



AL-AOSA UNIVERSITY



الأسوسا

ANNUAL REPORT | 2023–24

cara

FOREWORD

The last year has proved yet again how essential Cara's work is in supporting academics at risk of persecution around the world. Although the countries that they come from change according to the shifting horrors of war and persecution, Cara's support is consistent. As it has done since its founding in 1933, Cara enables and supports academics, often in desperate situations, to secure positions in UK universities where they can pursue their academic research and make a substantial contribution in their chosen field, before returning when it is possible to do so to their home countries. They are supported throughout by the remarkable and dedicated Cara team.

Over the last year, we have seen events in Afghanistan, Sudan and Ukraine dominating the work of Cara's Fellowship Programme, with the bombardment and destruction of Gaza and conflict in the West Bank also leading to increasing numbers of applications, though for those still in Gaza the reality is that we can do little until the fighting dies down and they are able to leave the territory.

This last year also saw the ending of our funding for the Syria Programme. The programme was launched in 2016 to support Syrian academics, in Syria or in exile in Turkey or Lebanon, in sustaining their academic careers until such time as they can return home. The position facing our Syrian colleagues continues to be extremely difficult and,

even though our funded programme has finished, we will continue to explore what more we can do to assist.

Meantime, over the course of the next year we will be drawing on our experience with the Syria Programme to determine how Cara can most usefully work with the higher education sector and other partners, to help rebuild higher education in Gaza as and when that is possible.

In all our work we continue to depend heavily on the goodwill and generosity of UK universities. Notwithstanding the financial pressures that they are facing, the support that they continue to provide to academics at risk and to Cara is impressive.

Finally, huge thanks are due to Alan McCarthy and Stephen Wordsworth. Alan stood down as Chair of Trustees in June this year after many years of service on the Council, and Stephen, Cara's Executive Director since 2012, has decided to retire at the end of this year. During the last 12 years Stephen has overseen a transformation of Cara's operations, putting it on a robust and sustainable financial footing, and promoting its reputation in the UK and abroad. We are now recruiting his successor to start in early 2025.

On behalf of all of us at Cara we wish both Alan and Stephen all very best for the future.

Dame Nicola Dandridge
Chair of Trustees

“Cara's support has not only provided me with the necessary resources to advance my work but also given me a sense of security and hope for the future. This fellowship is life-changing, and I deeply appreciate your belief in my potential.”

Cara Fellow from Ukraine

A VICE-CHANCELLOR'S VIEW



Durham University is proud to be a dedicated and long-term partner of Cara.

Cara has always been a part of us. In 1939 we hosted our first fellows, including Professor Wilhelm Levison, a medievalist from

Bonn who fled Nazi Germany with his wife. One of our Chancellors, G M Trevelyan, was a co-founder of the Academic Assistance Council, as Cara was first known, a commitment that grew out of his early recognition, in 1933, of the “terrible shadow of Nazi terror” and its threat to “crush all that is good everywhere”.

Today, the forces threatening to “crush all that is good everywhere” are still prevalent and still targeting the moral right of academics to speak freely as the evidence directs them. Recent events in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Sudan and Gaza have led to increasing numbers of academics needing Cara's assistance. Durham has been committed to playing its part. Since 2016 we have welcomed 19 Fellows and their families, helping them to find housing, schooling and an academic home in our quiet and safe city. They, in turn, have made invaluable contributions to our community and to our wider engagement with the world. They have collaborated with our academic mentors, generated new research insights, supported our students and even developed new links with industry.

From its beginnings, Cara has also helped to embed an internationalist, humanitarian ethos within UK universities. Like many universities, Durham regards our Cara programme as part of our culture of responsibility, hospitality and support, particularly for marginalised groups. The programme is also part of our integrated humanitarian response to global issues we research, study and seek to ameliorate. For example, our Cara programme sits alongside our work as the twin university and partner of Zaporizhzhia University in Ukraine, our South Africa scholarships in memory of the Durham academic and anti-apartheid activist Ruth First, and our close joint working with the Durham-Palestine Educational Trust. We greatly look forward to continuing our work with Cara, and to lending our support to their new fundraising efforts to increase their offer to an ever greater number of fellows.

We understand how great a privilege it is to be operating as a university in a safe and stable country where academic freedom is legally protected and often vigorously defended. We are fortunate to be able to offer sanctuary, respite and friendship to those who have been silenced, persecuted and endangered, and very grateful to Cara for making this possible.

Professor Karen O'Brien
Vice-Chancellor and Warden
Durham University

“The ongoing conflict in Khartoum has brought life to a complete standstill, with limited access to basic services and disruptions in salary payments ... my family in Khartoum are at risk of being caught in the crossfire or facing harm from the effects of the war.”

Cara Fellow from Sudan

Cara is not a ‘political’ organisation, and never has been. In 1933, when what is now Cara was founded as a rescue mission for academics who were being forced out of their jobs in Nazi Germany because, as Jews, they were ‘non-Aryans’, our founders nonetheless wrote, *“Our action implies no unfriendly feelings to the people of any country; it implies no judgement on forms of government or on any political issue between countries. Our only aims are the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science.”*

In the same way, while we were utterly appalled at the Hamas-led attack on 7 October 2023, which resulted in over 1,200 deaths and the taking of many hostages, and at the subsequent devastation in Gaza and the many tens of thousands of civilians killed there, that is not our focus as an organisation. Our concern is for the future of higher education in Gaza, and for the academics who were working in Gaza’s universities and hope one day to work in them again. Rebuilding higher education there, when circumstances permit, will be a huge task, and will take many years. But we are already talking to others to work out what we might be able to do in the interim, once the fighting stops, to help restore some basic provision of higher education there.

Even more important than the buildings are, obviously, Gaza’s academics. Many have been killed. One of them was a Cara Fellow, Dr Wiesam Essa, who had gone back to Gaza to take up an academic post at Al-Aqsa University. For the moment, none of those inside Gaza can get away, so we are giving priority to finding safe places for those who are already outside. But soon, we hope, more will be able to travel, and so we are already talking to our Network partners and planning how we can best be ready to help those who are currently trapped. One of them is another Cara Fellow, who also returned shortly before 7 October 2023, and writes that he and his family are *“... living in a horrible situation on sea sands with little food, water and no power.”* We earnestly hope to be able to see them again soon, face to face.

But they are far from the only ones needing help:

- The crisis in Sudan has resulted in over 11 million people being forcibly displaced (October 2024), with hundreds of thousands fleeing into Chad and other neighbouring countries. Many academics are among them, their universities closed, in many cases badly damaged in the conflict;
- Similarly, the war in Ukraine is continuing to do immense damage to higher education there;
- In many other countries, authoritarian leaders and extremist groups understand all too well the threat that free-thinking scholars pose to their ambitions, so seek to silence them with threats of imprisonment, injury or murder;
- Many female academics face particular dangers, including being blocked from higher education altogether just because they are women, as in Afghanistan;
- Individual academics may also be targeted for a wide range of other reasons, including their ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

University of Nyala, South Darfur, Sudan



We believe that what happens to them matters. If a country’s academics are silenced or scattered, higher education there is fatally undermined. Critical thinking is forced into the shadows and lies go unchallenged. Vital skills and knowledge will be lost. The next generation of specialists – doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, architects, scientists – will be second-rate at best. If those academics can never work freely in their home country again, that damage will become permanent.

So they need, and deserve, to be offered help, a safe refuge, and ultimately the opportunity to return home to help rebuild. We do our best, but inevitably, in this increasingly troubled world, many more people are turning to us for help. The number of applications has gone up nearly 400% in the three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24, compared to the three years before, and we have had to double the size of our Fellowship Programme team, from seven to fourteen full-time posts, to be able to cope. But we see the result of that in the hundreds of academics we have been able to rescue over those same three years and get to safety at one of our partner institutions, in many cases with their spouses and children as well.

2024 saw the end of our Syria Programme (SP), the third of our regional programmes. Launched in 2016, the SP received over £3 million in awards and made a huge difference to the lives of over 200 Syrian academics who participated in its

many activities. We look back at what it achieved later in this Report. Some individual SP activities will continue for a bit longer, under our Middle East Adviser, Kate Robertson, and we are now considering how we can use the experience we have built up from our SP work and from our two preceding regional programmes, for Iraq and Zimbabwe, to support the rebuilding of higher education in Gaza.

Lastly, my own news. When I joined Cara in 2012 I said I would stay for five years, and I am now in my thirteenth. A little while ago, I suggested to the Trustees that it was time for me to retire. I am proud of everything we have all achieved in the time that I have been here, but organisations and people need change; I think that this is the right time for me to go. We hope to have a handover around the end of the year or early in 2025, but I have said that I will stay until my successor is in place; there’s just too much going on to leave a gap. Throughout my time at Cara I have had tremendous colleagues, who work extremely hard in stressful and emotionally challenging roles to help people who are often in great distress. My deepest thanks and respect to them all, and also to all the Trustees over those years for their support and guidance.

Stephen Wordsworth
Executive Director

“I am not in a position to continue my academic work in my home country Ethiopia given the general insecurity and political turmoil in the country and the civil war in the Tigray region in particular. Ethnic Tigrayans have been subject to various persecutions including intimidation, harassment, repression, arrest, and different forms of violence over the last couple of years.”

Cara Fellow from Ethiopia

2023-24 has been another very intense but ultimately rewarding year for the Fellowship Programme, the present-day version of our original rescue mission from 1933. Thanks to the generosity of our partner universities, many of whom stepped up their support in the course of the year, 104 Fellows began new placements in 2023-24. Some had arrived in the UK earlier, but 62 of them arrived in the course of the year with their families, including 25 from Afghanistan and seven each from Sudan and Russia. Across 2023 as a whole, we had over 220 Active Fellows in placements, with a gender ratio of 52/48 male/female. The ‘snapshot’ figure at any given moment hovers between 170 and 190, as existing Fellows move on into other opportunities and new Fellows arrive.

The Programme’s work is still guided by the mission set down by our founders, ‘*the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science*’ – in simple terms, helping academics to escape from danger, even saving their lives, but also protecting what they carry in their heads, the intellectual capital of their countries. We do not want to be in the ‘brain-drain’ business; while our Fellows are here, they share their unique skills and knowledge with us, and when they go back, as we and they hope they will one day be able to do, they take these skills with them, developed further during their time here, to help rebuild safer, better societies.

The Programme has three stages, each managed by a designated Team. Our Enquiry Team carries out quick but thorough checks to establish each applicant’s eligibility for our support, assesses the risks that they face to help us to understand how urgently they need to get away, and checks with them that they have everything ready to be able to travel when that moment comes. The New Fellows Team then takes over, working with the applicant to settle all the details of their placement, usually at a member of our well-established University and Research Network, and cooperates closely with the host institution on immigration formalities and

the many travel and arrival arrangements. At any given moment those two teams are working with over 150 new cases between them. Our Active Fellows team takes over once the Fellows have arrived and then supports them throughout their placement, including by providing opportunities to join our successful mentoring scheme, to receive English language support, to attend webinars, and to access small grants for emergencies and to help family members also to make the most of their stay. We are hugely grateful to the hundreds of academics and staff at our partner universities, who give their time freely to help our Fellows and their families in so many ways.

Host institutions contribute generously to the cost of each placement. We normally ask hosts to provide full waivers of any course or bench fees and, wherever possible, to provide funding for accommodation and living costs. Some can still cover these costs in full, as well as the up-front travel and visa costs; and there has recently also been a very welcome shift by a growing number of universities from an ad hoc approach to establishing dedicated multi-year funding ‘pots’ for Cara Fellowships, so we know which institutions we can turn to in an emergency.

However, costs are rising relentlessly. In particular, the fees that our Fellows have to pay for their visas and NHS surcharges went up again sharply in 2023-24, and the rapid growth in the number of Fellowship placements, many involving families rather than just one individual, has inevitably been something of a challenge at a time when university finances are under well-publicised pressure. As a result, it has become much more common for us to contribute significantly to the cost of the overall placement package, drawing on the funds we receive from donors. This puts pressure on us to continue to raise funds to make our contributions; but it also makes each placement more of a genuine partnership between Cara and the host.

While our recent work has been dominated by the last three years’ successive crises in Afghanistan,

Ukraine, Sudan and Gaza, we are still able to help people from many other parts of the world too. In all, our current Active Fellows originate from 19 different countries, and each situation has its own unique challenges. We have the flexibility and expertise to find a way around many of the obstacles in our way, but some are beyond our control. For example, many Sudanese applicants have left the cities and are now in remote regions, with very little access to the internet (Rowida’s story on pp. 14-15 gives a good idea of the difficulties our Sudanese Fellows face); while those applying to us from Gaza now have no way to leave as the borders are sealed, and so they are stuck in an active war zone. Nonetheless, we do our best to keep in touch and to move things forward when we can.

In the course of 2023/24, many Cara Fellows again achieved notable successes in their study or research. A few managed to return home safely; while 17 of those unable to do so yet have, since August 2023, secured prestigious ‘Global Talent’ visas to extend their stays, with more in the pipeline, and others have secured academic jobs, in a very competitive market. It is inspiring to see our Fellows showcase such resilience and determination to continue their careers, despite the very difficult conditions that forced them to look to us for help. We highlight some recent examples on the next page, but there were many more.

2023-24 was also a successful year for our Fellows in terms of visa approvals. Thanks to our close cooperation with our hosting partners, who are the visa sponsors for each placement, our Fellows again had a 100% visa success rate, with only a single visa refusal in the seven-year period 2018-24; and we also had only a single refusal in 2023-24 in the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), our first for many years, which was quickly followed by other positive decisions.

Looking to the future, we will continue to work with partners to highlight the benefits which the UK derives from hosting so many outstanding

scholars, through our Programme and through others. Our work with the British Academy-led ‘Researchers at Risk’ programme (see p. 26) showed the value of having a government-funded award scheme running alongside what we and others can offer, as a way of responding quickly and effectively to a crisis; and the special visa regime for all Ukrainians meant that academics from that country could take up their placements here in the UK far more quickly than those going through the normal visa routes. A designated visa category for at-risk academics could bring great benefits to this country.

None of the above would have been achieved without the dedicated work of our Programme Team of fourteen. Several staff changes, particularly at senior levels, briefly affected our operations, but we managed to maintain the high quality of our work during this transition and we are now back at full capacity, getting even more academics and their families to safety.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Stephen for his outstanding contributions as Cara Director. His leadership and dedication have been invaluable. We wish him the very best in his retirement.

Zeid Al-Bayaty
Deputy Director/Fellowship Programme Manager

Three Cara Fellows and two host university representatives told their stories in our 2023 Fellowship Video – <https://bit.ly/FPVid23>



CARA FELLOWS – RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Many of our Cara fellows are high achievers. These are just a few of their successes this year:

- An Afghan postdoctoral fellow at Queen Mary, University of London secured a Global Talent Visa and has taken up a position as a Research Fellow;
- A Syrian PhD fellow at the University of Chester presented two research projects at the European Stroke Organisation Conference in Basel, Switzerland, and took up a part-time research fellowship at the Countess of Chester Hospital;
- A Yemeni postdoctoral fellow at the University of Manchester gave a presentation to the 12th international conference on ‘Direct Reactions with Exotic Beams’ (DREB2024) in Wiesbaden, Germany in June 2024;
- A Syrian PhD fellow at Warwick University had their research presented at the Critical University Studies conference in Hong Kong;
- A Turkish postdoctoral fellow at LSE chaired a panel at the Kurdish Studies Conference organised by the University’s Middle Eastern Centre in May 2024;
- A Syrian Cara ‘alumnus’ was named as the best research supervisor amongst 30 candidates at Cranfield University and subsequently took up a role as a Research Fellow at the University of Surrey;
- An Ethiopian Postdoctoral Fellow at SOAS, University of London, secured a permanent position as Lecturer in African Literatures, English and Related Literature at the University of York, which he began in January 2024;
- A Ukrainian Postdoctoral Fellow at Durham University took up a permanent position as Assistant Professor in Fintech at Durham University Business School in October 2023;
- A Cuban Postdoctoral Fellow gave a presentation on “Cultural Thought and Arts’ Theory in Cuba. Crossing Paths for Good Old Cultural Studies” at the World Conference on Cultural Studies in London in November 2023;
- A Cameroonian Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Edinburgh chaired the session on Climate Change at the Congo Basin Symposium on Security of Biodiversity in Yaoundé in November 2023.

Also, since August 2023 17 Cara Fellows have been granted prestigious ‘Global Talent’ visas to stay on in the UK. Four more are expected to receive Global Talent visas very shortly.

SYRIA PROGRAMME

Reclaiming lost academic identities and building sustainable futures (2016-2024)

Our Syria Programme came to an end this summer, after eight busy and rewarding years; so it is right to look back now and to take stock of all that the Programme achieved.

We launched our Programme in June 2016, to support all the academics who had been forced to flee from the conflict in Syria and to seek refuge in surrounding countries, in particular in Turkey. We had earlier funded an initial 2015-16 consultation phase with £50,000 from our own resources; after that, awards totalling \$4.2m from the Open Society Foundations and the Mellon Foundation, and other grants to support research from individual institutional partners, allowed us to develop the Programme and take the work forward.

The Programme had five main work areas:

- English for Academic Purposes (EAP);
- Academic Development;
- Research Incubation Visits;
- Cara-Commissioned Research;
- and the Syrian Research Fellowship Scheme.

Over 200 Syrian academics were actively engaged with the Programme’s work, and it also enjoyed strong support from UK universities and learned societies. Over 60 UK-based academics contributed to the Programme’s EAP activities, with over 400 more supporting its research activities and academic development work.

From the beginning, research played a vital role in sustaining our Syrian colleagues, facilitating their professional connection and collaboration with colleagues from wider regional and international academic communities. Just as importantly, the Programme provided a vital space in which Syrian academics could reclaim their academic identity in the face of so much loss, and connect with each other and develop discipline clusters and interdisciplinary collaborations. These in turn facilitated their continued academic engagement,

contribution and development over this prolonged period of uncertainty.

Highlights include:

- Our weekly online *E-learn Soirée Series* delivered over 300 webinars on key topics, with many of these introductory sessions then being extended through 2- to 6-week online training courses. These have enabled a complementary focus on teaching methods, and the Syria Programme has also facilitated much-needed formal recognition of prior teaching experience and practice through Advance HE, one of many organisations to have supported the Syria Programme with fee waivers;
- Over 30 Syria Programme ‘Research Incubation Visits’ of 4-8 weeks have been hosted by UK universities, many of which contributed to the cost in-kind and/or financially, leading to follow-on research collaborations and up to five years of institutional affiliation for Syrian colleagues, with continuing access to their host institution’s online resources;
- Over 150 research grants were awarded, leading in most cases to publications in peer-reviewed journals;
- Several Programme participants have been engaged by UK universities as paid researchers in their own research projects, in recognition of the intrinsic value of their Syrian colleagues’ local knowledge, expertise, experience and networks;
- A new Cambridge University Press Elements series on ‘Higher Education and Forced Displacement’ in 2025 will feature Syria Programme outputs, including an overview of the Programme.

But Cara’s mission goes beyond helping just individuals; our Articles define one of our objectives as being to advance education “... by supporting academics and their educational institutions in countries where their continuing work is at risk or compromised”. This concern for institutions led us to develop our

Collaborative Developmental Partnership with the staff of Sham University, a small independent institution near Azaz in a part of north-west Syria that is outside the control of the Damascus regime. Sham, a modest not-for-profit community university, with some 3,000 students across seven faculties, works to provide access to quality higher education to local young people and also to the many other Syrians displaced to the area by conflict, offering them hope for the future and an alternative to radicalisation in an area that is still fragile, fragmented and threatened by violent militia groups.

One of the many challenges that Sham faces is how to show evidence that they adhere to European standards and guidelines, in a situation where they are not formally accredited by any national authority. Facilitated by a core group of academics from the Universities of Leeds, Kent and Sussex, our Programme has supported and guided a process of structural and curriculum reform that should in due course provide evidence that Sham University does indeed deliver quality higher education that meets internationally recognised standards. This core group of supporters will take over responsibility for the continuation of this work into 2025.

Not even a tenth of what has been achieved would have been possible without the support of our army of volunteer experts in numerous roles – many of whom have established long-term friendships with Syrian colleagues and are committed to continuing to support them. Alongside them, we applaud the contribution of many universities, not just in the UK, and other Syria Programme institutional partners, publishers, and conference organisers, all of whom have given extremely generously of their time and in many cases other support too to Syrian colleagues throughout the Programme. We gratefully remember also the tremendous response of so many individuals, universities and other organisations to the devastating earthquakes in early 2023 in south-eastern Turkey, which had left many of our Programme participants destitute and



Above: Sham University Entrance

homeless. In just a few weeks, they contributed over £140,000 to our appeal for funds, making 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.

Finally, I would like to thank all the many staff members who worked so hard, over the eight years, to make the Programme such a success. I wish them all the very best for their futures.

Kate Robertson
Cara Middle East Adviser

“I was obliged to take frequent visits to the security and intelligence branches, as I had been in a European country opposed to the Syrian regime...”

Cara Fellow from Syria

FACES OF THE SYRIA PROGRAMME

JUNE 2024 WORKSHOP



JULY 2024 WORKSHOP



AUGUST 2024 WORKSHOP, GAZIANTEP



CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE





WESAM AMER

From Gaza to Germany and finally Cambridge: a journey of resilience, hope, and achievement

My journey from the war-torn streets of Gaza through Egypt and then to Germany, to the prestigious halls, faculties, and colleges of the University of Cambridge, is more than a dream fulfilled - it's a testament to resilience, hope, and unwavering determination. The joint fellowship from Cara and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) has not only opened the doors to one of the world's leading academic institutions but also marked a critical milestone in my academic, professional, and personal journey. For myself and my family, joining Cambridge University has always been a dream, one that seemed distant in the face of the ongoing struggles in Gaza. Yet, with the support of the Cara and IIE-SRF Fellowship, this dream has become a reality.

When I received the news of my Fellowship award, it felt like a lifeline, a bridge to a future where I could continue my academic work and research, despite the devastation surrounding me in Gaza. This Fellowship represents more than just

an opportunity to join Cambridge - it is a powerful platform that enables me to carry forward my research and activism, particularly in the vital area of higher education reconstruction in Gaza. My work, which focuses on raising awareness about the destruction of educational infrastructure in Gaza, has become even more vital. The war is not just about the physical destruction of buildings, but a calculated effort to dismantle the heart of our society - our universities, schools, and the future of our youth.

As both a professor and Dean, the Israeli attacks on Gaza's educational institutions hit very close to me and home. The devastation wasn't something I watched from afar - it was something I lived through, every single day. Since the onset of the conflict in October 2023, my life, and the lives of my colleagues and students, have been upended. Gaza's once vibrant academic environment has been shattered. The silence of the now-empty classrooms is a constant, painful reminder of all that has been lost. The bombing of universities and schools has not only interrupted our academic year - it has fractured the spirit of learning itself.

While I am now in a safe place in Cambridge thanks to the Cara and IIE-SRF Fellowship, after being evacuated from Gaza through Egypt and spending a few months in Germany, my heart remains with my family, friends, students, and colleagues who are still enduring the unimaginable in Gaza. Together, we faced multiple displacements, struggled to find basic necessities like clean water and power, and tried to continue our work under the most extreme conditions. The constant bombardment and blockade made daily survival a challenge. I can still vividly recall waking up at 4 a.m. each day to stand in line for hours just to secure bread for my family. The simple act of finding clean drinking water became a life-and-death struggle.

Throughout this ordeal, my greatest concern has always been how we can return to academic life. How do we rebuild our universities when so much has been lost? My teaching materials, the research

equipment I depended on, and the administrative records that documented my students' progress - all destroyed. These were not just physical items; they were symbols of the work I had poured my life into, and their loss feels deeply personal.

The destruction of educational infrastructure in Gaza has left a generation of students in limbo. These young people, who have already endured war and instability, now face the heartbreaking reality that their education may never resume. As an educator, it is devastating to watch their dreams slip away. The collapse of Gaza's higher education system is perhaps the most painful consequence of the war - a generation's future, once filled with potential, now hangs in uncertainty.

In the face of this overwhelming adversity, the Cara and IIE-SRF Fellowship has given me a renewed sense of purpose. It has enabled me to continue my research, despite the odds, and provided a platform from which I can continue advocating for the reconstruction of Gaza's education system. More importantly, it has allowed me to sustain the resilience not just of myself, but of my family, offering a path forward when all seemed lost.

This Fellowship is not just a personal achievement - it is a beacon of hope. It reminds me that, despite the destruction and despair, there is still a future worth fighting for, and that, through education and persistence, we can begin to rebuild what has been lost. Cambridge may be thousands of miles away from Gaza, but it has become a place where I can dream again, continue my work, and contribute to the future of Palestinian education.

For that, I will forever be grateful to Cambridge, Cara and IIE-SRF for making this dream a reality and helping me continue my journey of resilience, success, and hope.



SALAVAT ABYLKALIKOV

Escape from Russia's war

My name is Salavat Abylkalikov, and until recently, I worked as a Senior Lecturer and Research Fellow at one of the most prestigious Russian universities - HSE University in Moscow. My research covered a wide range of topics in population science, including demographic processes in Russia and post-Soviet countries, population migration, the impact of political and social factors on demographic changes, as well as demographic forecasting. My academic and teaching career was progressing quite well, especially considering that I am the first in my family to obtain a higher education, let alone a PhD.

However, the situation in Russia changed drastically after the war against Ukraine began. As a scholar who openly opposed the war, I faced serious threats, including possible criminal prosecution, dismissal from work, and even the risk of forced conscription to fight in the war against Ukraine. Furthermore, there have already been documented cases in Russia where parents were separated from their children due to their anti-war and opposition activities. In 2023, under the

pressure of these circumstances, my family and I made the difficult decision to leave Russia - my wife and our young daughter, who is now only one year and nine months old. I couldn't bear the thought of anyone taking my beloved little girl away from me!

In the UK, I have continued my research, which now includes studying the demographic consequences of the war against Ukraine for Russia itself. I am also involved in anti-Putin and anti-war activism, collaborating with many media outlets, especially independent Russian-language ones. Some of these outlets are classified as 'undesirable organisations', meaning that any comment made for them, or even sharing their content on social media, can result in a heavy fine and, upon repeat, criminal charges! Nevertheless, I strive to inform the public as widely as possible about the devastating consequences this brutal war will have for the Russian population, and how deeply misguided and criminal this decision was.

I am deeply grateful to Cara for their comprehensive support. This extends not only to financial aid but also assistance with paperwork, and educational and informational support. Cara's staff are incredibly sensitive and responsive; they helped us with the initial adjustment when many things, even small everyday matters, in a new country were completely unfamiliar. They assisted with online English language lessons and regularly provide training on how the Western academic world operates and how to improve one's competitiveness within it. Above all, it was simply a relief to talk to normal people, untainted by Putin's hysterical propaganda.



ROWIDA FARH
From Khartoum to Durham

I am a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Khartoum, and a mother of three. I enrolled in my PhD program at the beginning of 2019, around the time the revolution in Sudan began. The political instability in Sudan affected my progress, but then I was given a wonderful opportunity by the University of Granada in Spain as part of the Erasmus+ program for University of Khartoum faculty members. My plan was to spend my time at the University of Granada solely on writing and return to Sudan with a completed PhD dissertation.

However, during Ramadan, while my passport was at the Spanish embassy for visa processing, war broke out right outside my home. The fighting quickly spread across the capital and other cities in Sudan. I was alone with my daughters in our apartment, four months pregnant, while my husband was in Saudi Arabia performing Umrah.

We initially thought the situation would be resolved within a few hours, but that never happened. I was extremely frightened, especially because my daughter had a respiratory condition

and needed medication. Every day, one of the neighbours would risk their life trying to find a way out of Khartoum. Only a few families remained in the residential complex, and I couldn't imagine leaving my passport behind and fleeing. But when I heard that the diplomatic missions were being abandoned, I lost hope and with a heavy heart decided to leave too. We escaped from Khartoum under extremely dangerous and complex circumstances, leaving behind my passport, laptop, my daughters' toys, and our memories.

At the beginning of May 2023, I met Rebecca while fleeing to the Northern State of Sudan. I hosted her at my parents' house in Wadi Halfa, near the Egyptian border. She told me about Cara, and I shared my story about my lost passport. She later travelled to the U.S. via Egypt, while I stayed behind in Halfa with my daughters, feeling lost and without any work, but she kept a close eye on social media updates about passports, and one day she informed me of a Facebook post saying that the Spanish embassy had been looted and some passports had been found discarded on the ground. My passport was among them, and I finally retrieved it in late June, but there was no Spanish visa in it.

I then received an email from Alex at Cara asking to schedule an online meeting to discuss my case. I decided to travel to Aswan in search of better internet access for my Cara interviews and, while in Aswan, I also took the Duolingo English test.

I gave birth in mid-October; around the same time the first phase of Cara's evaluation was completed successfully. I received a call from Amanda, and we discussed the next steps, which included an academic interview. On November 23, I had my interview with Professor Justin. My parents and siblings, who had come to Aswan to support me, stood outside the door. I remember their tears and ululations when I told them Professor Justin confirmed he would be my academic mentor.

We needed to return to Sudan to reunite with my husband, who was in Port Sudan on the eastern

side of the country. I travelled with my daughters and newborn from Aswan to Port Sudan over three extremely difficult and dangerous nights. There were many points where I wasn't sure if we were going to make it. We stayed in Port Sudan for two months, during which we obtained a passport for my newborn, as the passport office had resumed work in the city. Amanda remained in constant contact with me throughout this time.

At that stage, we received generous support from Durham University in the form of flight tickets to a third country, where we could apply for a UK visa. Thanks to this, we were able to travel from Port Sudan (the only functioning airport in Sudan) to Entebbe, Uganda. We stayed in Uganda for two months. There are many stories from Port Sudan and Uganda that I don't have the space to share here. Finally, with Cara's close guidance and support, we obtained the UK visa and arrived in Durham on April 30, 2024.

We took some time to settle in. I managed to complete the fourth-year course I was teaching at the University of Khartoum and to fulfil my commitments to the university and to my students. I also finished transcribing the interviews I had conducted in Sudan and began conducting new ones. I'm in regular contact with my academic mentor, who has been incredibly supportive in many areas, sending me relevant reading materials and offering feedback on my writing. He constantly tries to make things easier for me. My family and I am truly grateful to Cara and to Durham University for their generous support.



FIREW BEKELE

From the shadows of Addis Ababa to bright dreams in Birmingham

My journey began in August 2019, a time marked by fear and uncertainty. I was living a life overshadowed by the ominous consequences of my commitment to academic integrity. As a lecturer and researcher in Ethiopia for over a decade, I devoted my career to exposing human rights violations and corrupt practices through my writings. However, this passion led to my arrest under the anti-terrorism proclamation, resulting in three harrowing months of detention in a dark room. The experience not only stripped me of my freedom but also left me with lasting physical and psychological scars, including asthma and distress.

Upon my release, the weight of fear loomed large over my daily life. The once vibrant classrooms felt alien, as the threat of persecution lingered. I struggled to continue my teaching role, particularly in the evening programs, where shadows of suspicion and anxiety followed me. The academic dreams I had nurtured for years began to fade, overshadowed by the oppressive atmosphere that stifled my spirit and potential.

Amid this turmoil, I discovered the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara). Their mission resonated deeply with my plight. Cara serves as a beacon of hope for academics like me who face persecution and violence due to their work. Their commitment to rescue and support those in need provided me with a glimmer of optimism. The realisation that there was an organisation dedicated to helping individuals escape from discrimination and conflict reignited my hope for a future in academia.

At the beginning of 2024, my family and I embarked on a new chapter of our lives in Birmingham, buoyed by the opportunity afforded to me through the Cara Fellowship. This Fellowship not only represented a lifeline but also a chance to pursue my dreams without the shadows of fear that had clouded my existence in Ethiopia. I began my PhD in Finance at Aston University, a place that embraced me and offered the support I desperately needed.

As I settled into my new environment, I felt the grip of fear loosen its hold on me. Each day transformed into an opportunity for growth and learning. I woke up with a renewed sense of purpose, focusing on my academic journey rather than the threats that had once defined my life. Aston University provided extensive support, from training and development opportunities to a nurturing academic community that encouraged my aspirations.

I am immensely grateful for Cara's unwavering support. Their dedication to individuals at risk has not only changed my life but has also allowed me to dream again. Today, I stand on the threshold of my aspirations, fortified by the knowledge that there are organizations committed to ensuring that academics can pursue their work free from fear. The journey from Ethiopia to the UK has been transformative, and I am now living a life filled with hope, ready to contribute to the academic community and advocate for those who remain at risk.



WAED ALSHEIKH

From Syria to Liverpool

I am filled with an overwhelming profound sense of gratitude and accomplishment. Pursuing my PhD at the Centre for Natural Products Discovery at Liverpool John Moores University carries layers of

meaning beyond academic pursuit. While earning this PhD is a remarkable achievement, the miracle story lies in how I got here.

Escaping the devastating war in Syria and finding my way to the halls of academia in the UK was not just a scholarly or physical transition. It was a promising opportunity to rebuild my future life through the power of education.

My deep sense of gratitude towards Cara stretches back more than six years when Cara was the lifeline of hope during that time of immense uncertainty. Cara's support was not only the cornerstone upon which I built my PhD but also my anchor throughout the countless obstacles I faced along my PhD journey.

Completing this PhD is not simply a personal milestone; it stands as another testament to the resilience and determination shared by several Cara fellows who have faced, yet persevered through, similar adversities.

Through the power of education, from Syria to the UK, I have transcended the narrative of war uncertainty to the fulfilment of not just my academic goal, but a whole life-changing story, for which I will always be grateful to Cara.

“My Cara mentor was really helpful in inspiring me throughout my two-year research journey, significantly contributing to my success. He played an important role in completing my research and securing the new position. Words cannot adequately convey how thankful my family and I are. You not only saved us but also gifted us a new life filled with hope. I hope to be in a position to support Cara’s valuable activities in the near future.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan



DAREEN ASSAF
From Despair to Hope, my Journey as a Syrian Academic with Cara

When the conflict erupted in Syria, it engulfed everything in its path, including academic institutions. As an academic who started my career in 2009 with big dreams and enthusiasm, I watched those aspirations diminish bit by bit as the crisis unfolded. Amidst the lack of basic necessities and the dangers facing both academics and students, I tried to resist and keep going.

I changed four universities across Syria, from north to south, attempting to avoid the encroaching war. But eventually, there was no safe place left except outside the country. Determined to develop myself and motivate my students, I persevered, teaching in temporary locations and enduring four-hour drives each day through dangerous roads and military blockades. However, despair set in as I realized I could no longer push myself further as an academic or be of use to my students.

Then, a message from a British friend changed everything. They sent me a link to news about Syrian academics rescued by Cara, with a note

saying, “Dareen, come to us.” This marked the beginning of my journey. I contacted Cara and, after a rigorous application process, secured a PhD scholarship—something that had seemed next to impossible given my circumstances. Nine months later, I landed in the UK.

My first few months at Sheffield Hallam University felt like traveling through time. In Syria, technological development had stalled for almost nine years, including academic websites. I was eager to seize every opportunity for growth offered by the university and Cara. Over the four years of working on my thesis, I developed many skills, undertaking courses in research methods, leadership in higher education, and connecting academic achievements to industry. I also benefited from Cara’s mentoring scheme, which matched me with knowledgeable and passionate mentors.

I successfully completed my PhD in Education, focusing on female underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in Syrian universities. Afterward, I was awarded an Honorary Visiting Fellowship from the University’s Sheffield Institute of Education Research and Knowledge Exchange Centre (SIRKE), where I won an early career research fund to investigate the challenges faced by international PhD students transitioning to postdoc positions. Recently, I was also awarded the prestigious Global Talent Visa.

Words cannot express my gratitude to Cara. The everlasting impact they have on individuals, communities, and countries by rescuing academics from troubled contexts and providing them with opportunities to continue their development is immeasurable. These academics are the main pillars needed to develop societies, and when the time allows, they will return to their communities with the knowledge and skills gained during their time away. Cara’s work ensures that these pillars can be rebuilt, making the foundation even stronger than before.



MOHAMMAD HADI MOHAMMADI
From Mazar-i-Sharif to Exeter

When I returned to Afghanistan, I wanted to help rebuild the country. I worked as a senior lecturer and Vice-Chancellor in an academic centre and helped set up a large analytical laboratory for important national and international projects in north of Afghanistan. But in August 2021, when the Taliban came back, my life was shattered again. I was in Mazar-i-Sharif when the city fell. Soon after, I was hiding in a small room in Kabul with my pregnant wife, Maryam, and our two children.

As members of the Hazara ethnic group, we were in great danger. Every knock on the door

felt like a threat. My wife, who is a midwife with a BSc, was devastated because the Taliban’s rules meant she couldn’t work or teach anymore. I could see the pain on her face, and we were living in constant fear.

Then, we got a chance to escape. I received a two-year Fellowship from the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara) by sponsorship of Camborne School of Mines (CSM) trust and the University of Exeter. This opportunity allowed us to leave everything behind and move to Cornwall in April 2022. We were tired but so thankful to be safe.

At CSM, I focused on my work in geochemistry and environmental studies under supervision of Professor Frances Wall. Even though we were in a peaceful place, my thoughts often returned to Afghanistan.

Over time, my family started to heal. Maryam worked hard to improve her English and volunteered as a breastfeeding supporter in the community. Our children began to enjoy school and life in Cornwall. But the memories and trauma of the past are still with us.

In April 2024, I started a new job as the Impact and Partnership Development Manager of the Critical Minerals Equipment Hub that is one of the projects in the CSM. Although we are now safe and settled, the pain of leaving home remains. Despite the worsening situation in my homeland, I hope for a future where peace will finally arrive. I know it is not something real or likely to happen soon, but I hope that someday it comes true.

“They reported to the dean’s office, then I was warned about ‘the negative consequences’ of my criticism of the situation with human rights in Russia...”

Cara Fellow from Russia

CARA IN SCOTLAND

This has been another busy period for all our university partners in Scotland, who were hosting 22 Cara Fellows by autumn 2024 with more on the way. Our work in Scotland has, as always, been greatly assisted by having a 'Cara Scotland Manager', based at and generously supported by the University of Edinburgh; this year Eilidh MacDonald stepped into the role while Tessa Bell was on Maternity Leave, and we are very grateful for all that she has done for us during that time.

Our annual 'Scotland and the North' conference in May, kindly hosted by the University of Dundee, was an excellent opportunity to pull together what we and our partners were all doing and to discuss our future plans. After a welcome from Professor Kim Dale, Dundee's Assistant Vice Principal International, and an introduction to Cara's current work from our Director, Stephen Wordsworth, Cara Fellows from Syria and Afghanistan and a 'Researchers at Risk' Fellow from Ukraine outlined their own journeys to safety and explained how they were each now taking forward their academic careers. Two panel discussions then considered



how universities might best embed support for Cara into wider university strategies to assist exiled and refugee academics and students, and also what options were open to Fellows to continue their academic careers if, at the end of their initial Fellowships, it was still not safe for them to consider returning home.

In addition, Chris Goldie of Gifted Philanthropy described the work that he and his colleagues had done, with funding support from UUKi, to assess

Below: RSE/YAS/Cara lecture, University of Edinburgh, 10 September 2024



CARA HONOURED



Cara was greatly honoured to learn in July 2023 that the *Senatus Academicus* of the University of Edinburgh had resolved to offer our Director, Stephen Wordsworth, the Honorary degree of *Doctor honoris causa*, in recognition of his service supporting forcibly displaced academics and in defence of learning and science, and also of his long career across international relations and cultural diplomacy.

Edinburgh's Principal, Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, conferred the award at a graduation ceremony on 10 July 2024, with the Provost, Professor Kim Graham, making the Laureation address. Stephen was accompanied by his wife Nichole.

Cara's fundraising potential, and also the work he was doing now, with Cara, to hold a series of networking and fundraising events at partner universities in the following months, at Glasgow, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Durham, with more to follow in 2025.

Another highlight of 2024 was the return of our annual lecture, a joint undertaking with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Young Academy of Scotland. Shortly before Covid struck we had come together to launch a new public lecture series in Scotland but, unfortunately, we had only held one event before everything had to stop. We were therefore very happy to be able to re-launch the series with an excellent lecture in September by Professor Shalini Randeria, the President and Rector of the Central European University (CEU), who has a strong track record of research into soft authoritarianism, democracy and demography, forced displacement and dispossession, and the politics of (un)accountability. In her thought-provoking talk, she set out her concerns about the backlash against liberal values and principles and against human rights in general, and especially against women's rights, LGBTQI rights and migrants' rights, not only in autocratic regimes but in liberal democracies too.

Professor Randeria kindly provided the full text of her presentation, which is available on our website.

Once again, many thanks to Eilidh for everything she has done for us this past year – and a warm welcome back to Tessa!

“I have no words to describe Cara’s enormous impact on us and our fates. I will be grateful for your help and support for the rest of my life. Thank you again for everything.”

Cara Fellow from Russia

CARA 'SCIENCE AND CIVILISATION' LECTURE 2024



The distinguished lawyer and author, Philippe Sands KC, gave the tenth Cara 'Science and Civilisation' lecture at the Royal Society on 22 October 2024, discussing how international law has been struggling to catch up with and contribute positively to tackling issues such as climate change and environmental protection.

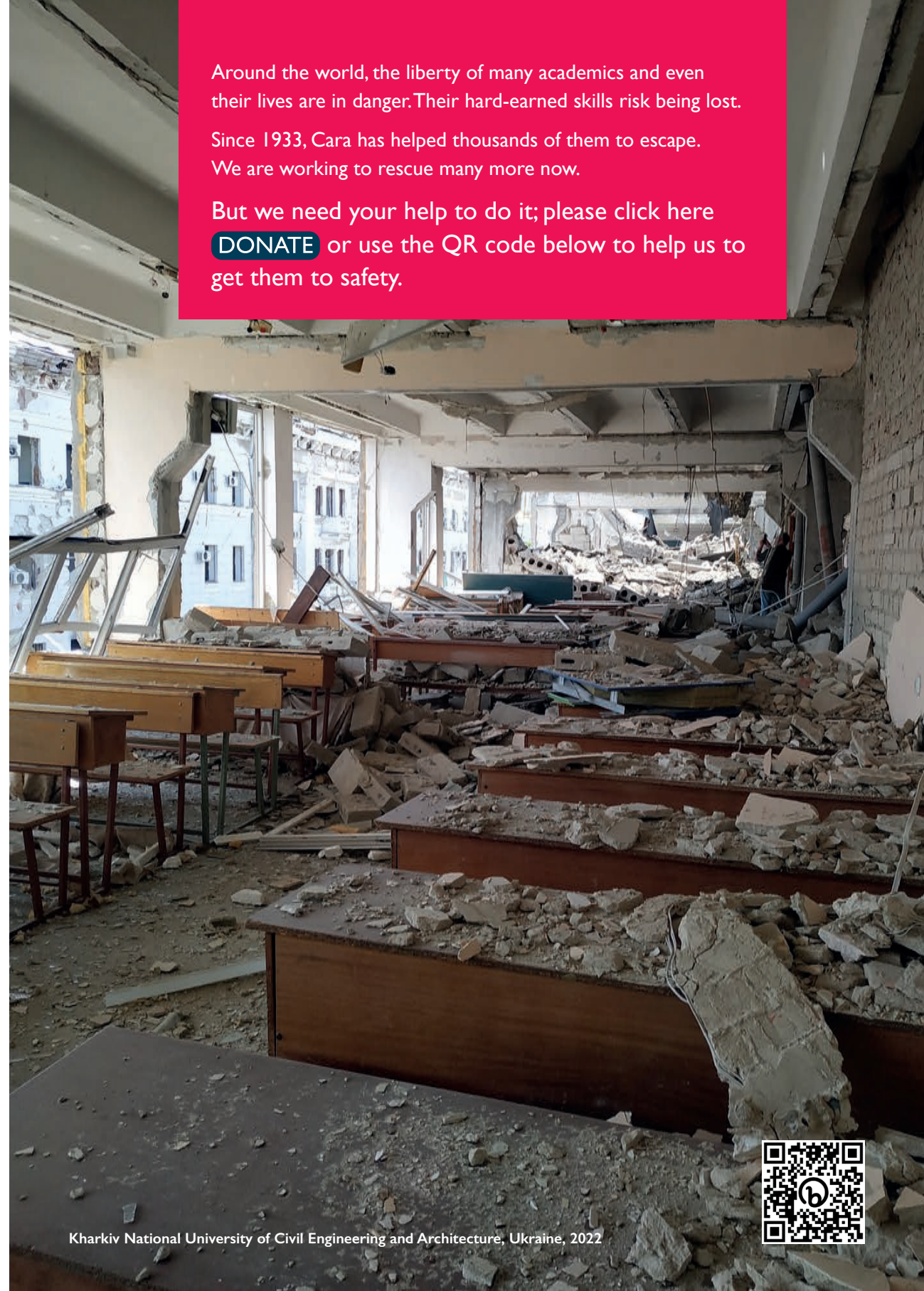
Above:

The full recording of his speech is available on Cara's website at: <https://bit.ly/SandC24>



"I actively participated in the protest movement with my daughter, openly expressed my civic position on social networks, and signed a Collective Letter of Scientists Against Violence. A few weeks after the elections, I was clearly informed that my support for the protests did not coincide with the official position..."

Cara Fellow from Belarus



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** or use the QR code below to help us to get them to safety.



Cara's financial year is the calendar year.

In 2023 most universities again 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; Cara 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 Cara, also to be paid on in full.

As a result, Cara's income in 2023 rose significantly, totalling £12,464,333, and total expenditure and commitments on awards and programme and project work for the year amounted to £12,246,666. Following net investment gains of £20,253 (realised losses: £2,918; unrealised gains £23,171) the total net movement of funds was a surplus of £237,920. On a cash basis there was a decrease of £5,210,086 (2022: an increase of £6,696,169) mainly due to a sum of £6,000,000 being placed equally in two money

market funds by Cara's investment adviser, Investec Wealth & Investment Ltd. Further information is given in the published accounts, which are available on the websites of the Charity Commission and Companies House. 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 2023 was a deficit of £32,456 (2022: a deficit of £300,187).

Cara continues to be extremely grateful to all its donors; some prefer to remain anonymous, but those who are happy to be acknowledged in public are listed on page 28. In addition, many UK universities continued their support for Cara's running costs in 2023, through their voluntary annual subscriptions; some universities very kindly increased their subscription amounts in response to the recent crises, and some also made one-off extra payments to help with Fellowship Programme-related costs. Total subscription income in 2023 was £536,950 (2022: £506,050).

“Your assistance and dedication saved my family's life, protected us from danger and instabilities, and created great opportunities for my children to live freely and be educated in an amazing country, the UK. Definitely, these are the fundamental needs of a family, which couldn't happen without the generous financial, logistical, and legal support of Cara and my university.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

Network members generously offer fee waivers and often accommodation and financial support for Cara Fellows and their families. Over a hundred also contribute a voluntary annual subscription, 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 have done so much 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 St George's | 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 | Goodenough College | Greenwich | Harper Adams | Heriot Watt | Hertfordshire | Highlands and Islands | Huddersfield | Hull | Imperial College London | 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 School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine | London Metropolitan | London South Bank | London School of Economics | 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 | Royal Veterinary College | Salford | Sheffield | Sheffield Hallam | SOAS | Solent | Southampton | South Wales | Staffordshire | Stirling | Strathclyde | St Andrews | Sunderland | Surrey | Sussex | Swansea | Teesside | University of the Arts London | University for the Creative Arts | University College London | Ulster | University of Wales Trinity St David | Warwick | Wellcome Sanger Institute | Westminster | West of England | West of Scotland | Winchester | Wolverhampton | Worcester | Wrexham | York | York St John

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 (IIE-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 2023-24 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 64 successful PSI applications in fourteen rounds. Several of our Cara Fellows and SP participants have been successful in winning PSI-funded places.

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, to provide six webinars and six training sessions over the three years.

As of October 2024, we have hosted five webinars and four training workshops of the six of each we have to complete by next summer. The final webinar and the fifth training workshop will be organised in the coming months, with the last training workshop being held in-person in Paris during the Inspireurope+ stakeholder forum in May 2025. 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; by the end of October 2024, with one more webinar and two more training sessions still to go, we had already reached 663 (589 webinar attendees and 74 training participants).

UK PARTNERSHIPS

Our key relationship in 2023-24 was again with all the members of our UK Universities and Research Network, without whose practical and financial support we simply couldn't function. Since the last Report, two of our members, City University and St George's, have merged to become City St George's, University of London, and Trinity St David has joined the Network, so the number remains at 135. A full list of the Network members is on page 25.

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 2023-24 further funding was secured for a third year, and 175 of the original 180 grantees are continuing their work and receiving their award funds from Cara.

We were invited by Times Higher Education (THE) to be their 'Charity Partner' at their



Cara Director Stephen Wordsworth and a Cara Fellow at the THE Awards, Liverpool, 7 December 2023

November 2022 awards ceremony, and again in 2023, our 90th anniversary year. At the time of writing, we have just been invited to be their Charity Partner once again, for the 2024 awards ceremony in November in Birmingham. This will be another great opportunity to present our work to a large audience, and we are very grateful to THE for continuing to support us in this way.

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 for grants of up to £10,000 each to support research project activities for eligible researchers in all disciplines except medical and health sciences, continued in 2023-24. 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. Five Cara Fellows and fifteen 'Researchers at Risk' Fellows received awards in November 2023.

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. The Cumberland Lodge Fellowship programme is 'on pause' for 2024-25 while they conduct an evaluation exercise, but we hope to continue our partnership with them in 2025-26.

We are very grateful 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 2023-24, for a ninth 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 continued to benefit 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. We are aware that the funds raised from the sale of the medal are now coming to an end, but we look forward to continuing our cooperation in 2024-25 and to organising an event in due course to mark the successful completion of the programme.

In December 2023 the Northern Consortium (NC) generously confirmed a further three-year grant to support Cara Fellowship awards at NC member universities. Similarly, in February 2024 Springer Nature also confirmed a further three-year grant to support Springer Nature-Cara Fellowship Awards.

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 2023-2024 by paying voluntary annual subscriptions; despite the well-publicised financial squeeze which the sector is facing, some nevertheless were able further to increase their subscription amounts. As a result, our total subscription income in 2023 totalled £536,950 (2022: £506,050). 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 2023-24 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
- Chemist's Community Fund (Royal Society of Chemistry)
- Fondation Liber
- French Huguenot Church of London Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Karl Eusebius von und zu Liechtenstein Foundation
- Mellon Foundation
- Northern Consortium
- Sir Hans Krebs Trust
- Sir Joseph Hotung Charitable Settlement
- Springer Nature Limited
- Texel Foundation
- Thriplow Charitable Trust
- UKRI, for Inspireurope+
- Wellcome Trust
- Wolfson Foundation

Since 2023 we have been working with Gifted Philanthropy, to develop and implement a new fundraising strategy for Cara. As part of this, we launched the first of a series of awareness-raising events in June 2024 at the University of Chester and resumed after the summer break with three events in three days at Glasgow, Durham and Edinburgh in September, at the LSE and St Andrews in October, and at Cardiff Metropolitan in mid-November, with Loughborough to follow. Other dates and venues are under discussion.



University of Chester VC Eunice Simmons speaking at our event there on 18 June 2024

“I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to you and all your colleagues at Cara for the invaluable support you provided during my journey as a research fellow in the UK. I am pleased to inform you that I have signed a job contract and have now started my position as a research fellow. I am committed to continuing my efforts to support my female students in Afghanistan in the future as well.”

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31st December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Income		
Donations and legacies	12,346,461	6,134,621
Investment income	117,872	6,855
Realised (losses) / gains on investments	(2,918)	12,976
Unrealised gains / (losses) on investments	23,171	(75,611)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income	12,484,586	6,078,841
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Expenditure		
Raising funds	40,002	6,737
Charitable activities:		
Grants payable	11,240,010	5,708,365
Programme and project work	949,974	724,250
Governance	16,680	15,590
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenditure	12,246,666	6,454,942
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	237,920	(376,101)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All of the operations undertaken by the company during the current and preceding years are continuing operations.

The retained surplus for the year based on historical cost is £214,749 (2022 – net deficit £300,490).

Auditor's opinion: We confirm that the information given in the summary income and expenditure account and the balance sheet shown on pages 30 to 31 is consistent with the annual accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2023 which have been audited by ourselves.

DAVID WARREN BA FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor), 15 August 2024

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 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	10,367	13,240
Investments	6,344,849	321,278
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total fixed assets	6,355,216	334,518
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Current assets		
Debtors	525,265	689,888
Cash at bank and in hand	3,421,239	8,631,325
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current assets	3,946,504	9,321,213
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(8,943,661)	(8,535,592)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net current assets (liabilities)	(4,997,157)	785,621
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities	1,358,059	1,120,139
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
The funds of the charity:		
Restricted Income Funds	592,774	625,230
Unrestricted Funds – general	615,285	444,909
Unrestricted Funds – designated	150,000	50,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total charity funds	1,358,059	1,120,139
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 14 August 2024 and signed on its behalf by:
NICOLA DANDRIDGE (Trustee)
SIMON BARRATT (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 2024

Chair: Dame Nicola Dandridge DBE, Professor of Practice in 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

Ms Sarah Dickson OBE, Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK
Professor Vince Emery, President at the University of Hertfordshire hosted by Global Academic Foundation, Egypt
Mr Alan Mackay, Deputy Vice-Principal International, University of Edinburgh
Professor Alan McCarthy, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology, University of Liverpool
Dr Joanna Newman MBE, Provost at SOAS, University of London, formerly Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities
Ms Naina Patel, Chief People Officer at the University of the Arts London
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
Dr Mehroosh Tak, Senior Lecturer at the Royal Veterinary College
Mr Ben Webster, Founder and CEO of Mosaik Education
Professor Paul Weindling, Research Professor, History of Medicine, Oxford Brookes University

*“I am incredibly grateful for Cara’s unwavering support.
This fantastic news fills me with joy. I owe you a tremendous
debt of gratitude for saving and ensuring my life.
Please convey my best regards to your esteemed team.”*

Cara Fellow from Afghanistan

THE CARA TEAM AT 31 JULY 2024

Executive Director – **Stephen Wordsworth CMG LVO**

Deputy Director & Fellowship Programme Manager – **Zeid Al-Bayaty**
Fellowship Programme Deputy Manager (on Maternity Leave) – **Laura Puiggali**

Team Leader, Enquiries – **Sara Bermudez**
Team Leader, Active Fellows, and Programme Manager, Inspireurope+ – **Lucia Simms**
Acting Team Leader, New Fellows – **Sinan Özyürek**
Senior Fellowship Programme Officer (on Maternity Leave) – **Narmin Ali**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Jake Coulter**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Jennifer Donnellan**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Ellie Jordan**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Madalena Massena**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Alex Purser**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Tim Riches**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Oscar Saunders**
Fellowship Programme Officer – **Linh Dieu Tran**
Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Karolina Bilik**
Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Jess McFadden**
Fellowship Programme Assistant – **Fabio Miccoli**

Middle East Adviser: **Kate Robertson**
Syria Programme Officer – **James Keeley**
Syria Programme Officer – **Anouf El Daher**
Syria Programme Officer – **Ginny Marr**
Syria Programme Officer – **Katy Sansum**

Cara Scotland Manager (based in Edinburgh) – **Eilidh MacDonald**

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>

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