine, 2022

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – 2022

Our Financial Year is the calendar year, and extracts from the audited 2022 Accounts – the Summary Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet – are on the following pages.

In 2022 most universities continued to pay the funds they were providing for the accommodation and living costs of the Cara Fellows they were hosting as restricted donations to Cara, rather than paying the Fellows direct; we paid the funds on to the Fellows, in full, as charitable grants. The British Academy also paid the funds they were channelling to the Fellows of the ‘Researchers at Risk’ programme through us, also to be paid on in full. As a result, our income in 2022 rose significantly, totalling £6,141,476, and total expenditure and

commitments on awards and programme and project work for the year amounted to £6,454,942. The total net movement of funds was a deficit of £376,101 (2021: a surplus of £416,673). On a cash basis there was a surplus of £6,696,169 (2021: a surplus of £448,410). As in previous years the timing of receipts of restricted income when compared with the payment out of such income has led to a significant variance in the result for the restricted funds, which in 2022 was a deficit of £300,187 (2021: a surplus of £361,088).

During 2022, the total value of the assets held by our investment advisers, Investec, fell from £383,263 to £321,278 as a result of difficult market conditions, due in large part to the war in Ukraine.

“Thank you so much for your very kind words and best wishes. We will be forever grateful for your generous cooperation.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

“I want to express my sincere appreciation for your invaluable assistance during our meeting. I can clearly see the tremendous effort you invest in supporting fellows like me in these processes. Once again, thank you for your remarkable support.”

Cara Fellow from Jordan

“You and your great team have been so kind and supportive to me throughout the process of my case, I am really in debt of that and I will not forget.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31st December 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Income		
Donations and legacies	6,134,621	3,078,772
Investment income	6,855	4,836
Realised gains on investments	12,976	545
Unrealised (losses) /gains on investments	(75,611)	37,827
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income	6,078,841	3,121,980
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Expenditure		
Raising funds	6,737	48,947
Charitable activities:		
Grants payable	5,708,365	2,081,652
Programme and project work	724,250	559,397
Governance	15,590	15,311
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenditure	6,454,942	2,705,307
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net (expenditure) income for the year	(376,101)	416,673
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All of the operations undertaken by the company during the current and preceding years are continuing operations.
The retained net deficit for the year based on historical cost is £300,490 (2021 – net surplus £378,846).

Auditor's opinion: We confirm that the information given in the summary income and expenditure account and the balance sheet shown on pages 34 to 35 is consistent with the annual accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2022 which have been audited by ourselves.

DAVID WARREN BA FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor), 30 August 2023

For and on behalf of COCKE, VELLACOTT & HILL
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
Unit 28 City Business Centre, Lower Road, LONDON SE16 2XB

BALANCE SHEET

as at 31st December 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	13,240	10,631
Investments	321,278	383,263
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total fixed assets	334,518	393,894
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Current assets		
Debtors	689,888	142,888
Cash at bank and in hand	8,631,325	1,935,156
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current assets	9,321,213	2,078,044
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(8,535,592)	(975,698)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net current assets	785,621	1,102,346
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities	1,120,139	1,496,240
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
The funds of the charity:		
Restricted Income Funds	814,114	1,114,301
Unrestricted Funds - general	255,849	256,152
Unrestricted Funds - revaluation reserve	50,176	125,787
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total charity funds	1,120,139	1,496,240
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 11 August 2023 and signed on its behalf by:
NICOLA DANDRIDGE (Trustee)
ALAN McCARTHY (Trustee)
Company Registration No: 00641687 Charity Registration No: 207471

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

PATRONS

Mr Greg Dyke
The Baroness Neuberger DBE
The Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve CH CBE FBA
Professor Lord Patel of Bradford OBE
Mr Jon Snow
Dr Rowan Williams (The Rt Revd and Rt Hon The Lord Williams of Oystermouth PC)

CARA TRUSTEES AT 31 JULY 2023

Chair: Professor Alan McCarthy, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology, University of Liverpool
Hon Secretary: Dame Nicola Dandridge DBE, Professor of practice of higher education policy, University of Bristol, formerly Chief Executive, Office for Students
Hon Treasurer: Mr S J K (Zac) Barratt, Director, The Summit Group Ltd

Professor Vince Emery, President at the University of Hertfordshire hosted by Global Academic Foundation, Egypt
Dr Joanna Newman MBE, Provost at SOAS, University of London, formerly Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities
Dr Cornelia Sorabji CBE, Honorary Professor of Practice, University College London, formerly also Counsellor Strategy & External Expertise at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Ms Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive, Universities UK
Professor Paul Weindling, Research Professor, History of Medicine, Oxford Brookes University

“Thank you so much, I am extremely grateful to you and the entire Cara team. Your cooperation is vital and very important to me right now and your help means the world to me. I am very happy and feel blessed to have been given such an opportunity.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

THE CARA TEAM AT 31 JULY 2023

Executive Director: **Stephen Wordsworth CMG LVO**

Deputy Director & Fellowship Programme Manager: **Zeid Al-Bayaty**
Fellowship Programme Deputy Manager and Team Leader for new Fellows – **Sheila Mills**
Fellowship Programme Deputy Manager and Team Leader for active Fellows – **Laura Puiggali**

Programme Manager, InspirEurope+, and Senior Fellowship Programme Officer – **Lucia Simms**
Senior Fellowship Programme Officer – **Narmin Ali**
Senior Fellowship Programme Officer – **Sara Bermudez**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Jake Coulter**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Amanda Gamage**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Sinan Özyürek**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Tim Riches**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Oscar Saunders**
Senior Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Alex Purser**
Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Jennifer Donnellan**
Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Linh Dieu Tran**

Middle East Adviser: **Kate Robertson**
Syria Programme Deputy Manager – **Anaïs Richmond**
Syria Programme Officer – **James Keeley**
Syria Programme Officer – **Anouf El Daher**
Syria Programme Administrator – **Ryana Dhali**
Syria Programme Administrator – **Katy Sansum**
Syria Programme, A&H Coordinator and Finance – **Ipek Velioglu Melis**

Cara Scotland Manager (based in Edinburgh) – **Tessa Bell**

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

We thank our long-term volunteer, Harbinda Hanspal, for her support.

DATA PROTECTION

In view of the sensitivity of the personal information that Cara processes, Cara is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Cara's registration may be viewed at: <https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Entry/ZA066134>

Cara (Council for At-Risk Academics)
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90 London Road
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T: 07933 036535

info@cara.ngo
<https://www.cara.ngo/>

Charity registered in England and Wales No 207471
Company registered in England and Wales No 641687