



cara

ANNUAL REPORT | 2020-21

“The mission of Universities is the promotion of critical thought, both in our research and in our teaching. We don’t tell people what to think, we seek to show people how to think. As a consequence, the repression of academics is often amongst the first moves of those groups and regimes that seek to impose conformity and exclude criticism. In many parts of the world today, academics are under attack for doing their jobs, for what they have said, for who they are or simply because of where they are. In defending these colleagues at risk, then, we are defending the very idea of a University.”

Professor Stephen Reicher
St Andrews University
– Grandson of a Cara Fellow from 1934

FOREWORD

The past year has been one of immense challenge for everyone. As I write this in early August, the Covid pandemic has wrought havoc on the health of nations in 220 countries and territories, with so far nearly 200 million confirmed cases, including more than 4 million deaths and current estimates of more than 10 million suffering from Long Covid. The social fabric of countries has been similarly ripped and ravaged, as views differ widely and often aggressively on issues ranging from lockdowns and restrictions to vaccinations and social care systems, and transport systems remain in uncertainty and often chaos.

For Cara, the pandemic posed huge challenges, and I would like to pay tribute here to our terrific Cara team, whose determination, dedication and creativity ensured that our work of rescue and support continued, albeit in often radically different ways.

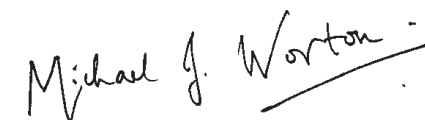
Physical sanctuary was not possible to achieve for many of our Fellows during the strictest of the restrictions, but intellectual and academic sanctuary has continued to be provided. This virtual sanctuary offers real hope through its provision of ongoing online contact and support and development activities. However, it also reminds both persecuted academics and those seeking to help them of the importance of physical safety if lives and careers are genuinely to be saved and transformed.

Our Fellows are very different, but, as exiles, they are all haunted by a profound sense of loss (of home, family, friends, career, security, language, culture, and so on), and

their sense of loss is often accompanied by a yearning for a new belonging. Our work at Cara does not end when a Fellow finds sanctuary with a university in the UK or elsewhere. Alistair Bonnet powerfully argues in ‘Off the Map: Lost Space; Invisible Cities, Forgotten Islands, Feral Places and What They Tell Us about the World’ that ‘*place is the fabric of our lives; memory and identity are stitched through it. Without having somewhere of one’s own, a place that is home, freedom is an empty word*’.

Our mission is to bring them to sanctuary and then to support them as they seek to transform their sanctuary into a temporary but nevertheless meaningful home.

I am extremely grateful to the hundreds of academics who give their expertise and time to teaching, training, guiding, mentoring and advising our Cara Fellows and to the hundreds who support our Cara Syria Programme through the online and face-to-face teaching, research training and professional development they give to our many Syrian Fellows displaced to Turkey and other parts of the region. Their work is a gift of help; it is also, vitally, a gift of hope and the promise of a better future. Thank you.



Professor Michael Worton
CBE, Cara Chair

A Vice-Chancellor's View

The right to freedom of speech is fundamental to the lives of academics and academic institutions, it is something that we protect at all costs, and as important as the pursuit of knowledge and understanding is the freedom to debate and challenge. In my role of Vice-Chancellor, I see defending the right of my colleagues to speak freely as one of the most important and valuable things I can do.

As a global university, the University of Birmingham wants the right to speak freely, without fear for personal safety, to be shared by all those within our global community. This is why we have been part of the Cara network for the last 14 years and have supported over this time 2-3 Cara Fellows each year. We have seen the huge benefits that supporting a Cara Fellow brings to the individual but also to

our University through the contribution of diverse expertise and unique perspectives.

Today, the demand for support through the Cara network is at an all-time high. We will continue to play an active and significant role in the Cara network, not only because it's needed, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because as a civic university, we open our doors to all, equally, and as a global university, supporting scholars at risk is our responsibility. At the University of Birmingham, we are happy and proud to be part of this valuable network.

Professor Sir David Eastwood
Vice-Chancellor
University of Birmingham

“The military government arrested the people from their homes who were involved with the civil disobedience movement. The next day they just returned the dead bodies. Therefore, if I continue to live in Myanmar, my life is not safe anymore.”

Cara Fellow from Myanmar

OVERVIEW

A difficult year, marked by great solidarity and achievement

Few of us will look back fondly on 2020/21. It was a year of disruption and disappointment, of anxiety and anguish and, for some, of tragic loss. But one thing shone through; the determination of all those we worked with – the academics in our Fellowship and Syria Programmes, our partner universities, the many individual university staff members, our other partners and our many donors, large and small – not to let all this deflect them but to continue and in some cases even to increase their efforts to support what Cara does.

The result of that support is, we hope, evident in this Report. Continuing help for those already engaged in our Fellowship Programme, and dozens more new Fellows able to join them in safety, with their families. Our flourishing Syria Programme, making it possible for Syrian academics in exile, in Turkey and elsewhere, not just to maintain and update their skills but also to use those skills in important projects that will make major contributions to issues such as food security and the environment and, eventually, to the future of their own country.

All this is set out in more detail in the pages that follow, which describe what was, by many standards, a successful year. But just what is success? In 1939, just a few years after Cara was founded, Bertolt Brecht put into the mouth of a great scientist, Galileo, the line, *“Unhappy the land that needs heroes”*. Unhappy also the world that needs organisations like Cara, where those whose sole ‘crime’ is to have, and to want to share the benefits of, a good education, and to support truth and justice, become the targets of despots and extremists.

But the world is as it is; and so we must continue the work which our founders started back in 1933. They, facing then the threat of fascism in Europe, understood the urgent need for an organisation dedicated to *‘the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science’*. Now, almost ninety years later, the threats to learning and science and to the freedom of academics, far from receding, have multiplied, emerging in many different societies and from people professing many different world views. Just this year we received our first appeals for help from Belarus, Myanmar

“A death threat, caused by my research activities on cultural codes that suppress and restrict women’s rights, made me leave Afghanistan. I have not felt safe to return since that time.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

and Afghanistan, as a brutal regime led by ‘Europe’s last Dictator’, a repressive junta led by a supposed Buddhist and a resurgent military force made up of Islamist extremists, each for their own reasons, began to target their countries’ academics.

Fortunately, as noted above, we have had strong support from our university partners over the last year, and our decision some years ago to focus our Fellowship Programme in particular on those who are still in immediate danger has clearly won their wide support. We mean no disrespect towards those who are already in exile, struggling to find ways to salvage their careers; some of these are, after all, exactly the people we serve through our Syria Programme. But without the places and the visas that our university partners can provide, and the funding packages that we help to put together, the people we work with through our Fellowship Programme would have few if any other options. In many cases, their academic lives would be over; and, in some cases at least, their freedom and even their physical lives as well.

Instead, they are safe; and through our two Programmes we are now helping over 500 previously-threatened academics, making Cara one of the leading organisations of its type in the world. Unfortunately, our work will continue to be needed in 2021/22, possibly even more urgently: just a few days before I signed off this Report, Kabul fell to the Taliban, sparking profound fears among Afghan academics, particularly women. As I write, we are finalising the details of our first placement for an Afghan academic, and we are already in touch with over 30 more, some trapped and desperate, others embarked on dangerous journeys. I fear that many more will follow, but I am confident that, with our partners’ support, we will be able to help them too. So we thank all our partners, in advance; and dedicate this Report to them all.

Stephen Wordsworth
Executive Director

“My family and I are not safe. We can be imprisoned without any proof. I do not have work. I have no income. Neither a guarantee of life nor a career guarantee, just because I disagree with the government.”

Cara Fellow from Turkey

CARA’S FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Despite the many Covid challenges, dozens more rescued, with our partners’ support

In 2020/21 the work of our Fellowship Programme – today’s version of the original ‘rescue mission’ from 1933, aimed at saving academics from discrimination, persecution and violence – was significantly affected by the pandemic. Several months of lockdown from March 2020 onwards left new Fellows who had been hoping to escape from danger trapped in their own countries instead, not knowing if or when they and their families would be able to get to safety. It was a desperately hard time. And many of our current Fellows were also affected, unable to work to the full because of Covid restrictions and in some cases with important and long-planned onward career moves blocked.

Even when land borders and visa centres reopened and flights resumed, things were far from normal. Flights were suddenly cancelled again. New regulations prohibited transits in airports where they had been entirely routine the day before. Newly-reopened visa centres sometimes closed again without warning because of Covid, or even for other reasons altogether, as when the Beirut Harbour blast of August 2020 severely damaged the visa centre there which is so important for our Syrian Fellows. New documents were required, along with new tests, all incurring extra charges. New arrivals in the UK had to be put into quarantine, on the basis of constantly-changing official ‘traffic light’ lists.

No amount of planning could have foreseen every twist and turn of the last twelve months, but most of our Fellowship Programme team had been with us for several years when it all began. Throughout the lockdown they had kept in close touch with all our Fellows, wherever they were, offering what reassurance they could. Once

travel became possible again, they put their considerable experience to good use, finding ways to sidestep every obstacle and deftly cope with the tangle of new regulations, complexities and absurdities.

As a result, they were quickly able to start getting things moving again, helping 12 new Fellows to begin their placements in the last four months of 2020, with their families, with 26 more arriving in the first half of 2021. 13 existing Fellows were able to embark on their next moves over the same period.

We used the enforced lull also to develop other ways of helping our Fellows to get the most out of their Fellowships. We piloted a new Mentoring Scheme for Fellows in autumn 2020, which was then rolled out in the first half of 2021, and developed our provision of Academic English Language support – much of it, inevitably, remotely, but very valuable nonetheless. With *pro bono* support from partners, we also developed our series of webinars, with new sessions on *Getting Published* and *Tools and Tips for Researchers*, and two detailed sessions on the all-important subject of visas. The recordings were all posted on our website.

Throughout this difficult time, we had great help from our university partners and their staffs. Many universities were able to be flexible over the timing of new arrivals, and were generous in covering the extra costs if Fellows they were already hosting needed to extend their stays to make up for time lost during lockdown. And if they could not stretch to this, some very welcome extra support from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation and the Texel Foundation gave us funds to cover some of these costs ourselves, as well as, for example, to cover other needs

– emergency funds for a new Fellow blocked halfway through their planned journey to the UK in a country where they had no support network, and extra help for those whose first placements had ended but whose plans to move on or to get jobs had been disrupted.

Sadly, the pandemic saw no let-up in brutality around the world, some of it targeted, as so often, against academics. A steady flow of new enquiries continued throughout the year, initially mainly from Syria, Turkey, Yemen and other countries across the Middle East, but in 2021 the worsening situations in Myanmar and Afghanistan brought new, but equally desperate, people to our doors. By the end of July 2021 we were actively engaged with some 330 Fellows, many of them currently in placements, but including others for whom we were seeking first placements, providing support to move on to another stage of their careers, or with whom we were otherwise keeping in touch as they moved forward, together with around 475 of their immediate dependents.

Over and above the extra support which our partner universities provided to help our Fellows to cope with the lockdown, they continued, as in previous years, generously to waive any course or bench fees for our Fellows and, in many cases, also to provide full funding for accommodation and living costs. Several more universities moved towards setting aside a ring-fenced annual ‘pot’ to support Cara Fellows, which will greatly aid our planning in the future and save everyone time. In all, UK universities’ cash and in-kind support for our Fellowships totalled over £3m in 2020/21. We understand very well that these same universities are

facing significant uncertainties and financial challenges as a result of the pandemic, on top of Brexit, which makes their willingness to continue to provide funds to support their threatened colleagues from around the world all the more creditable. Where they could not cover all the costs, we did so ourselves, with funds we had raised from our other donors. In addition, over 85 UK universities again supported Cara’s work by paying over £320,000 in voluntary annual subscriptions in 2020/21, which covered around two-thirds of our running costs and so kept the whole operation going.

The help we get from universities as institutions is, of course, only part of the story. We fully recognise also, and gratefully thank, the hundreds of university staff and other supporters who work with our Fellows as supervisors and mentors, and with them and their families as colleagues and friends; nothing would be possible without their extraordinary contribution too.

In the course of 2020/21, despite everything, many of our Fellows again achieved notable successes in their study or research. Six secured prestigious new ‘Global Talent’ visas to make it possible for them to extend their stay in the UK, others found good academic jobs, in a very competitive market, and others achieved vital new qualifications. A full list would take several pages, but some of the highlights are listed below.

Zeid Al-Bayaty
Deputy Director/
Fellowship Programme Manager

CARA FELLOWS

Recent Highlights

- A Syrian Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Newcastle applied successfully for a Tier 1 Global Talent Visa, with the support of the Royal Academy of Engineering.
- An Egyptian Postdoctoral Fellow researching biological processes for the manufacture of chemicals from renewable sources at the University of Edinburgh also applied successfully for a 2-year Global Talent Visa.
- A Palestinian Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Edinburgh started work as a Lecturer at Swansea University, under the Skilled Worker Visa route.
- A Syrian PhD Fellow took up a position with the Cyber Security Research Group at the University of Bristol, on a Skilled Worker Visa.
- A Syrian PhD Fellow at the University of Aberdeen has been offered a position as a Reagent Manufacturing Scientist at LumiraDX, a multinational diagnostic company.
- A Syrian PhD Fellow at Birkbeck University took up a postdoctoral position at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
- An Iranian Fellow at Reading University has been made a Regional Correspondent for the Middle East at the Oxford Human Rights Hub, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford.
- A Syrian PhD Fellow started a new job at Aston University, as a Business Research Associate at the Energy & Bioproducts Research Institute.

Nour, a Cara Fellow at the University of Portsmouth, with her supervisor, Sassan, at her PhD graduation



Investing in Syria's Intellectual Capital: Creating Pathways to the Future.

Our Programme's purpose: 'To nurture and sustain Syrian academics and facilitate future opportunities by strengthening and connecting them and enabling their continued academic engagement, as a group that is vital to the future of Syria.'

2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the Syria Crisis, with no end in sight. Syrian academics who have been forced into exile in neighbouring countries still need help. Most are in Turkey, so it is there that our Syria Programme (SP) has concentrated its response.

Now in its fifth year, our SP was designed to offer a wide range of support to individual academics affected by the Syria crisis, within a research framework. Our Programme also responds to a collective need – the participants' wish to contribute to, and be part of, a future Syria with a modernised outward-facing, autonomous and internationally-connected Higher Education sector at its heart.

The SP combines five complementary areas of work: English for Academic Purposes (EAP); Academic Development; Research Incubation Visits to UK universities; Cara-Commissioned Research; and the Syrian Research Fellowship Programme. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to end all face-to-face activities from Spring 2020, including the various workshops that had previously been held in Istanbul, but we were already offering a wide range of online activities and were able to adapt quickly. Our SP's main funders also generously permitted extensions of the agreed award periods, to allow for any disruption.

By July 2021, nearly 200 Syrian academics from across the discipline spectrum

were actively engaged with Programme activities, with over 300 more registered on the Programme database, surpassing the targets agreed with the main donors. In 2020 we successfully piloted a Reflective Online Foundation Course, developed with the support of UK university education experts and intended to ensure a common understanding of core research concepts and underline the link between research and teaching, and this is now being rolled out as mandatory across the full SP cohort. We have also worked hard to improve the gender balance amongst SP participants. The male to female ratio has moved from 8:1 to 6:1 over 2020-21, due in part to our dedicated Arts and Humanities (A&H) strand. A number of female academics are also leading both STEM and A&H research teams.

Research remains core to the Programme, as the best way of enhancing understanding of international standards and good practice. Research activities help the SP participants to make vital professional connections through research collaboration, develop their academic profile by publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and continue to make important academic contributions even while in exile. Through Cara-commissioned research, over 30 SP participants, partnered with mentors, are currently working on the challenges facing two Syrian universities that are trying to sustain access to Higher Education for local and displaced populations

in the non-regime-controlled northwest of Syria. A further 74 have received research grants to carry out research on a wide variety of subjects as members of study teams, partnered with experienced, mainly UK-based, Principal Investigators or mentors. In June 2021, our selection panel reviewed a further 32 research proposals, awarding 12 grants with a total award value of over £87,500, for research topics ranging from agriculture and food security to energy poverty, marriage customs and youth politics.

Cara's brokering role has also come to the fore in 2020-21, with an increasing number of rigorous quality research outputs including 15 publications in respected peer-reviewed journals and an SP special issue of 'Education and Conflict Review'. UK academics who have been supporting the SP have developed successful research proposals involving SP participants for submission to third-party funders, in partnership with Cara. Funders of these SP 'spin offs' include the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Scottish Research Fund, Innovate UK, the universities of Sussex, Kent and Reading, and the British Academy. The UK government's Global Challenges Research Fund aligned particularly well with the SP's aims, although the recent UK Overseas Aid budget cuts resulted in the loss of funding for two in-principle successful SP spin-off projects. Over 20 SP participants have been working as paid study team members in spin-off projects, with Cara providing their institutional umbrella.

Our SP's research outputs benefit uniquely from the participants' local insights, experience, expertise and networks, which are otherwise all too often overlooked by those responding to, or funding responses

to, the Syria crisis. They are of value not just to the academic community, but also to responders, policymakers, planners and practitioners. To ensure that their key findings are disseminated effectively, we launched a new 'Briefing Paper' series in May 2021, with each Briefing Paper disseminated to a targeted audience. The first two were based on research by SP participants examining the *Economic Impact of Internally Displaced Persons on Host Communities* and *Community Responses to Protecting Archaeological Sites during Conflict*. More will follow. Looking ahead, our SP team are working with the Royal Society and the British Academy on an online symposium over five days in the week of 6 December 2021, to showcase the full range of our Syrian colleagues' SP-supported research. Key stakeholders with relevant mandates will be invited from both the academic and humanitarian sectors, including funders, and the symposium will be followed by a Round Table on *'Immediate and Future Challenges for Syrian HE: Responsibilities and Strategies'*.

Our SP's success owes everything to the support of our university partners and, in particular, to the enthusiasm and commitment of an ever-growing number of university experts working in a voluntary capacity in a wide range of roles. By July 2021 over 330 discipline experts and 126 EAP experts from more than 71 UK universities and 14 non-UK universities, including several in Turkey, were actively supporting SP activities. We thank them all for their fantastic contribution.

Kate Robertson
Cara Middle East Adviser

New Scots: academics rescued from war-torn countries are bringing their valuable expertise to Scotland

by Rebecca McQuillan

Arriving in Scotland, Yemeni academic Mohsen entered a world that was different from the one he'd left behind in some unexpected ways.

The postdoctoral researcher was amazed by the lush scenery of his adopted home – and the tap water.

Even now, more than a year later, Mohsen is awestruck by the water: “That was something that was a surprise for me, that I can drink the tap water, which is very delicious,” he explains enthusiastically by video link from his home. “In my country you have to boil the water if you want to drink it.”

Scottish tap water is truly a wonder to someone coming from a nation where basic infrastructure has collapsed.

But it's the peace Mohsen has found here that transcends all other considerations. For the first time in years, he and his family have been able to live in the absence of fear.

Yemen has been in tumult for decades due to terrorist attacks, insurgencies and now a dragging conflict in which the official government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, has been fighting Shi'a rebels known as the Houthis. The war, which began in 2014, has created what is now the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Eighty per cent of the Yemeni population needs humanitarian assistance, according to the UN.

The Saudi-led blockade of Yemen, ostensibly to stop armaments from Iran, has significantly contributed to food scarcity and pushed up the cost of essentials. Bombing raids continue.

Many healthcare facilities are out of action and millions lack adequate sanitation, contributing to the largest cholera outbreak ever recorded.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs declared in December that the war had caused an estimated 233,000 deaths, including 131,000 from indirect causes such as starvation, inadequate health services and infrastructure. Save the Children estimate that 85,000 children under five may have died of extreme hunger in the 42 months to October 2018.

The UK government has been strongly criticised for cutting its aid budget to Yemen by half, with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres calling the decision “a death sentence”.

Mohsen (not his real name) came to the UK with the help of the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara).

Now researching the involvement of the immune system on the metastasis of cancer, Mohsen was working at a Yemeni university when the war began.

Air raids were a regular occurrence in the area where he lived with his family.

The explosions were terrifying for his young children, who would start screaming when the bombs started dropping.

He said: “We used to gather all in one room, in the living room, the safest room. Every day we did not expect to live until the next day.”

A raid on a house 200m away from Mohsen's home sent rocks flying in all directions. One piece of masonry a foot



Smoke and dust rise near buildings in Sanaa, Yemen, 7 March 2021 (REUTERS - Khaled Abdullah)

wide hit his car, parked outside his house, shattering the back windscreen. Luckily no one was nearby at the time.

Mohsen says: “You just lost every hope, every plan in your mind, so it was very hard. You don't think about anything other than how to stay alive.”

“The most important thing is your children. It's your responsibility to protect them from danger, from risks, and then you find yourself unable to protect them, and you just lose your role.”

Mohsen notes that because of the breakdown of normal life, many people in Yemen don't have salaries any more. “People are starving, they have lost hope. And it's very difficult to live without hope.”

Mohsen was told about Cara by a relative who was studying abroad. He got in touch to see if the charity could help him and they did. Cara worked with Mohsen closely for months, trying to help him find a position that suited his area of expertise.

He said: “Cara was something that gave me hope again. I started to think positive. I thought, there is some light coming from the UK, from Scotland, though I didn't know at the beginning it would be Scotland.”

Mohsen finally had an offer of employment from an academic in Glasgow. He went to Cairo to get visas for himself and his two daughters, and Cara both helped him fill in the application correctly and paid for the visa.

He came to Glasgow on his own but was joined in September last year by his wife and two of his children (his eldest daughter having started university in another country). His young son and teenage daughter now attend Scottish schools and the family finally feels settled.

Cara arranged English classes for Mohsen, who now speaks the language near-fluently, and helped prepare for the arrival of his family. The charity also provided workshops on how British universities work and is supporting Mohsen applying for jobs.

Above all, hope has returned. Mohsen likes his adopted home. “You don't feel like a foreigner,” he concludes.

Cara's work is a “win-win” for Scottish institutions, says Scott McQuarrie, Cara's Scotland regional manager. “It's getting the output for the institution and you're getting a safe and secure environment for the academic; everyone's happy.”

FROM i, 4 JUNE 2021
(Reproduced by kind permission)

Exiled Syrian archaeologist feared his academic life was over – until UK charity Cara stepped in

By Padraic Flanagan

Exiled academic Adnan Al Mohamad watched from afar as his beloved Syria collapsed into chaos. Driven from his home by the raging conflict and daily threat of kidnap or execution, the archaeologist feared that his life's work unlocking the region's ancient mysteries was over.

However, a little-known organisation originally founded to rescue academics from Nazi persecution, the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara), threw a lifeline to Adnan that has allowed him to resume his promising career and restored his hope of one day returning to work in his benighted homeland, which has some of the oldest and culturally richest archaeological sites in the world.

Thanks to the UK charity's help, the 41-year-old father of two has also rejoined efforts to identify and stop Syria's artefact-trafficking networks. Before fleeing in 2014,

Adnan had risked his life to document the looting of the countryside surrounding Aleppo. Laced by ancient Roman roads, the farmland's fertile soil contained a trove of ancient treasures from its long history.

"I became an archaeologist because I love my heritage," he told i from his home in Istanbul. The academic said he had hated what he saw in the hills outside Aleppo – centuries of history being sold to the highest bidder.

"For Syrians, this is real life," said Adnan. "Smuggling and trafficking these artefacts is a war crime."

When Isis advanced and claimed Manbij, his hometown, as part of its caliphate, the looting and cultural vandalism ramped up to an industrial scale. The sale of precious artefacts to buyers across the world became a vital revenue-stream for Isis's self-proclaimed government.

Adnan developed a network of informants throughout the region who tipped him off about illegal digs and the artefacts that were being stolen.

However, experts such as Adnan who were trying to document the losses and halt the sale of historical artefacts were taking a huge risk. Isis regularly offered bounties for people it suspected of trying to interfere in the trade.

When Isis discovered that Palmyra's antiquities chief, Khaled al-Assad, had spirited away museum artefacts for their protection, he was beheaded.

His death, at the age of 82, was a huge blow to Adnan. "He was like a father," he said. "Meeting him changed everything for me. I was supposed to study law but he inspired me to become an archaeologist."

Amid escalating violence, Adnan fled Manbij and crossed Syria's northern border into Turkey, to join his wife and two children in Osmaniye. Thoughts of the ancient world were put aside as the academic, who spoke no Turkish, was forced to take a series of bone-wearying jobs as an agricultural labourer.

After several years, Adnan relocated his family to Istanbul and, having learned the language, found work in factories and restaurants. Many other Syrian academics were based in the city.

One told him about Cara and an upcoming workshop, organised by the charity's Syria Programme, which had been set up to enable exiled, displaced and at-risk Syrian academics to continue their work with support from UK academics. An hour after emailing the charity, he was invited to the Istanbul event.

"The workshop changed my life," Adnan said. "It gave me the opportunity to return to academic life. I was introduced to about 100 Syrian colleagues I'd never known before and offered help with skills to improve my career, such as learning English. It was hugely

important because I thought my career was finished in Turkey."

In the past five years, the charity established in 1933 by William Beveridge, then the director of the London School of Economics, has received more requests for help than at any other point in its history. In 2015, it provided aid to 160 academics and their families but last year 350 scholars needed its help.

Cara's Kate Robertson, who set up the Syria Programme five years ago, said: "Thousands of academics in Syria have been displaced and many killed since the outbreak of conflict in 2011. So much accumulated knowledge risks being lost forever."

Cara is the only organisation working to strengthen and connect Syria's displaced academics with UK-based colleagues, enabling their continued academic engagement and contribution as a group that is vital to the future of Syria."

Cara organised for Adnan to be paired with two leading academics specialising in the preservation of heritage sites and arranged for placements at Durham University and Birkbeck University of London in 2019.

Since then he has returned to academic work in Turkey, where he collaborates with his UK academic mentors and monitors progress on the protection of important Syrian heritage and cultural sites.

Thanks to Cara's help, Adnan's return to academic life has given him fresh hope of returning to Syria and its heritage sites. After 10 years of bitter fighting and wholesale destruction, the restoration effort needed by the country will be massive. And vital.

"There's a lot of work to do, not just in protecting archaeological sites but also in restoring them," he said.

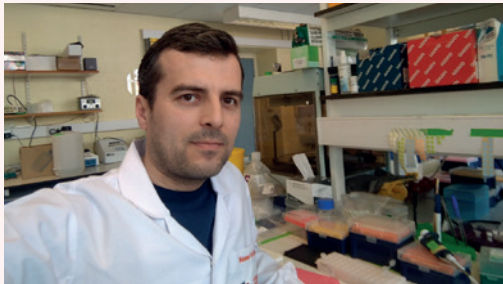
"When the war is finished Syrians will have to work together to rebuild Syria and save our heritage for our children and future generations."



Adnan Al Mohamad

Fellows' Stories

■ During the war in Syria, many academics like me were desperately looking for any opportunity to leave the country, to get to a safer place where they could live and work. Aleppo was on fire, and in early 2013 I was severely injured. I had to leave to save my life and my family's.



I started looking for any opportunity and found Cara. Like a dream, within six months of my first contact I landed in Heathrow in September 2014 to start a new chapter of my life.

My first placement was at the University of Nottingham as a research associate, where I had all help and support from colleagues. Within the first few months, I published my first paper in the UK. One year later, I moved to Southampton as a research fellow, where I was also welcomed and had great support. A few years later, with the support of colleagues and especially my supervisor Professor Hasan Arshad, I was able to obtain grants to fund my research, including a grant from Asthma UK to develop a diagnostic test.

I am now an established researcher, looking forward to adding valuable contributions to the scientific community in the UK.

Dr Aref Kyyaly, Research Fellow,
University of Southampton

■ I worked as a Professor at Baku State University. My monographs were published in Azerbaijan, Russia, the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, Iran and China (Hong Kong). Corruption and human rights are big problems in my country. Some of my students, civil society activists and youth organisers were arrested on false charges, and I worked to help them, as Chairman of the Public Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Political Prisoners of Azerbaijan. In 2015, I received the Ion Ratiu Democracy Award at the Woodrow Wilson Center, in recognition of my scholarship and activism in promoting democratic change.

Three years ago, customs officers at Baku airport blocked copies of my book, *“Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War”*, which had been published in the Harvard Cold War Book Series. A little later, government-controlled bookstores, on instructions, removed my books from sale, and state publishing houses ‘recommended’ authors to remove references to my books, to avoid trouble. Books sent to me by international mail were sent back, *“address not found”*.

On 17 November 2018, the Day of National Revival, the authorities in Baku arrested me for laying flowers at the Alley of the Martyrs, a memorial used to honour those who died during Azerbaijan’s breakaway from the Soviet Union. In July 2020, in the course of a televised address, President Aliyev instructed law enforcement agencies to check my activities. At that time, I was already outside the country. I really didn’t know what to do. My friends advised me to apply to the US-based Scholar Rescue Fund, and the SRF connected me with Cara.

Cara has done incredible work. Getting a visa, helping me come to the United Kingdom, finding accommodation, all this was not so

easy in the lockdown. But thanks to Cara’s dedication, all this has become possible, and for seven months now I have been working at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. During this time, my monograph and several articles were published in different countries, as the work of an SRF/Cara Fellow. My long-planned research project continues successfully.

It is a noble thing to protect science and scientists. Cara is engaged in this noble cause. The support of Cara is also the support of science, the scientist and development in general.

Dr Jamil Hasanli,
Azerbaijani historian

■ I am from Myanmar and came to the UK to complete my Master’s in Human Rights and Cultural Diversity at the University of Essex. After my studies, I was a research associate in the Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of York.

I was intending to go home but, unfortunately, given the political situation I now fear for my safety and the safety of my family if I return to Myanmar. Previously, I engaged with a group which worked with the ethnic armed organisations for the peacebuilding process in Myanmar. I participated as author and co-author in multiple reports condemning the military for human rights abuses. Other evidence of my human rights work and scholarship is available online, which puts me at



risk under the newly proposed cyber security law. All of my family members and myself are actively participating and supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement, which opposes the military coup action. I am worried to go back home as it is a totally unsafe environment for me because of my background and academic profile. I feel I can do better to support from outside of the country, using my academic skills and knowledge to participate actively in different campaigns to stop the military regime in my country.

I am so thankful to Cara which provided and gave me a space and funding to strengthen my academic skills and to expand my network. I continue to support the Myanmar community here with fund raising and donations for internally displaced people in my country. My colleagues and I form a volunteer group here and we have been reporting human rights abuses to the UK government. I believe that my academic skills and network will be useful in reforming my country.

Khin Thet San

■ Words cannot describe how Cara helps academics to chase their dreams to complete their studies and makes the impossible possible. I started my Master’s degree at the University of Mosul in Iraq in 2012. ISIS threatened us, and then a bomb was put at our house, so we were forced to move from house to house. In 2014, Mosul was occupied by ISIS, and we had to flee; they reached my uncle and cousin and executed them, and took our car, house, and everything that we owned. I completed my Master’s dissertation and discussion outside my city, but in 2017 Mosul was at war, and our house was destroyed.

Protecting my family and my children

were my first concern. At first, I was hopeless until a friend talked to me about Cara and its humanitarian message. I contacted them to explain my case, and I was thrilled that they responded to me and showed great sympathy and support. When I got my PhD offer letter from the University of Birmingham, it was like a dream that came true. Unfortunately, a delay occurred during the pandemic, but Cara's team continued to offer support. They planned the travel and arranged the accommodation for the self-isolation period. My first impression of Birmingham was of a beautiful city, with many parks where families and children can have fun. The people were very welcoming and friendly. The University staff were accommodating and warm-hearted, especially my Supervisors, Professor Moritz Kebschull and Professor Iain Chapple, and the University campus is a charming and



elegant place. My daughter is also getting an outstanding education in her first year at primary school. Cara continues to offer support, answering any question related to life or study and providing a webinar to strengthen skills and planning for a career after graduation. I thank Cara's team, its unique aims and the University of Birmingham.

Dawood

■ I am a Palestinian researcher from the Gaza Strip. I completed my PhD in Geoinformatics in Belgium in 2011, and I was happy when I received permission to advance this field of research in Gaza by establishing a research centre inside Al-Aqsa University.

Unfortunately, however, repeated wars have weakened research institutions and researchers in Gaza, and most donor countries focus on humanitarian needs, and not the development of scientific research. After more than four years of training graduates and volunteers and submitting research and development projects, there was still not enough support, and the process drained most of my time, so I could not advance my own research skills.

I contacted Cara, and there were vigorous contacts via e-mails daily from the first communication, giving me great hopes to join a well-known institute in the UK to accomplish a lot of research. Cara did everything possible to secure me a placement with the University of Manchester (UoM) as an honorary staff member at the Department of Geography, and also helped me to complete all the necessary procedures for travelling and accommodation and to get through all the daily obstacles we faced as a family in the UK.

Now I have completed my affiliation to the UoM and I feel very happy and satisfied with my achievements there. This would have never been possible without the help of Cara. I would be grateful to those who can support Cara in achieving its lofty mission, which enabled me to achieve my dreams and rescued me and my family, because many people desperately need Cara's help.

Wiesam

■ I hold a PhD in food control from Aleppo University, in Syria. I left my country due to the war. Our first goal at the time was simply to save our lives, but Cara supported me to start again and build my scientific career.

I don't know how to describe my feeling when I found myself at Birmingham. I spent hours wandering streets that were free from the roar of planes and the sounds of the bombing. I couldn't believe that I had come out of the nightmare into a beautiful dream. My research is focused on the identification and development of CERT inhibitors by synthesizing fluorescent derivatives of ceramide and integrating them into liposomes. I had the honor of starting at Aston University, under the distinguished supervision of Professor Helen R Griffiths. Then at the University of Surrey, again under the supervision of Professor Helen, with great support from her and with a great effort from Cara to get this placement.

Professional support was not all that Cara provided, support on a personal level was most important. Cara contributed to reuniting me with my wife, after a three-year separation: with the professional experience and skills that I had gained at Aston and Surrey, I obtained a grant from the Philipp Schwartz Initiative to move to join my family and work at the Humboldt University in Berlin, under the supervision of Professor Christoph Arenz. I



published several scientific articles and participated in research, conferences, and seminars.

Housam Haj Hamdo

■ Lots of young ambitious people in Syria wish to travel abroad and re-build their stolen dreams. I have been one of the few who got the chance to do that.

Coming to the UK for me was like starting a new life on all levels. I had the chance to do my PhD at Aston University, with wonderful supervisors who gave me great support, advice and encouragement. I also had great friends and colleagues, made lots of connections, participated in conferences and gained wide experience. In the end, I was awarded my PhD and published two papers in peer-reviewed journals.

I am working now at Aston University as a business research associate, helping the UK to achieve the goal of reaching NetZero by 2050. I was recently nominated to join the Dean of the school to attend International Women in Engineering Day, hosted by the Royal Academy of Engineering. In a couple of years' time I see myself as a lecturer at one of the UK universities, and I am working hard to achieve that.

Even my family has positively settled in. My husband has been successfully building a career, and my child is remarkable in his class at primary school. All this would not have happened without Cara. Cara and Aston University were my second family in the UK, when I was really missing my real family.

Nadine

■ During the catastrophic circumstances of the Syrian crisis, providing the daily necessities like food, water, fuel, and electricity became too stressful. Working in research became nearly impossible, and the daily bombarding had a destructive impact on our mental health. We turned into hopeless people. The



personal support we got from Cara has given us another hope in life.

Cara exerted a lot of efforts for nearly a year to find me a suitable fully-funded PhD placement in pharmaceuticals at Sussex University. There were also struggles about my visa that could have put me off my dream without the support of Cara. The University of Sussex has also played a great role in supporting me as a young researcher. The generous grant, courses, academic sources and teaching opportunities all helped me improve my academic qualifications and move forward on my career path. Also, thanks to Sussex, I have had two papers published in highly ranked academic journals in pharmaceuticals.

Nour, University of Sussex

■ A SUPERVISOR'S STORY: Newcastle University

Ali first came to Newcastle University as a student on the MSc Drug Chemistry programme in 2014, under the Chevening programme. I was the MSc admissions tutor at the time and was impressed by his application and strong supporting references. Ali did very well in his MSc course, graduating with an excellent overall grade.

Due to the deteriorating security situation in his home country, I suggested to Ali that he ask Cara to help him achieve his dream of obtaining a PhD in Chemistry. I was overjoyed when Cara agreed, and that Ali chose to continue his scientific journey as part of our research group.

Ali fitted in very well with the group, whilst his family settled quickly into the UK school system. His project was focussed on the development of new chemical probes, based on D-amino acids, for the labelling of bacterial cell wall proteins. The bacterial cell wall is an important target for the development of antibiotics, and greater understanding of the fundamental biology is the key to developing the drugs of the future. During his PhD Ali took on some challenging science, expanding his skills in synthetic and analytical chemistry and learning many new skills in bacterial cell biology. He has presented his work in several conferences, and he is preparing an exciting publication in the area.

As a supervisor it was a proud moment when he came out of his PhD viva to tell me that he had passed, and to receive some excellent feedback from his PhD examiners. I was even more pleased when Cara agreed to support him to continue his work, as a visiting researcher. I am looking forward to an exciting year ahead working with Ali, building his skills and pushing the boundaries of chemistry.

Dr Michael J Hall, Newcastle University

The view of a University Cara 'contact point'

In Cara's earliest days as the Academic Assistance Council in the 1930s, Durham, along with many other HEIs in the UK, answered the call to host academics fleeing Germany and Austria. Cara's work to support those in need of hope is as vital today as it was almost 90 years ago. Perhaps even more so.

I have been Durham's Cara contact for over 10 years. During this time, Durham's engagement with Cara has evolved. A decade ago, we spent many hours sourcing match funds and in-kind support in response to requests to host individual fellows. In 2016, Durham committed to an annual Fellows' programme, marking an important step change. Our programme now supports two Fellows and their families per year, for two-year academic placements. It includes language training for fellows and their families, support to integrate into local schools and communities, and of course academic mentorship.

Our mentors view our Cara programme as extremely rewarding and thought-provoking. An opportunity for mutual learning, from drawing on technical skills and research abilities to understanding different research and career journeys. A window into research and cultural worlds beyond the UK. For some, academic expertise align and collaborative research has flourished. For others, placements have meant welcome space and time in an academic environment. The chance to take a breath, and to consider the next steps. Our mentors not only provide academic guidance, but their support often extends far beyond the laboratory or lecture hall.

There are still challenges, new and different ones each year. Our families continue to face difficult choices. In partnership with



Cara we try to tackle each challenge as they arise. I am proud of our programme and of all those at Durham who help more than they are required to, act more quickly than expected, and provide truly thoughtful care for our Cara Fellows and their families so far from home.

There is always more we can do to support Cara's work. We have come a long way, and I hope, in time, our Cara-Durham programme will grow in scale and scope to keep up with the demands of our challenging world.

Jemima Lloyd,
Assistant Director,
International Partnerships and
Global Opportunities, Durham University

Mentoring Scheme

As part of our commitment to providing our Fellows with the tools they need to thrive during their placements, we ran a small pilot of six mentor-mentee pairings in October 2020. Following the success of this, we rolled out the scheme to all active Cara Fellows in March 2021. At present we have just under 40 mentoring pairs across the UK and overseas.

At a time when most networking opportunities have been severed, the scheme aims to bring Cara Fellows together with experienced colleagues in their research fields for a period of at least six months. Conversations between the pair might cover, for example, how to develop a

strong publication record, secure teaching experience, apply for funding grants, etc.

The scheme is mentee-led, meaning that mentees drive the relationships and have full autonomy to decide what the conversations will be about and what actions to take. The mentor, as part of the Fellow's support system, is a professional friend who is there to help the mentee identify achievable goals and solutions and support their decision-making.

The second round will be announced later in 2021. If you are or have recently been an academic and are interested in joining the scheme, please contact puiggali@cara.ngo.

“As someone who is already known among the civil servants and diplomats for my activism and scholarly work, it is extremely difficult to continue my work as the personal risk to my safety is too high. The military regime is now targeting women’s rights activists and women protesters to instil fear among civilians.”

Cara Fellow from Myanmar

■ MENTORING SCHEME:

A Fellow's Experience

Having worked on my research with Cara's support during the last two years, I had the pleasure to be mentored by a Professor of EU Law in Scotland. He was kind enough to arrange regular/monthly meetings to discuss my progress in my research and my future academic plans. It was a great pleasure to have been advised by my mentor, particularly, in terms of preparing job applications in the UK and for many other universities abroad.

We arranged several online meetings during the last academic year. Of course, our conversations are not always about academia and research. His professional advice on preparing effective job applications and on job interviews have made me much more confident to keep trying. I wish I had had a chance to meet him face to face to talk more and get his invaluable advice but unfortunately, the pandemic has made this impossible.

However, this has not been an obstacle to me speaking with him whenever I have asked. For sure, the scheme is one of the most significant and invaluable services provided by Cara. I would definitely recommend current and future Cara Fellows to consider participating in it. It would help their academic activities and of course their job applications in the near future.

A Cara Fellow in the field of international law

■ MENTORING SCHEME:

A Mentor's Story

Acting as one of the first group of mentors in this scheme was certainly a rewarding experience for me. Preparation for the role and support throughout the process provided by the Cara team was meticulous, and every aspect of this addition to the Cara Fellowship Programme had been thought through with care and sensitivity.

My mentee (an early career researcher from Syria) and I quickly established a comfortable relationship, perhaps made all the more straightforward by the close fit in our research interests. I provided advice and guidance that was both general and specific, covering the usual areas important to early career researchers – CV preparation, oral presentation skills, writing papers and grant applications, and identifying next steps in academic progression.

Perhaps two additional aspects especially pertinent to Cara Fellows were navigating the UK Higher Education and Research landscape, and developing an awareness of career and employment opportunities beyond the obvious. I was able to provide reassurance that competition for appointments and funding is open and transparent, an observation that came as something of a surprise. I particularly liked the “mentee-led” definition of the scheme, which really did promote a relaxed atmosphere at our meetings. Those of my colleagues who have also served as mentors agree that the scheme is first class, and the opportunity to act as a professional friend to a Cara Fellow coming to terms with life in the UK, a privilege.

Alan McCarthy,
Emeritus Professor of Microbiology,
University of Liverpool

A home in London for Cara Fellows

As soon as staff from Goodenough College began talking about Cara, it became clear that our two organisations, both champions of the ideals of freedom of thought and the pursuit of knowledge, were natural partners.

We were sure that Goodenough could and should play a vital role—in giving academics in grave danger of persecution a safe place to live here in London and the opportunity to become part of our warm and welcoming international community.

Founded in 1931, Goodenough College is more than a halls of residence. It is a residential community for some of the world's brightest and best international postgraduates, dedicated to creating “a fellowship of global citizens with shared values of tolerance, respect, understanding, service and togetherness”.

In 2017, our Development team was able to secure major gifts from two of our Alumni, allowing us to establish The Goodenough Accommodation Bursary for At Risk Academics. Others have since come on board and we have been able to provide a safe and secure home for four Cara Scholars and their families to date, with a fifth on the way.

The Bursaries enable the Scholars to live cost-free while they study. They have full access to the College's communal eating, study and social spaces and to our exceptional programme of social, cultural and intellectual activities. In return they enrich the Goodenough community immeasurably through their skills, knowledge and life experience.

One of our first Scholars was Zaid: “*Living at Goodenough has been a wonderful experience for me. I've felt safe and secure and have been able to focus on my studies free from the anxieties and insecurity I'd become accustomed to in Syria. I've also met some amazing fellow postgraduate students, from all over the world, who have provided me with genuine support and friendship.*

Achieving academic excellence was always my ambition, but once the war started it also felt like an obligation. Coming to London I wanted to learn skills that I could later use to help rebuild my country – I am confident that my time at Goodenough will help me to do just that.”

Hannah Du Gray,
Director of Development and
External Relations, Goodenough College



Goodenough College,
London

Keeping us up to date on visas

I first heard of Cara shortly after I was appointed as Head of Immigration & Compliance for staff/research matters at Cambridge. Academics engaged via Cara who come to Cambridge to undertake research are commonly engaged via the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) T5 ‘sponsored researcher’ visa route, and it is my responsibility to ensure that the University's obligations under the GAE route are met, and to assist individuals to make a successful application.

In 2018 I had the fortune to lead the higher education sector in our negotiations with the Home Office to revamp the parameters of the GAE route. The result was a more agile visa route, which recognises the different types of work and engagements that researchers and academics coming to the UK on a temporary basis can then undertake.

Despite this new-found clarity, the GAE route remains something of an enigma amongst the better-known visa routes, such as Global Talent or Skilled Worker, so I'm always keen to advertise the GAE route and its benefits within the wider research sector. I was therefore delighted to be asked by Cara to conduct a webinar in April this year for their Fellows on the GAE visa process, and on some of the post-engagement visa options such as Global Talent and Skilled Worker.

Because of Covid, this had to be a video presentation, which for me, being somewhat ‘tech illiterate’, always brings its own pitfalls.



But it turned out to be a most enjoyable session, with some really good questions and comments that brought out just how important this subject is for Cara Fellows needing to get away to a safe place where they can continue their work. The presentation was recorded and is available on Cara's YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/CaraT5vs>.

Graeme Ross,
Immigration and Compliance Manager,
University of Cambridge

**“I am well and feel very free after a long time.
Freedom is marvellous!”**

Cara Fellow from Turkey

Honorary Fellowships at South Wales

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

The University of South Wales (USW) has been an institutional supporter of Cara for many years, with staff contributing to its Syria Programme (SP) since

2018. Dr Cath Camps, Deputy Director of USW's Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching, has been supporting the Programme since 2017, and it was this involvement that prompted her idea for the creation of an Honorary USW Cara Fellow Scheme for SP participants. With the full support of Professor Julie Lydon, USW's Vice Chancellor, and her Executive Team, the Scheme was officially launched as part of USW's 2021 'Refugee Week' activities.

This innovative partnership between Cara's Syria Programme and USW began with 33 Syrian academics being offered USW/Cara Fellow status. The status offers affiliation to the University for a period of 5 years, with the possibility of a further 5-year extension if required. The Scheme enables Fellows to access electronic library resources plus a range of other institutional resources that will support individual Fellows as they continue their academic work in exile. Over time it is anticipated that the numbers availing themselves of the Fellow Scheme will grow as more SP participants satisfy the selection criteria.



Dr Cath Camps

Dr Rowan Williams, Chancellor of USW and a Cara Patron, recently commented on the Scheme saying: *"At a time when defensive or violent populism, gross racial inequality, resurgent anti-Semitism and crises of confidence in the media overshadow the global landscape, it is vital to reaffirm the importance of the international commonwealth of intellectual creativity, which is so deeply feared by tyranny and irrationality of every kind. I am very proud that USW is playing its part in continuing the work done by Cara over the decades in supporting this vision and guaranteeing opportunities for those who have faced threat and disruption in their quest for intellectual liberty."*

A Syrian-UK Partnership

In 2019, my colleague, Dr Marion Heron, who was already working with the Cara Syria Programme, asked me whether I would be willing to review a grant on mathematics education. I jumped at the opportunity, as it aligned with my personal goal of wanting to work in development. When I read the grant that Hanadi and her team had submitted, on 'University Students' Mathematical Knowledge Gaps in Conflict Zones', I was excited. This was an issue I recognised and had researched and faced as a university mathematics teacher. I told Cara that I would be happy to help mentor the team to strengthen their social sciences research methods and theoretical framing. I felt Hanadi's research could have real impact on teaching practice in Syria. I met her and her team in Istanbul in February 2020, just before the Covid pandemic took hold across the world. Through a translator and lots of sign language, we had some robust arguments about making sense of how the research should and could occur, issues around ethics, as well as my understanding of the Syrian HE system and its culture.

But what I really appreciated was spending time with all the Syrian academics and understanding their lived experiences and seeing their determination to create opportunities for themselves. Unfortunately, I have not been able to meet Hanadi since February 2020, but we have had regular meetings online, where we have communicated using Google Translate. Hanadi's English has improved over the time, though my Arabic has not! I was impressed with Hanadi and her team in learning and executing social research methods, as well as writing a journal article in a language that was not their own. I feel really blessed and thankful to Cara for providing me with the opportunity to work with these incredible academics. Through this, I have

built my expertise in conducting educational research within a post-conflict context and in the Middle Eastern region.

Dr Anesa Hosein
University of Surrey

I graduated from the Faculty of Science, Al-Baath University in Homs, with a first-class honours degree in 2004, and was immediately appointed as a teaching assistant in 2005. I began teaching at the Faculty of Science, Al-Baath University, where I also obtained a Master's degree in 2009.

In 2011, I received a Syrian Ministry of Higher Education scholarship to study for a PhD at Gazi University in Ankara. However, because of the revolution and the political situation between Syria and Turkey, I was transferred to an internal cohort and was unable to travel.

Since my dream was to continue my studies and obtain a doctorate, I studied in Syria and, despite the bad situation at that time in the city of Homs because of the war, gained my doctorate in 2015. I returned to teaching at the Faculty of Science as a faculty member, but the situation had changed. There were arrests at the university of students, and even professors. Once, when I was an exam hall invigilator, I saw one of the students cheating with a paper in his pocket. When I asked him to hand over his paper, he threatened me with kidnapping and murder, as he was one of the Assad's *shabiha* (state sponsored militia).

I could no longer stand the situation at the university and so decided to travel to Turkey. I arrived in 2016 and started part-time teaching in the Arabic programme at Gaziantep University. In 2017, I heard about Cara's programme for Syrian academics and

applied to join it. I was accepted and was very pleased, as it opened up new horizons for me.

Through the Cara Syria Programme I have been able to participate in many research projects, publish articles, keep up with science, learn new technologies and improve my English. The Syria Programme has had many benefits in advancing my scientific career. Furthermore, it helped improve my psychological state, which had suffered as a result of my losing my job and my academic position in Syria. Through the Syria Programme, I have got to know many

Syrian academics and have conducted joint research with them. I am currently working on research projects analysing qualitative and quantitative data. In addition, I am working on joint research projects in the field of informatics and artificial intelligence with my husband, who is also a member of the Cara Syria Programme and was also a teacher at Al-Baath University.

Dr Hanadi Abdullah
Sham University

“You have been amazing and I am forever grateful for all your support and kindness. I hope one day I will be able to pay you back in a way or another.”

Cara Fellow from Syria

“You always went beyond our expectations. Thanks again for your continued support and for giving hope to our family.”

Cara Fellow from Iraq

Report from Cara’s Scotland Manager

Cara’s engagement in Scotland continues to go from strength to strength. In 2020/21 we welcomed Robert Gordon University to our UK University Network, and Heriot Watt University and the University of the Highlands and Islands each took in their first Cara Fellows. 16 of the 18 higher education institutions in Scotland have now committed to support Cara, and Scottish universities are hosting 11 Cara Fellows, with another 3 to be placed soon. We are very grateful for the fantastic contributions our university members make to support our work, and I was pleased to acknowledge this when hosting a session at the recent Scottish Universities International Group conference. There is a great appetite across our network in Scotland to share best practice, and we will focus on this over the coming year.

Covid-19 has presented the same big challenges in Scotland that Cara has faced elsewhere, but my colleagues planned meticulously to ensure that at-risk academics here received the highest level of support throughout the pandemic, adapting to the fluid and evolving situation. I’m delighted that Cara’s work in Scotland has been recognised in media articles, in the Herald and Holyrood Magazine. We have just put out another media release, highlighting Scottish universities’ commitment to academic freedom.

Cara Fellows continued to excel in their placements in 2020/21. High-profile successes have included two Fellows securing visas via the demanding ‘Global Talent’ route, which says a lot about the quality of our Fellows and the ground-breaking research they undertake. It really is a win-win scenario for both the hosting institutions and our Fellows. We were also delighted to hear that the Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) had welcomed two Cara Fellows in their latest wave of



new members, and that a Cara Fellow at the Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation at Glasgow has been granted a prestigious Honorary Membership of the British Society for Parasitology in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the field.

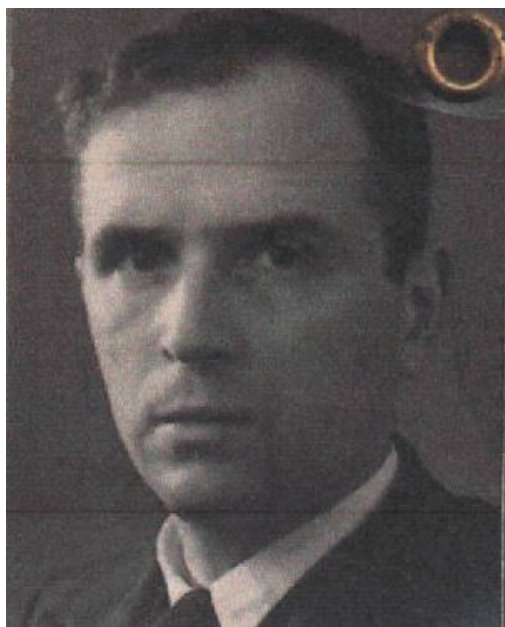
Looking ahead to 2021/22, we hope to build further on our close ties with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the YAS, in particular through our next annual joint human rights lecture, in late 2021; and plan also to develop our new partnership with the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World at the University of Edinburgh. But our relations with all our Scottish university partners will remain the cornerstone of our work here; and we look forward to another successful year.

Scott McQuarrie,
Cara Scotland Manager

A 1938 rescue

I first heard about Cara via my wife, Dr Ann-Christin Zuntz, who is working with a group on a project on the anthropology of agriculture with Syrian scholars, as part of Cara's Syria Programme. When she mentioned that the charity has existed since 1933 we became very interested, since my grandfather Professor Günther Zuntz was a refugee academic, fired and forced out of Germany by the Nazi regime in the late 1930s. We wondered if he had any connection with Cara under its former name, the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

We asked Stephen Wordsworth, Cara's Executive Director, who located records at the Bodleian under the category "*Correspondence relating to individual refugees who were not funded by, or registered with, the Society*", and the Special Collections Department there sent us nearly two hundred pages of correspondence, from 1933 until 1956.



My grandfather's earliest letters mused about possible destinations around the world; we learned from one that he considered Ethiopia because his father had once been a physician to Haile Selassie, a wonderful discovery! Later in the decade, though, his enquiries become more desperate.

Professor Zuntz had most recently been employed by a progressive boarding school rather than a university, and so was not eligible for full help by the Society, hence the category he appeared in. But what the Society regarded as so small as to not consist of "funding" had an astonishing impact on his life: in July 1938 they voted him £30, supplemented by £21 of personal donations they had solicited on his behalf. This paid for his journey to Britain from his first exile in Denmark, and gave him sufficient funds that he was permitted to enter by the UK authorities. This timely intervention, so close to the start of the war, clearly saved his life.

Throughout the war the Society continued to assist him indirectly, putting him in touch with people and groups that kept him from poverty, including a stint as a porter at the Bodleian itself, and making efforts to fund his academic work. The last few letters in the archive are particularly gratifying: he wrote to the Society to inform them of his employment as a Classics lecturer at the University of Manchester, ending, "*No reason, you see, to trouble about me*". Finally, in 1956 the Society wrote to him with congratulations on his election to the British Academy; his reply thanks the Society for the "*devoted work to which you have dedicated yourselves*".

Dr Joe Zuntz,
Reader in Astrophysics,
Royal Observatory Edinburgh

UK Partnerships

Our key relationship in 2020/21 was again with all the members of the UK Universities Network, without whose practical and financial support we simply couldn't function. We were delighted to welcome two new Network members in 2020/21 and look forward to further growth in the year ahead. A full list of the Network members is on page 30.

In December 2020 we and the Royal Society hosted a joint panel discussion on the theme '*Are threats to academic freedom damaging global science?*' Professor Jim Al-Khalili chaired the event, which featured presentations by Professor Veronica van Heyningen, Lord Krebs, and current Cara Fellow Zaher Al-Bakour, with additional contributions from Professor Robin Perutz and the Royal Society's Foreign Secretary Sir Richard Catlow. Our next '*Science and Civilisation*' Lecture, delayed from 2020 by the pandemic, will be a joint event with the Royal Society in late October 2021, with Professor Michael Ignatieff, who stepped down as President and Rector of the Central European University in Summer 2021, speaking on '*Academic Freedom: Right or Privilege?*' We are also keenly anticipating our online symposium with the Royal Society and the British Academy over five days in December 2021, which will showcase the full range of research supported by Cara's Syria Programme.

In July 2021 we agreed with the Trustees of the Sir Hans Krebs Trust to continue our cooperation for a sixth 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. *The Sir Hans Krebs Trust/Cara Fellowships* are helping 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. Throughout 2020/21 we also continued our cooperation with the Society for Applied Microbiology and with the Microbiology Society, who each generously provide support for a Cara Fellow in their special field.

In 2020/21 we also welcomed the renewal of the 3-year grant from the Northern Consortium (NC), a charity established in 1987 by leading universities in Northern England. The *NC-Cara Fellowships* make it possible for us to support academics in danger to study for PhDs at NC member universities. We were also grateful for the continuing support of the Past and Present Society, for a Fellow now at Oxford and another due to start in the coming year at Birmingham; and we continued to enjoy close cooperation with the British Council, who greatly assisted during the lockdown by making special arrangements for new Cara Fellows from Syria to take the IELTS English language test remotely, via the 'IELTS Indicator'. The British Council also supports our Syria Programme (SP) by running 6-monthly APTIS English language tests at cost, in order to gauge the progress of SP EAP participants. Advance HE has partnered with the SP, waiving Fellowship fees for up to fifteen Higher Education Academy (HEA) applicants, four of whom have now secured HEA Fellow status; and Cambridge University Press continues to support our SP's EAP work, by providing *pro bono* online licences for its Cambridge English Empower series, as does Blackwell's, by offering a discount.

In Spring 2021 we nominated our fifth '*Cumberland Lodge Scholar*'. Cumberland Lodge, the 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: and to The Communication Group for their invaluable advice and support for our media and awareness-raising efforts.

UK NETWORK UNIVERSITIES, 2020/21

In the course of 2020/21 we welcomed two more universities to the UK Network – Robert Gordon and Bangor – bringing the total to 123. Network members generously offer fee waivers and often accommodation and financial support for Cara Fellows and their families. The great majority also 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 | Aston | Bangor | Bath | Bath Spa | Bedfordshire | Birkbeck | Birmingham | Bournemouth | Bradford | Brighton | Bristol | Brunel | Buckingham | Cambridge | Canterbury Christ Church | Cardiff | Cardiff Metropolitan | Central Lancashire | Chester | Chichester | City University London | City & Guilds of London Art School | Courtauld Institute | Coventry | Cumbria | De Montfort | Dundee | Durham | East Anglia | East London | Edinburgh | Edinburgh Napier | Essex | Exeter | Glasgow | Glasgow Caledonian | Glasgow School of Art | Goldsmiths College | Goodenough College | Greenwich | Heriot Watt | Hertfordshire | Highlands and Islands | Huddersfield | Hull | Imperial College | UCL | 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 Mary | Queen Margaret | Queen's Belfast | Ravensbourne | Reading | Regent's | Robert Gordon | Roehampton | Royal Central School of Speech & Drama | Royal Holloway | SOAS | Salford | Sheffield | Sheffield Hallam | Southampton | Solent | South Wales | Staffordshire | Stirling | Strathclyde | St Andrews | Sunderland | Surrey | Sussex | Swansea | Teesside | University of the Arts London | University College London | Ulster | Warwick | Westminster | West of England | West of Scotland | Winchester | Wolverhampton | Worcester | Wrexham Glyndŵr | York | York St John |

International Partnerships

Cara works with a wide range of like-minded international partners, including in particular its two US counterparts, the Scholars at Risk Network and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund. In 2020/21 Cara also continued its 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, Cara has supported forty-one successful PSI applications, and is working again with the Humboldt Foundation on the tenth round. Several Cara Fellows are now working at German universities with PSI support. In 2020/21, Cara also continued its cooperation with the French funding scheme

for at-risk academics, the *Programme national d'aide à l'Accueil en Urgence des Scientifiques en Exil (PAUSE)* and developed a strong new relationship with the Open Society University Network, working together initially to support three academics from Myanmar to study in the UK.

We are grateful also to Elsevier for supporting the Syria Programme (SP) with *pro bono* ScienceDirect licences for SP participants, as well as for providing its support for an SP special issue of the International Journal for Educational Research (IJEDRO) facilitated by its Editor in Chief, Professor Allen Thurston, which is due to be published at the end of 2021.

“I can't find words that can describe Cara or explain my gratitude to all of you. You gave us hope, education and opportunities to develop so we can be self-dependent later.”

Cara Fellow from Syria

“The support that Cara has given me throughout this academic year was an amazing motive to work hard.”

Cara Fellow from Syria



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.

cara | '10 x 20'

Please go to <https://www.cara.ngo/10-x-20-appeal/>, and help us to get your colleagues to safety.

Some 400,000 people work in Higher Education in the UK, and more in the UK's learned societies. If 10% of them were able to give just £20 to Cara every year – £5 per quarter – our finances would be transformed.

Fundraising

Cara has to raise new funds every year, to be able to continue its work. We are enormously grateful to the 86 UK universities who contributed over £320,000 in voluntary annual subscriptions in 2020/21 – roughly two-thirds of Cara's annual running cost bill.

Our '10 x 20' fundraising initiative, launched in November 2017 and aimed, ultimately, at getting 10% of those working in higher education in the UK to contribute £20 per year, is continuing to grow. Fundraising was hampered by the pandemic, as no live events could take place. Nonetheless, by August 2021 the number of Direct Debit subscribers had grown further to over 270, between them pledging almost £40,000 per year. We will work to increase this further in 2021/22, to strengthen our funding base. We also received many generous one-off donations, including legacies, donations in memory and other gifts.

In the course of 2020/21 Cara staff 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:

- Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund
- Andrew W Mellon Foundation
- April Trust
- Eddie Dinshaw Foundation
- French Huguenot Church of London Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Harbour Foundation
- Microbiology Society
- Microsoft
- Northern Consortium
- Open Society Foundations
- Sir Hans Krebs Trust
- Sir Joseph Hotung Charitable Settlement
- Society for Applied Microbiology
- Texel Foundation
- Thriplow Charitable Trust
- Wolfson Foundation
- Worshipful Company of World Traders

We warmly thank all our donors; we could not continue our work without them.

Financial Performance in 2020

Cara's Financial Year is the calendar year. In 2020 most universities continued to pay the funds they were providing for accommodation and living costs for the Cara Fellows they were hosting as restricted donations to Cara, rather than paying the Fellows direct. As a result, Cara's income in 2020 totalled £2,665,849 while expenditure and commitments on awards and programme and project work for the year amounted to £2,380,941. The total net movement of funds

was a surplus of £296,759 (2019: a deficit of £177,876). On a cash basis, there was a deficit of £241,560 (2019: a surplus of £368,398).

During 2020, the total value of the assets held by Cara's investment advisers, Investec, fell sharply in the Spring, in reaction to the pandemic, but had recovered by the end of the year, to reach £343,432 (value at end-2019: £328,253). By 30 June 2021 their total value was £361,032.

SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the year ended 31st December 2020

	2020 £	2019 £
Income		
Donations and legacies	2,659,453	2,239,708
Investment income	6,396	6,591
Realised gains / (losses) on investments	(590)	1,057
Unrealised gains / (losses) on investments	12,441	(35,425)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income	2,677,700	2,280,667
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Expenditure		
Raising funds	4,585	3,159
Charitable activities:		
Grants payable	1,849,563	1,913,537
Programme and project work	512,632	523,673
Governance	14,161	18,174
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenditure	2,380,941	2,458,543
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net income (expenditure) for the year	296,759	(177,876)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All of the operations undertaken by the company during the current and preceding years are continuing operations. The retained net surplus for the year based on historical cost is £284,318 (2019 – net loss £213,301).

Auditors' 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 2020 which have been audited by ourselves.

David Warren BA FCA Senior statutory auditor, 2 June 2021
For and on behalf of Cocke, Vellacott & Hill Statutory Auditor Chartered Accountants
Unit 3 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, London SE16 2XU

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31st December 2020

	2019 £	2018 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	569	1,885
Investments	343,462	328,253
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total fixed assets	344,031	330,138
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Current assets		
Debtors	109,399	75,966
Cash at bank and in hand	1,486,746	1,728,306
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current assets	1,596,145	1,804,272
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(860,609)	(1,351,602)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net current assets (liabilities)	735,536	452,670
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities	1,079,567	782,808
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
The funds of the charity:		
Restricted Income Funds	753,213	413,596
Unrestricted Funds - general	288,394	343,693
Unrestricted Funds - revaluation reserve	37,960	25,519
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total charity funds	1,079,567	782,808
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 2 June 2021 and signed on its behalf by:
PROF MICHAEL WORTON (Trustee)
DAVID URE (Trustee)

Company Registration No: 00641687 Charity Registration No: 207471

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

President

Professor Sir Malcolm Grant CBE

Patrons

Mr Greg Dyke

Rabbi 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)

Trustees at 31 July 2021

Chair: Professor Michael Worton CBE, Former Vice-Provost (International), UCL

Hon Secretary: Professor Alan McCarthy, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology, University of Liverpool

Hon Treasurer: Mr David Ure, Company Director, formerly Chair of the Reuters Foundation

Ms Nicola Dandridge CBE, Chief Executive, Office for Students

Professor Penelope Gardner-Chloros, Professor Emerita of Sociolinguistics and Language Contact at Birkbeck, University of London.

Professor Colin Grant, Vice-Principal (International), Queen Mary University of London

Professor Mark Hammond, Visiting Professor in Public Administration at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Professor Sir Deian Hopkin, former President of the National Library of Wales; former Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of London South Bank University

Ms Lilia Jolibois, Non-executive Director and Member of the Audit Committee of Future Group SA, France, and Board Director of the INSEAD Foundation

Mrs Anne Lonsdale CBE, Former President, New Hall (now Murray-Edwards College), Cambridge, and Cambridge University Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Dr Joanna Newman MBE, Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities

Ms Tabitha Nice, Litigator in private practice, later non-practicing Chief Adjuster, Specialty, for a Lloyd's managing agent.

Mr Nigel Petrie, Retired in 2016 as Chairman of AD Group, an entrepreneurial technology business.

Professor Paul Weindling, Research Professor, History of Medicine, Oxford Brookes University

Staff at 31 July 2021

Executive Director: Stephen Wordsworth CMG LVO

Deputy Director & Fellowship Programme Manager: Zeid Al-Bayaty

Senior Fellowship Programme Officer: Sheila Mills

Senior Fellowship Programme Officer: Laura Puiggali

Fellowship Programme Officer: Narmin Ali

Fellowship Programme Officer: Oscar Saunders

Fellowship Programme Officer: Lucia Simms

Fellowship Programme Assistant: Sara Bermudez

Fellowship Programme Assistant: Jak Galbraith

Middle East Adviser: Kate Robertson

Syria Programme Officer/Senior Administrator: Anaïs Richmond

Syria Programme Administrator: Jake Coulter

Syria Programme Administrator: Sophia Povey

Syria Programme Administrator: Angus Tait

Syria Programme, A&H Coordinator and Finances: Ipek Velioglu Melis

Cara Scotland Manager: Scott McQuarrie

Volunteers and Interns

The move to 'working from home' because of the lockdown made it impossible for us to recruit volunteers and interns to work with us in our office as we would normally do. We thank our long-term volunteer, Harbinda Hanspal, for continuing her support for us, remotely, and hope to resume working with more volunteers in 2021/22.

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>

“Thank you for your kind words and for your help and support, you have been great! Thanks 1000 times.”

Cara Fellow from Egypt



*University students, engineers and teachers protest against the military coup in Myanmar April 4, 2021
(Dawei Watch via REUTERS)*

Cara (Council for At-Risk Academics)
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90 London Road
SE1 6LN

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F: 020 7021 0881

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

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

Middle East Office (since 2008): 101 Uhod Street, Amman, Jordan.