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Responding to International Humanitarian Crises

Lessons From the UK Higher Education Sector Response to the Invasion of Ukraine

August 2023

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Foreword

This research has been both humbling and uplifting. The findings showcase both the remarkable and inspiring resilience of our Ukrainian colleagues and the incredible efforts of UK higher education colleagues and partners.

Of course, this has not always been easy – the sector has had to navigate a changing policy landscape and consider its own financial constraints. However, one element is consistent: that the UK sector is at its best when it is collaborative.

We are incredibly grateful for the contributions of all colleagues to this report, via interviews, case studies, and focus groups. The voices of those at the forefront of the response have driven our analysis. The inclusion of voices from the Ukrainian sector has been our priority and we thank our Ukrainian colleagues who have volunteered their insights so humbly and generously during what is an unimaginable time for many.

As we look to the future, we hope that the lessons learned from the sector's response to the war in Ukraine will ensure that the UK's higher education sector is best placed to respond to other crises in other contexts.

The research demonstrates that the sector's responses are most fruitful when they are coordinated, sustainable, and locally situated. We hope that this report stimulates a new conversation on how we build such factors into our future responses across the UK.

Susie Hills
Joint CEO and Co-Founder
Halpin Partnership

Universities can play an important role in responding to humanitarian crises, and response to the invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated what is possible when policy, funding and political interests align with the goodwill, creativity, and commitment of colleagues in the UK's higher education community. The broad spectrum of responses – which has drawn together funders, regulators, government agencies, universities, and both private sector and charitable organisations – has meant the UK's response to supporting the higher education community in Ukraine has been significant.

This is to be celebrated. However, the scale and impact of this response has – rightly – posed questions over how we, as a community can respond to, and support, other higher education systems experiencing humanitarian and other forms of crises.

The genesis of this project was, therefore, to take the opportunity to reflect on the work undertaken in the sector to support universities in Ukraine, through the twinning initiative and beyond, and draw lessons for the future.

Drawing on the experiences of those closely involved with the scheme, the report highlights how the UK sector was mobilised to support universities in Ukraine and sets out ways in which we might better respond to future crises, while recognising that there is no 'one size fits all' model. Importantly, it reflects on the policy, funding and political levers which have enabled a broad-based response and how these need to be taken into account when formulating a response to emerging crises at individual, institutional and sector levels.

Importantly, the report sets out a framework that institutions might employ to help develop and tailor such responses, providing a practical tool that can help maximise the effectiveness and impact of university action.

With global challenges accelerating and geopolitical relationships increasingly fraught and contested, the need for university systems across the world to benefit from partnership, support and expertise of their peers in countries such as the UK will continue to grow. It is incumbent on us, as a community, to think carefully about how we can best respond in a coordinated, strategic way.

I hope that this report can play an important role in stimulating discussion and debate as to the role of our universities in responding to humanitarian crises in the future.

Jamie Arrowsmith
Director
Universities UK International

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Introduction

1. Following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, there was an unprecedented response from the UK higher education sector, funders, and government to provide support for colleagues, students and institutions affected by the war.

2. Within weeks of the invasion, and coordinated through Universities UK (UUK), a group of sector leaders and sector partners had come together to respond in unity. This included the support of Cormack Consultancy Group (CCG) and the inception of the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative. CCG reached out to colleagues in Ukraine ensuring that, in so far as possible, the capacity and capability needs of the Ukrainian sector led these activities. Some initial cautious responses by universities were caused by underlying concerns over sector funding and the five-year financial partnership commitment, but these reactions served to demonstrate how seriously universities have taken their obligations and commitments to Ukrainian partners. Given this, the continued engagement in the scheme is an endorsement for twinning, with some who were originally cautious now looking to join. It is clear that this is the first coordinated, planned and resourced response to a humanitarian crisis from the higher education sector of its kind in the UK. The rich case studies included in the report show benefits to both Ukrainian and UK universities well beyond any financial considerations.

3. The response has been underpinned by a policy and regulatory environment that is largely supportive of the needs of institutions in Ukraine, through a range of both funded and unfunded initiatives.

4. Three factors: coordination, a favourable policy environment, and the availability of funding, differentiate this response.

5. This report was commissioned in April 2023, as a 'lessons learnt' exercise. Over a year into the ongoing war in Ukraine, it is intended to stimulate thinking and inform planning and decision-making for key communities, including university leaders, members of the academic community, higher education professionals, policymakers and funders, and other stakeholders, such as third sector organisations.

6. This study analyses the UK higher education sector response to the invasion of Ukraine to:
   - Provide a descriptive overview of the key features of the response, highlighting the perceived value and impact of different activities,
   - identify the factors that enable and facilitate different types of response, and those that limit the capacity and ability of institutions and other stakeholders to engage,
   - develop a framework of policy and practical options for institutions looking to respond to future international humanitarian crises, including conditions that need to be in place for effective and impactful deployment, and
   - make recommendations to universities, to funders, and to government to ensure that all stakeholders are better prepared to offer support for those affected by international humanitarian crises in the future.

7. It is not intended to be a formal evaluation of the impact of the disparate strands of activity that have been undertaken to date, many of which remain in process.

8. This research is intended to:
   - Provide insights that inform the practice and decision-making of policymakers, higher education representatives and third sector organisations in responding to international humanitarian crises.
   - Help ensure that all parties are better equipped to respond in the future by setting out the range of possible responses and the factors that must be in place to support their effective implementation.
   - Ultimately benefit those affected by international humanitarian crises by sharing learning and expertise and creating a framework for action for the UK higher education community.

9. Details of the research methodology can be found in Appendix 2.

Lessons learnt

10. In times of crisis, education must remain a priority. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to education and should be maintained in <u>emergency situations</u>. It is through collective efforts and humanitarian support that the UK has contributed to continuing access to both higher education and research in Ukraine. Not only is education important in continuing personal attainment, it also supports participation in rebuilding and reconstruction, as well as future economic activity.

11. Here we make recommendations for action that would ensure the higher education sector is better placed to respond to future international humanitarian crises. These are broad recommendations, explored further in the body of the report and intended for universities, policymakers, funders, and third sector organisations involved in humanitarian response.

General lessons

12. L1 – Locally led
Humanitarian response should be driven by local context and by the capacity and capability needs of those requiring humanitarian support. It is imperative that responses to humanitarian crises are led by those who are impacted.

    Universities UK International (UUKi) can play an important convening role in bringing stakeholders together to understand the scale and scope of challenges and help establish the parameters of possible action.

13. L2 – Delivered in partnership
The sector and its partners – including bodies such as UUK – should ensure a coordinated and connected response. It is in this response that resources are maximised and any duplication of effort mitigated. Cross-sector coordination is critical to an effective response.

    The partnership approach also enables connection with those who bring local knowledge and broader charitable purpose, enabling a comprehensive structure of support.

    The partnership response should be coordinated through a central body such as UUK, with appropriate, adaptive and relevant measurement and monitoring of performance being embedded at key stages of the response.

For funders and regulators

14. L3 – Policy and regulation
Government bodies should work collaboratively with UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and sector bodies to enable the most effective policy and regulatory environment for delivery.

    Establishing a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and others directly in support of humanitarianism would ensure preparedness for future response, as well as providing a clear understanding of the policy and regulatory parameters of any intervention. A direct call to action from relevant ministers would no doubt also energise the sector to respond.

    Identifying policy, regulatory and funding issues at an early stage would facilitate a high-impact response. A standing committee could be established of key government departments and sector stakeholders that could be mobilised as required. An early assessment of the potential barriers and the scope for addressing these can save considerable time and resources, and direct activity towards appropriate channels.

15. L4 – Funding and financing
Sector-wide funding to support the continuation of higher education internationally through humanitarian response should be discussed with government bodies and other funding agencies. That discussion should include an upfront agreement of suitable performance measures of funding at each stage of humanitarian support: from preparedness to emergency

response, through recovery and rehabilitation, to reconstruction and development.

Longer term, options for sustained financing should be explored as a priority by government bodies including FCDO and DSIT, and public bodies including UKRI and others in discussion with representatives of the sector and its partners. These discussions should include an upfront exploration of the deliverables, expected outcomes and restrictions of particular funding streams.

For UK institutions

16. ### L5 – Effective leadership and governance at an institutional level

Ownership at the institutional level is key to an effective response. There needs to be senior buy-in to ensure that advocates and champions have the support to develop an appropriate institutional response.

Individual institutional responses should be overseen by an appropriate committee with accountability to the senior team for ongoing resource allocation and monitoring. Governance mechanisms should be embedded into ongoing governance frameworks and stood up or down as needed. Responses should be supported by a business case, business plan and risk assessment within the institutions' existing risk management processes.

A specific recommendation of the report is the need for UK HEIs to ensure, through their Board of Governors/Council, that any response is within the charitable objects of their university.

17. ### L6 – Thorough environmental analysis

Analysis should be undertaken at institutional and sector level in order to understand the unique situations and complexities of each humanitarian situation. This analysis should include an understanding of the political, social, and cultural context as well as an understanding of the higher education sector of the host country.

A transparent and open discussion of the conflicts and potential constraints of working within, or in support of, a specific population, geography or region should be included and should address challenges relating to, for example, differing perspectives on equalities and other human rights concerns, or the relative autonomy of the higher education sector in that country.

Specific to Universities UK (UUK)

18. ### L7 – Sector-wide competencies, expertise and resource mapping

UUK should hold a comprehensive record which maps sector knowledge and expertise in relation to humanitarian response and which can provide a frame of reference to be used in future humanitarian crises. That mapping exercise should include key research groups, education providers and other partners that are able to contribute to the full range of humanitarian situations. A key element of preparedness for future humanitarian need, UUK should coordinate an initial review of expertise and experience which should be maintained for use when the need arises.

Responses must be pragmatic and deliverable. Responses must be tailored to the capacity, capability, and resources of all parties. For the UK institution, this means a realistic assessment of the art of the possible – including an objective assessment of the operational, funding, and regulatory conditions that will shape any response.

19. ### L8 – Framework response

The sector, coordinated by UUK, should adopt a framework approach to future crisis responses.

Section 7 of the report includes a descriptive framework to support universities, their partners and the sector in implementing these recommendations and in responding to future humanitarian events.

The framework poses a series of questions which collectively seek to respond to the emerging themes within the research, including capacity and capability assessment, environmental analysis, and effective planning for long term support. It supports a deliberate and considered response to humanitarian need through greater preparedness and greater coordination.

General Findings

20. Here we introduce some of the general findings of the research, grouped around the three differentiating elements of this humanitarian response: partnerships and coordination, policy and regulation, and funding.

Partnership and coordination

21. A key theme – and one of the differentiators in the sector response to the invasion of Ukraine when compared with other humanitarian crises – has been the coordinated, connected, partnership approach. This unified response has arguably not been seen before, not only in our collective efforts to support other humanitarian situations, but also in our response to other collective challenges. UUK and its members have been at the heart of that response but supported by a significant group of sector partners including CCG, Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara), Jisc, Student Action for Refugees (STAR), UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA), Royal Society, The British Academy, Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Academy of Medical Sciences and Refugee Education UK (REUK).

22. The research, however, highlighted the opportunity for greater coordination. Our engagement with the Welsh Sector Committee group, for example, proposed opportunities for resource sharing across institutions. In this instance, several Ukrainian universities that were situated in close proximity to each other within Ukraine, had been partnered with Welsh sector universities via the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative. This geographical connection had been 'discovered' in conversation between universities after twinning arrangements had been made, rather than being a planned or communicated outcome, and the Welsh Sector Group felt this a lost opportunity for resource and knowledge sharing across institutions. It was also felt that the potential to engage with partners beyond the sector had not yet been fully optimised, nor had the sector's potential role in providing a connection into Ukraine for organisations that wanted to provide support but lacked the connections or capabilities to act alone.

23. CCG, a UK-based consultancy specialising in the development of international higher education partnerships, was identified early in the research process as a key enabler of the response. CCG was referred to UUK as an organisation that came with a strong understanding of the Ukrainian sector, and established links into Ukrainian universities and Ukrainian government departments. An almost universal theme in our various interviews, focus groups and informal discussions was the critical role that CCG had played in connecting the UK sector through twinning, to universities and other key institutions in Ukraine. Many felt that the strength of the UK HE sector's collective response was largely because of the involvement of CCG. CCG brought not only knowledge of the local context which had allowed for accountability to those affected by the invasion, but also the strategic foresight and operational capacity and capability to respond.

24. This highlights the low level of pre-existing partnerships between UK and Ukrainian universities. It also highlights a lack of collective knowledge of some countries, including Ukraine, in our sector bodies. This knowledge gap may be, for example, in understanding the research landscape or the strategic priorities of a country's higher education system. The UK government's International Education Strategy includes priority countries, with sector and government focus being primarily on those countries, developing knowledge exchange and strategic partnerships that will strengthen the UK sector's position internationally. It is not necessarily the case that those priority countries are also those most likely to need humanitarian support. Developing better knowledge and understanding of other geographies that are more likely to experience humanitarian crisis is critical to an effective, efficient, and relevant response. This is knowledge which can be developed through universities and relayed to government through ongoing research and knowledge transfer activities. Organisations such as the British Council, which are embedded in country and employ local staff could, for example, provide critical insights.

25. This position is no doubt strengthened by the formation of the new UK Higher Education Humanitarian Group that draws on the sector's collective knowledge and experience. The group has emerged from a collective response to the war in Ukraine with an ambition to create an even broader collective response and includes, amongst others, representatives of several

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universities, REUK, Cara, and the British Academy. The group brings together the expertise, knowledge, and experience needed in responses of this kind whilst also aiming to inform a continuous improvement approach to the sector response. Particularly in countries or regions which are not well known or understood by UK universities, it is essential that the sector builds partnerships with those that have a well-developed knowledge of the environments of those most at risk of humanitarian crisis, as well as the ability to identify those countries most at risk. The British Council, embedded in multiple countries and employing local staff could, with a broader remit, bring real strength in this respect.

Policy and regulation

26. A further differentiator has been the government's clear and demonstrable support for Ukraine, the rapid response to the invasion and subsequent changes to the policy and regulatory environment. These are discussed in more detail in the research data section below and have undoubtedly enabled the strong and connected response evidenced in the research. Visa regulations were seen as an ongoing inhibitor to some sector initiatives and the regulatory concessions, particularly given the sustained nature of the invasion, were considered not to have gone far enough.

27. Maintaining a sustained and connected partnership for humanitarian response will also position the UK sector's collective efforts towards a greater voice in future policy and regulatory change, meaning the sector is more prepared to respond to future humanitarian need. Again, there is a role for the newly formed UK Higher Education Humanitarian Group which brings together academic and operational expertise. It has the potential to be a key enabler in our continued response to the invasion of Ukraine and to other humanitarian needs – but only if the group engages broadly across the sector and with sector partners to ensure a comprehensive inclusion of voices and objectives, including those with experience of the host country seeking support, and connections with policymakers and regulators.

Funding

28. The availability of funding has also been a key differentiator and enabler. It is notable that the majority of funding committed to the response has come directly from UK HEIs. Significant financial resources have been provided through UKRI, the FCDO and the Office for Students (OfS), for example. Funding bodies raised concerns regarding how to ensure due diligence, transparency and accountability of distributed funds and this raises complex questions regarding the measurements of success in conflict or other humanitarian response situations. Research investments, funded by DSIT for example, are likely to take time to deliver significant results in Ukraine. It is challenging to allocate the normal performance measures that would come with UK funded research grants. Where government aid has been official development assistance (ODA), this is also subject to different impact measures from standard research support. The country and institutions are focused on the immediate threat to life and to infrastructure and are unable to commit to some of the timeframes that might ordinarily be expected of funded research initiatives. Longer term, humanitarian frameworks generally point to the need to move from funding to financing. Funding and/or financing are integral to the ongoing unified response that has been delivered by the sector. In particular the need to move from funding to financing is a key lesson (L4) of the research and a next step priority.

29. These three differentiators have, collectively, enabled a strong initial response from the UK sector to the war in Ukraine. There are, however, difficult questions regarding why our collective response has been more unified than in other crisis situations or situations of sustained ongoing humanitarian need: Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan for example. There are also fundamental questions regarding the sector's role in humanitarian response. These are questions that humanitarian bodies have posed for decades: What is the purpose of our intervention? What response are we intending to deliver and for how long can we sustain this? What type of response are we best placed to deliver? What is our capacity to deliver and what expertise do we bring? And how does – and should – any response differ from the ongoing work to which the sector already contributes through teaching, research and knowledge exchange? These questions have helped to shape the framework that is presented in the report and through which the research will contribute to the ongoing engagement of the sector in providing humanitarian support.

Context

30. On 24 February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine and has since conducted a full-scale military assault on the country.

31. It is within this context that the higher education sector has come together with sector bodies to provide support for Ukrainian universities, staff and students. The higher education sector has always had a role in humanitarian response, through both teaching and research that informs policy development, capacity building and innovation in crisis, as well as ongoing support. This also takes place through bodies, such as Cara, that provide support for researchers at risk. The current response, however, signals a step change. The strength of response from the university community, sector bodies and other partners was immediate and unified. Within days of the invasion, and brought together by colleagues at Universities UK, a diverse group of university leaders and sector partners had met to consider how best to respond to the invasion.

32. This ability to respond was underpinned by a new and facilitative policy and regulatory environment which saw changes to visa regulations and access to both UK fees and the UK loan book for Ukrainian students. Universities, partners, and student groups responded individually, collectively and as part of sector initiatives developed during those early weeks of crisis. And it is in both the rapid change to policy and in the coordinated response that the most significant differentiator between this and previous humanitarian response from the sector can be seen.

33. This report draws on the contributions of Ukrainian and UK universities and of sector bodies and partners, and collectively explores the response to the crisis as we move into a second year of war. Eight case studies are explored in more detail, each drawing on a key theme in the research data. Finally, we draw on the research alongside a range of established humanitarian frameworks, to suggest a potential framework for use in ongoing and future humanitarian response.

34. The war in Ukraine is ongoing and our findings naturally reflect the initial crisis response. In developing the Higher Education Humanitarian framework, we are considering the longer term and ongoing nature of the sector's role in humanitarianism.

Tertiary education in Ukraine

35. Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in 2005, demonstrating ambitions to harmonise the higher education system of Ukraine with the European Higher Education Area. In 2014, an Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine was signed and represented a necessary step in radically transforming Ukrainian higher education.

36. According to official statistics as of 1 September 2022, there are 347 HEIs (State owned – 210, Communal – 36, Private – 101) with 1,054,000 students currently in Ukraine. Ukrainian HEIs operate independently, and according to the national legislation (Law on Higher Education 2014), have full-scale autonomy, similar to the UK sector. However, financial autonomy is still under implementation following nine years of negotiations and developments. The country boasts research strengths in agricultural technology, aviation and space, and nuclear research, to name a few.

37. Prior to the war, Ukraine had plans to significantly reform its education landscape. It sought to meet the European standard of education, which it viewed as exemplary – particularly in its scientific focus. Perhaps motivated by the place of scientific activity in significant economic development across the continent, it hoped to embed technology innovation in its own growth strategy. There remains an incredible ambition to develop and invest through innovation.

38. This ambition however was to be moderated by some of the systemic realities in its education landscape. A lack of strong pre-existing networks and relationships in-country (and perhaps out of) reduced opportunities for funding and development, and the lack of public evidence for innovation as a force for good meant science had not been 'popularised'.

39. The National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) was established by the Ukrainian government in 2018. It intended to be the vehicle for the implementation of state policy, viewing research and development as a key economic activity and prioritising competitiveness and leadership in science. Among its objectives were integration into the world research area and

world research infrastructure, and international exchange of knowledge and personnel. The country's own research infrastructure is also strong, with incredible talent across the sector. Maintaining Ukraine's position in the international science community has been central to several responses of UK HEIs to date.

40. In 2019, 0.43% of Ukraine's GDP was spent on research and development and in 2020, 0.41%. For comparison, GDP expenditure for the same years in Poland was 1.32% and 1.39% respectively. For Slovakia, a close but much smaller country, it reached 0.83% and 0.91%. This indicates an ambitious system, but one constrained by financial resource. However, Ukraine's involvement in nine Horizon 2020 projects and its associated membership of Euratom, EUREKA, and the Science for Peace and Security NATO programme, demonstrate that its hope for development through collaboration is strong.

41. Much of the country's ambition pivots on this desire to connect. Efforts to align Ukrainian higher education with European standards, to integrate into the European Research Area, and to work with those institutions of highly ranked global status have been prevalent throughout our research. The connectivity created in crisis response activities so far may well accelerate the incredible partnerships already nurtured by Ukrainian universities.

42. The war has undoubtedly exacerbated some systemic issues in higher education and brought others to the forefront. Graduate competencies often fall short of labour market needs, research and teaching infrastructure has been damaged, and the loss of (mostly male) personnel to military efforts is increasing resource pressures. A low-tech structured economy, coupled with prioritisation of wartime spending, leaves little resource for research and development. The objectives of the NRFU may now be placed even lower on the education agenda.

43. Despite this, Ukraine's higher education system remains strong in the face of adversity. Its government's Draft Recovery Plan, which places education and science at the centre of reconstruction, highlights key opportunities under the themes of its system, funding, and partnerships. The plan notes factors such as the low financial autonomy of HEIs and the loss of human life caused by the invasion as significant barriers to education reform. However, it also proposes internationalisation through collaborative projects and involvement of international researchers, prioritisation of English studies, and the development of interdisciplinary teaching programmes. Through these means the country hopes to draft a 'roadmap for modernisation' – something that newly forged relationships with UK institutions may support. In-country relationships between universities are also strong. Where universities are not under direct military threat, they are able to focus on capacity-building projects and the development of intellectual potential to support their colleagues in greatest need of aid. These newly forged relationships are incredibly fruitful and demonstrate the remarkable power of the Ukrainian sector when it is most united and collaborative.

44. In the current situation, unfolding each day, higher education may not be an imminent priority for Ukraine. However, it will play a leading role in its post-war reconstruction, from regional rebuilding to trauma support and psychological wellbeing. The UK's blueprint for international education may well be a virtue for its new partners in eastern Europe and the delivery of the UK's vision for a 'Global Britain' is driven through such activities. However, there is also an emphasis on equal partnership and mutual benefit. The activities coordinated by UK universities in response to the current crisis may well act as a springboard into improved HE provision, maintaining the integrity of Ukraine's HE capacity and allowing it to emerge stronger. The Ukrainian sector has shown its incredible strength, resilience, and ambition in the face of war. Without this, the UK would not have benefited from multiple partnership opportunities with Ukraine.

UK higher education in 2023

45. Whilst the challenges faced by the UK higher education sector have no comparison to those being experienced by colleagues in Ukraine, they are relevant to this research in that they contextualise the constraints and challenges of any response. The UK sector has been influenced by various factors, including changes in government policies, a new regulatory landscape, technological advancements, socioeconomic shift, and global events.

46. HEIs are grappling with financial pressures due to reduced public funding, increased competition, and uncertainties surrounding tuition fees. The government decision to fix domestic tuition fees until 2025/26, alongside the impact of sustained high inflation, are together creating a challenging financial environment. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted revenue streams, with potential long-term implications for funding and sustainability.

47. Despite the UK continuing to be an attractive destination for study, global competition for international students is strong. The policy environment is also challenging, with the UK government seeking to reduce net migration. The UK research environment has also been impacted by both policy change and financial challenges post-pandemic. The changes in access to European research funding post-Brexit and tightening UK government resources all add to the financial pressures being experienced by the sector.

48. Universities are autonomous bodies in the UK. In England, universities are regulated under new powers by the Office for Students, which falls under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, but they have broad decision-making powers. The diverse arrangements for accountability and regulation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales provide for the same autonomous status and resultant capacity to act.

49. Ukrainian universities are similarly governed through a combination of legal regulations (the Law of Ukraine on Higher Education), institutional governance and administrative structures. Both systems adhere to the Bologna process with similar academic qualification frameworks and both systems enjoy elements of autonomy that are not seen in all countries.

Higher education and the war in Ukraine

50. The UK higher education sector response to Ukraine has been broad, with coordinated programmes ranging from the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative to the Researchers at Risk Fellowships Programme, and through scholarships and student support.

51. Those responses have been enabled by a shift in the government policy environment, one which has removed many of the barriers of immigration, though only to an extent. Policy introductions, including the Homes for Ukraine programme, were agreed to make the visa process both faster and simpler in comparison to other crises.

52. Most notable in the context of the response to Ukraine has been the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative. The scheme, conceived and facilitated by CCG, has been a new and unique response and it is through this twinning scheme that the voices of Ukrainian universities have been reflected clearly in this report.

53. From research that contributes to better understanding of the causes and consequences of humanitarian crisis and which adds to policy development, to innovations in public health, disaster management and conflict resolution, to education and training that prepares students for careers in humanitarian aid, the UK HE sector has always had a significant role in addressing global humanitarian crises. Universities actively collaborate with international organisations, NGOs, and others to support capacity-building initiatives, knowledge exchange and other programmes. These various responses have not always been coordinated and this brings the potential for duplication, omission, and lost impact in crisis scenarios where all resource matters and every day counts. Efficiency and timeliness are key.

54. The sector response to Ukraine indicates a step change in that response, both in the scale of the response and also in that it demonstrates greater coordination. UUK has been central to the coordinated response – one which has seen widespread support from universities and from sector partners, such as: Cara, JISC, STAR, The British Academy, SCONUL, and Refugee Education UK.

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55. Changes to policy and the availability of funding have also been critical. The change in the UK government's support for students, allowing access to both UK fees and the UK loan book have been instrumental, as have changes to visa regulations, although the latter has remained difficult to negotiate and has arguably not gone far enough.

56. To support the response mobilised by the UK sector, various financial packages of support have been made available. The headline figures are as follows:

   • £5m from Research England in support of the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative, allowing universities to 'scale up and sustain' their partnerships and 'provide new cross-sector resources'. 33 partners received grants to support collaborative R&I projects on the one-year anniversary of the twinning scheme, again allocated by Research England.

   • £3m from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in support of the Researchers at Risk scheme, followed by a further £9.8m and culminating in a total of £12.8m.

   • £4m distributed by the Office for Students in support of Ukrainian students studying at HEIs across England who may be experiencing financial hardship.

57. It was estimated in August 2022 that this funding had been matched by an estimated £50m in individual donations and resources from UK HEIs.

58. Such funding has been a core enabler of the sector's capacity to assist. Accountability and transparency associated with these funded initiatives has, quite naturally, led to a debate regarding the measurement of success of the various funded initiatives. And it is here that two of the most complex areas of the research have emerged. The first relates to the measurement of success in an ongoing war. Whilst performance measures relating to, for example, student hardship or the protection of individual researchers are simpler to measure, the impact of research investment during an ongoing invasion are less easy to determine. It is likely that the full impact of these initiatives will not be able to be measured until peace has been reached.

59. The second area of research relates particularly to the individual donations and the funding of resources by UK HEIs. Here, questions relate to the eligibility of donations and other support within the charitable objects of individual universities.

60. The sector response is situated within a complex set of established organisations and frameworks for humanitarian response. It is a key aim of this research that it informs a more structured, coordinated and sustainable response to current and future humanitarian crisis.

Descriptive Overview of the UK Higher Education Sector Response to the Invasion of Ukraine

61. Here we cover the three main responses as evidenced in the research:
    - The UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative
    - The Researchers at Risk Fellowship Programme
    - Scholarships and student support

    We also touch upon other notable initiatives that were raised through the course of our interviews.

UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative

62. The UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative has been a notable driver in mobilising the response of UK universities. Delivered by CCG and supported by Universities UK, the twinning scheme embodies a facilitative and consultative partnership approach, connecting institutions in crisis with those in the position to help.

63. Born in March 2022 following the expression of primary needs from Ukrainian HEIs, the scheme formulates a collaboration model with a three-part rationale: to maintain the integrity of Ukraine's HE system, to prevent brain drain, and to help Ukrainian universities to emerge with new skills, experiences, and capabilities. The scheme forges relationships between Ukrainian universities and similar UK universities and is intended to produce long-term, capacity-building, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

64. The needs-based and collaborative approach to crisis response is encapsulated by the programme. The great unity of the UK sector has been noted, but this breadth of commitment required coordination. Pivoting the response on a single entity may have been a risk, but there are indications of early success, with over 100 partnerships currently in place and universities continue joining the scheme. The coordinating, 'matchmaking' mechanism needed to connect institutions in crisis with capacity builders was, in many ways, found in CCG.

65. The policy environment surrounding the invasion of Ukraine, in which governments of respective countries shared their condemnation of the war and held open communication, has been enabling. CCG's direct links to Ukrainian governmental departments may have fast-tracked the ability to assess need and adapt to the country's education landscape. This was further bolstered by the shared institutional values – at some levels – between UK and Ukrainian universities, especially surrounding research quality, European research projects, and women in academia.

66. In meeting the need to preserve the integrity of Ukraine's HE system, CCG's approach has been one of capacity building. The creation of dependencies should be avoided in crisis response, to protect in-country capacity to rebuild and reconstruct through education. The facilitative and consultative role has been key in the matchmaking process. As a facilitator, CCG has overseen the partnership process – chairing meetings between partners, showing those with willingness to help how they could deploy resources in concrete and meaningful ways, and supporting English language training. In its consultative role, it has prompted some UK (and Ukrainian) university leaders to rethink their models of internationalisation and has demonstrated the power of knowledge and skill sharing in crisis and beyond.

67. One of the factors leading to the success of the scheme, identified through our interviews, was the ability of the programme to be 'multi touchpoint' rather than 'transactional.' CCG themselves recognised the ability of twinning to 'harness all aspects of an institution', extending beyond research and teaching into student support services, professional services, and Student Unions. The learning extended between institutions is also key to capacity building, especially given Ukraine's ambitions to reform education prior to the invasion, such as exposure to higher standards of HE and different research systems. For the UK, exposure to Ukraine's research landscape is a contrast to the impact-focused and heavily ranked nature of research in UK HEIs.

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68. Beyond this, the research and innovation grants announced on the first anniversary of the twinning scheme will see 33 partners begin collaborative research projects. Funded by Research England and delivered by UUKi, this is not only a further example of in-country capacity building which focuses on key areas of Ukraine's economy, but direct participation within these respective systems. This has also extended to student mobility, with over 1000 students from both countries currently engaging in online and in-person exchanges, and some Student Unions have also been linked to support peer-to-peer relationships. Internationalisation is happening at institutional and individual levels.

69. The coordination of a project of this magnitude has inevitably created areas of challenge, both through CCG and the HEIs involved in partnering. Some were circumstantial – language barriers, loss of power and connection, or the displacement of key individuals – and some systemic. Many of our conversations alluded to concerns about twinning arrangements appearing as a PR exercise, rather than meaningful and consistent ways to support education through crisis. Where success measures are largely anecdotal at present, there is some difficulty in demonstrating the impact of these relationships.

70. In response, CCG conducted a Twinning Satisfaction Survey relating to the first year of partnerships. The main obstacles to partnership development were identified as a lack of funding, bureaucratic delays, non-responsiveness or slow responsiveness, and the general circumstances faced by Ukrainian partners who remained in-country. Beyond this, the foundations for partnering caused difficulties in some cases. Value alignment was noted as important for many, and where partner institutions had environmentally unsustainable research specialisms for example, institutional values were seen to be compromised. The five-year commitment required of the partnership was also an unfamiliar arrangement for those with much shorter financial planning cycles and the context and key risks of the host sector at any given time must also be considered. The current context of the UK HE landscape, of which financial sustainability is a concern, has been explored earlier in the section 'UK higher education in 2023'.

71. Interviews indicated a lack of existing cooperation between UK and Ukrainian institutions. This is supported by, for instance, the 2019/20 HESA Aggregate Offshore Record which shows only 295 Ukrainian students studying either directly with, or in partnership with, a total of 11 UK universities (including the Open University and University of London distance learning programmes). Pre-existing connections were a great enabler to Bath Spa University, as explored in Case Study 4. Elsewhere, relationship building was not so straightforward. There was one example of a values-based conflict around investment in fossil fuels which emerged post twinning.

72. Interview participants highlighted the need for greater investment of time in relationship building. This has been difficult to achieve in ongoing crisis – by nature, time is scarce, and responses must happen with a sense of urgency. Understandably at this stage, relationships were highlighted as being primarily one-way. Whilst some exchange of knowledge has taken place, it has, so far, been disproportionate and so risks a lack of equality of voice.

73. The twinning mechanism has, undoubtedly, been key in the response of UK institutions. Many have acted beyond the twinning relationship, and some independently of it. Others however felt themselves to have relied on the scheme in its entirety, 'hinging' their response on this initiative. This was a key premise of one of our interviews, which posed the question: what would have happened if CCG had not acted as early and efficiently as they did?

74. There is no doubt that the twinning initiative has been an incredible facilitator of support, described as "transformative" by one interview participant, but this was also a theme more generally experienced throughout the interview process. In considering the humanitarian response framework, the Twinning Initiative makes three ideas clear: that the mechanism should be facilitative, consultative, and capacity building.

75. The initiative also has scalability. CCG has managed a great number of partnerships and the involvement of both UK and Ukrainian partners in matchmaking has been successful in many cases, exceeding the FCDO funding proposal target of 100 twins in the first year. Driven by the

UK experience, CCG is also exploring twinning opportunities with other countries, too. However, the repeatability of the initiative would not be possible everywhere – especially in terms of differing academic standards and regulations, diverse cultural values, and different political environments. The twinning process is likely to have hastened the Ukrainian higher education sector ambitions to develop through partnerships and connected infrastructure.

76. The initiative has highlighted the need for an organising central agent to coordinate logistics, communications and to affect relationship building. The twinning scheme has been just that – the essential matchmaker mechanism that has needs-based and collaborative support at its core. If the design or content of the programme is not replicable beyond the European relationship, this element certainly is. Whilst it is too early to assess the success of individual twinning relationships, the psychological impact of wide-scale support has certainly been felt by Ukrainian partners.

Researchers at Risk Fellowships Programme

77. In partnership with Cara, The British Academy launched its 'Researchers at Risk' Fellowships programme in direct response to the Ukraine crisis. The initial £3m package of support, provided by UK Government, was announced in April 2022 and applications opened in the same month. The programme aimed to offer additional support to existing programmes across institutions and partnerships with Cara and was intended to allow recipients of the fellowships to continue their research and gain new skills, whilst developing collaborative relationships with their UK equivalents.

78. Drawing on existing alliances, the scheme is supported by the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Royal Society. Six core disciplines are covered by the scheme: natural sciences, medical sciences, engineering, humanities, social sciences, and the arts. Financial contributions to the running of the programme have been abundant, with £0.5m from The Nuffield Foundation, £50,000 from SAGE Publishing and £1m over five years from The Leverhulme Trust. The contribution of the UK government was also significant with the initial £3m package supplied upon the scheme's inception and a further £9.8m announced in June 2022. The £12.8 total was supplied via the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, now recognised as the Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology.

79. The fellowships span a two-year period with recipients awarded £37,000 - £42,550 (if the maximum of 15% uplift is granted) per annum for the course of the programme. Applications had to be made via a UK institution, who would name the applicant, the researcher at risk, and a designated mentor. Both awardee and mentor had to produce a joint statement alongside a risk letter supplied by Cara and a financial statement and justification. The named applicant also had to act as a visa sponsor and identify six months of accommodation for the researcher at risk to reside in. An institutional statement also had to be supplied, covering these details.

80. Awardees were selected based on the perceived strengths of the UK host in providing a supportive academic and residential environment, as well as the compatibility of the awardee, mentor, and institution.

81. Fellowships were subsequently managed in-house, with mentors acting as a single point of contact and coordinator of individuals on the scheme. One award holder said the programme is "playing a vitally formative role in [her] life in the UK – it keeps [her] positive, focused, and motivated." The structure provided by the scheme, as well as the wraparound support provided, has been a great asset.

82. One interview participant specifically raised challenges in relation to the Researchers at Risk model. Some related to the balance of support between the scheme provider and the hosting university. In times of crisis, it was also noted that there may be significant feelings of isolation, loss, and psychological distress that may make integration difficult. Aside from the emotional impact of invasion or other crisis situations, there will also be an element of intercultural competence to navigate. The operations and professional environment of a UK academic setting may differ to that of Ukraine and other countries, creating some disparities in the ability of academics from each background to connect, collaborate, and align their research objectives.

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83. There was also an implication during some of our discussions that, as much as developing the capacity of schemes like this one is important, there must be a matched capacity available within UK host institutions. Schemes of this kind depend on UK institutions to provide the equipment, space, and additional services to the awardee and whilst the financial stipend is likely to cover primary research and living costs, the availability of these resources may be scarce. This is particularly relevant in a financially constrained sector and in addition to current structural issues in the UK concerning housing and school places, which may well impact the dependants of those selected. Regional diversity within the UK is also important to consider in this framework, with the majority of scholars hosted by institutions based in England and Scotland. However, it identifies the particularly generous institutions of the less represented regions of Wales and Northern Ireland.

84. The visa routes chosen by applicants and their institutions was a considerable lesson learnt since the beginning of the scheme. The Homes for Ukraine (Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme) provided the most support for fleeing Ukrainians and their dependants whilst having no clerical fees which are present in most of the other visa schemes. Institutions faced some difficulty navigating this visa route as the scheme does not account for organisations applying as sponsors providing accommodation. In many cases in the early rounds of the scheme, individual sponsorships were more easily identified but now, over a year into the invasion, there are fewer volunteers offering sponsorship than at the beginning of the crisis.

85. The programme, akin to the scholarships described in this report, has great strength in its ability to become a 'blueprint' for action in future crises. The ability to activate such a scheme, which protects the intellectual potential of a country in crisis and the professional development of its academics, is powerful. This is particularly relevant to areas of post-war capacity building and regional development on a local level and on a personal level, the ability to pursue and be fulfilled by education. There are also great strengths in exposure to another country's research system. The UK's strong emphasis on rankings and impact may be unfamiliar to a guest for example, but the funding structures this gives way to may be a great opportunity for Ukrainian academics who wish to pursue research in strategic priority areas.

86. Exposure to different systems, skills sharing, collaboration, and protection of intellectual potential in-country are all demonstrated by schemes like Researchers at Risk. The ability of the sector to work together in coordinating mechanisms that best meet recipient needs should be celebrated. Although challenges in culture and capacity must be navigated, the insights of those in receipt of fellowships shows the power of the programme to reframe crisis experiences. Primarily, it allows those most at risk to pursue their academic goals and find some stability amongst displacement.

Scholarships and student support

87. Where universities have been able to deploy resources rapidly and effectively, there has often been a pre-existing familiarity with navigating institutional crisis responses. This has been particularly evident in scholarship schemes and other support programmes. It was noted during our interviews that where pathways to UK refuge are safe and legal, they are often found in the labour market or education.

88. The adaptation of existing schemes, rather than the establishment of new ones, has been a great lever for universities to pull. The University of Leicester adapted its affiliation with the Bright Path Futures programme to support those arriving from Ukraine. The wider response of the university has been explored in Case Study 6. Originally developed for Afghan families, the scheme focuses on social integration, language skills, and trust and confidence-building exercises. The harnessing of all aspects of an institution – including pastoral support – is found in the programme. Leicester's response has placed particular emphasis on its civic connections, being a University of Sanctuary and sitting in a City of Sanctuary, too. Beyond the university, town, community, and local authority bodies have been embedded in the response. Civic connections may allow displaced students to also connect with local towns and regions, which generates a sense of place, belonging, and inclusion. Education is considered to generate feelings of safety and normality amongst refugees, especially children. Social relations, which universities may generate through their civic purpose, can also support belonging, inclusion, and settlement.

89. However, the integration into civic life does pose some challenges. This is particularly evident in current structural issues in UK regions and emphasises the importance of considering the local context of the host country in any given time of crisis. This includes, for example, current housing shortages which places further pressure on local authorities tasked with hosting refugee families and is particularly challenging when the university purpose is considered. In providing an educational route to refuge, the student may be hosted but with no extra capacity available to also host the student's family. This is intensified by the lack of policy support, such as the inability of universities to host larger groups of refugees under the proposed second phase of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and also extends to primary, secondary, and further education, where dependants may require placement in local schools. Where university extension into the locality is a great enabler of support services and feelings of belonging and inclusion for those displaced, there may be systemic blockers to the success of full integration into regional communities. The recent policy change disallowing international postgraduate taught students to arrive in the UK with dependants follows a constrained landscape of housing and schooling capacity.

90. Pastoral support activities are also key in navigating experiences of trauma and psychological distress. The University of Leicester also champions the 'trauma-informed pedagogy' approach, which considers the unique needs of students with refugee backgrounds. Through training and workshops, the university has provided teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages with an understanding of the impact of trauma on the learning experience, and how these experiences may be navigated in the classroom to create safe, positive, and nurturing academic environments. They focus on identifying trauma in young people, applying strategies to mitigate the impact of trauma, and the development of individuals post-trauma.

91. Where universities have adapted pre-existing schemes, there is an appetite to derive innovation and learning from these new models to enable improved responses to future crises. Emphasising the importance of early intervention, many see universities as having a central role in exercising autonomy, deploying resources and facilitating packages of support where the UK Government, for example, is constrained in its capacity. However, there is also recognition that some of the ad-hoc and urgent provisions made must be more robust to be needs-based and context-sensitive in the future. These responses must be formalised.

92. The creation of educational pathways to safety very much aligns with university capabilities. Described as a 'groundbreaking' scheme combining sanctuary with education', King's College London (KCL) has been a sector leader in coordinating the mass hosting of Ukrainian, and other, refugees. The university is the first to be accredited as a 'community sponsor' under the UK Refugee Community Sponsor Scheme and creates 'safe, legal, education-led pathways into Europe'. Importantly, it allows those people who are displaced but still have a desire to study, to arrive with their families – an opportunity that hadn't been available prior to this scheme. Hinging on a similar model to the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, the scheme led by KCL offers additional support and matches displaced guests with community hosts, as well as pairing students with the educational opportunities most relevant to them in the UK. Akin to the experience of developing partnerships under the Twinning Initiative, this is another example of the power of other systems and policies acting as a framework for the development of new models; it allows universities to invest resources in people, management, and practical assistance, rather than the inception of entirely new frameworks. The focus on capacity building, which equips institutions with the people, policies, and practices to respond to crises now and in the future, is key.

93. KCL has coordinated the response with Citizens UK and a consortium of other universities, explored in Case Study 7. The desire to help other universities to develop their own schemes is at the core of the sanctuary programme and the ability to offer a model which can be scaled up or down depending on the crisis is demonstrated by the current framework. In formalising some of the urgent responses made so far, it hopes to 'shift from humanitarian gesture to core structure', and asks for the same across the sector.

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94. Other support measures have included summer schools, languages training, and catch-up content for those where core learning has been disrupted. At the University of Plymouth, the Hello Project, a buddying scheme created for international students, has been adapted for students of their university and their twinning partners in Ukraine. The scheme fosters peer connections, promotes cultural exchange and creates a mechanism for peer support.

95. In other areas however, obstacles have been encountered. In hosting those displaced by the invasion, a huge amount of wraparound resource is needed. This may include counselling services for those dealing with trauma, as well as the creation of bespoke safeguarding policies tailored to the needs of refugee experienced individuals. There is also likely to be a discrepancy between institutional capacity and recipient need. Where scholarship schemes and hosting opportunities have been vast and abundant, recipient numbers are understandably low, and places oversubscribed. In some cases, academic standards have also been a challenge. It was noted during some interviews that there is a lack of alignment of academic abilities between UK and Ukrainian students undertaking equivalent programmes of learning. This creates difficulties in navigating curriculum content in the UK.

96. Where existing sanctuary schemes have been developed to meet the needs of the Ukraine crisis, the power of models to be deployed appropriately according to the specifics of a situation has been demonstrated. Where new programmes of support have been established, it is hoped these will become a catalyst for responding in the future. Though challenging to create a model that could be enacted across different geographies, cultures, and political environments, there is a need for transition from ad-hoc responses to formalised mechanisms embedded into operational structures. Where responses are sustainable and embedded in strategy, they may be most impactful.

97. The research also highlighted a range of individual university responses and individual responses led by Student Unions. One of our major findings is that the coordinated sector and partner response has been a defining feature and successful outcome of the Ukraine situation. However, there have been some notable projects worthy of highlighting.

98. The Data for Ukraine project, which evolved from a pre-existing research project to be more specific to the invasion, demonstrates an innovative and research-led response to the crisis, adapting and accelerating existing projects. It involves the Kyiv School of Economics, the MOBILISE project at the Universities of Manchester and Oxford, and various American universities. The project uses Twitter data to identify instances of civilian resistance, human rights abuses, displacement of people, and humanitarian support needs. Data is gathered via keyword searches to identify reports of these experiences via verified social media accounts and is estimated to discover these events up to three hours prior to the mainstream media. It is an incredible example of the adaptation of existing projects to meet crisis need and the power of research-led support in meeting real and immediate needs of those impacted. In a Sky News interview, Dr Olga Onuch of the University of Manchester, stated that the project captures, "the living language of how these things are reported in social media." It is hoped that the documentation of these events may play a role in achieving future justice.

99. Students have also played a vital role in the response to date. One student at Glasgow Caledonian University donated an ambulance in the early stages of the crisis, funded by himself and his family and he also drove the vehicle to the Polish-Ukrainian border. This incredible act of selflessness sought to distribute medical supplies and to transport people in danger. The same student has since delivered a second ambulance to Ukraine as well as delivering over 30 more to other geographies, including Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

100. The wider coordination of Student Unions has also been an important response across many institutions. This has included fundraising drives, donation points supported by Red Cross, and consideration of ethical purchasing. In March 2022, the National Union of Students (NUS) stated, "NUS Services will no longer accept Russian products in the supply chain" and this was accompanied by a list of available vodka suppliers without production links to Russia, which could be used in SU venues.

101. There are indications that some capacity is being dedicated to reconstruction and rebuilding post-war. The British Council, for example, has begun conversations with Advance HE to develop a Future Leaders programme. Led by the Ukrainian team, the programme intends to support those who will lead the work to reconstruct and reequip Ukrainian higher education, post-invasion. The programme was designed by Advance HE in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine President's Fund on Education, Science and Sports, and Ukrainian universities. The three-year capacity-building programme will focus on the development of the leadership capacity by relying on the UK's sectoral strengths and with support of Ukrainian HEIs as part of the country's national revitalisation and rebuilding goals. A programme pilot will be delivered by the end of 2023.

102. Advance HE's work in Ukraine began with a Ukraine Higher Education Leadership programme. Delivered between 2016–2019 the programme engaged teams of staff at 40 Ukrainian universities to develop groups of change agents.

103. Following this work, a national Teaching Excellence Programme for Ukraine working with the British Council and local partners was created. This followed an initial scoping study of needs which Advance HE conducted based on an initial UK study visit, surveys and focus groups of Ukrainian stakeholders. It began in 2019 and was delivered to two cohorts, across 10 universities, to develop Centres of Excellence in institutions. The project was disrupted initially by Covid-19 and subsequently by the Russian invasion, but was completed in 2022.

104. Advance HE also delivered a programme to support 'displaced universities' (these were universities initially displaced by the 2014 annexation of Crimea) that supported two institutions with a range of topics around leadership, governance, teaching, internationalisation and civic engagement. An EU-funded project led by the Institute of Higher Education in Ukraine and Advance HE was commissioned by the British Council to deliver parts of the programme related to Advance HE's international experience, with the Institute of HE providing local context.

105. At the end of 2022, the British Council Ukraine put out a call to design a Ukraine HE Future Leaders Programme which had been discussed between a range of key stakeholders: the Ukraine President's Fund for Education, Science and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Cormack Consultancy Group and British Council Ukraine. The initial programme scope was to develop 500 future leaders across one hundred Ukrainian Universities over a 3-year period. Advance HE was awarded the tender and between December 2022–March 2023 ran focus groups with different stakeholders (including Ukrainian university leaders, potential programme participants, potential Ukrainian delivery partners, other Ukrainian stakeholder institutions, and potential UK university collaborators) and following these discussions, put together a report – accepted by the stakeholders – which contained an outline scope, learning outcomes, timeline, and an approach to delivering this programme.

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Factors Supporting, Enabling, or Inhibiting Responses

106. Over the course of the research, we conducted interviews with over 30 individuals, as well as a series of informal exploratory conversations. A full list of interviewees has been supplied in Appendix 3.

107. When discussing the various responses to the crisis, interview participants most frequently referred to resources – whether they be people, physical or digital infrastructure – and to policy. For that reason, the data is grouped into the following themes:

   • People
   • Government and policy
   • Funding and financial support
   • Digital capabilities
   • Local context

108. Details of the research methodology and limitations of the study can be found in Appendix 2.

People

109. As with many situations requiring universities to mobilise quickly, it is the creative efforts of individuals at the core of institutional responses. From individual fundraising to the rapid design of international programmes of support, HE colleagues have been the driving force behind the UK sector's response.

110. In the highest levels of leadership – whether that be government, sector bodies, or Vice Chancellors – a clear structural need has been identified. The suggestion of a 'one to many' approach became a consensus theme across many interviews, where several colleagues saw merit in a single leading agent who had specified lines of responsibility. Particularly within the policy environment, it was also proposed that a key sector agent, such as Universities UK, would be best placed to coordinate the sector's response with the advice of an appropriate thematic lead which was, in this case, the Department for Education.

111. At institutional level, skills and expertise were observed as transforming the crisis response process and came from various sources. The sector perhaps has a newfound resilience to operational transition following the Covid-19 pandemic, with repeatable processes for responding rapidly to change. Some also drew on their existing networks, such as Cara or Universities of Sanctuary, which had exposed them to crisis situations in other contexts. Familiarity with immigration terminology and immigration policy for example, or experience in navigating the crisis funding landscape, became a great enabler.

112. In other areas, key knowledge gaps have been exposed and these were evident in digital licensing regulations, intercultural competence, and the visas and immigration landscape. Some institutions sought to ask, "what can we do?" in the immediate phase of the crisis, rather than approaching Ukrainian institutions and asking, "what do you need?" Again, this perhaps pertains to the absence of an appropriate leadership structure in the early days of the crisis where some lack of coordination led to premature or misguided responses. The University of Liverpool instead asked Ukrainian partners what was needed from the bottom, before mobilising support upwards amongst staff. This is a great example of a capacity-building approach which meets the real rather than perceived needs of universities in crisis. Elsewhere, a need is illuminated for an adequate skills training programme to support the response to crisis in the future.

113. The people structures in place, both within an institution and sector-wide, can transform crisis response processes. What began as gestures of compassion and willingness to help, in some cases resulted in fully seconded teams. Some institutions even appointed crisis-response leads, in the form of Programme Managers and Senior Project Managers. The communication structure has also been distinct: where external agencies and NGOs had before communicated with Widening Participation teams for example, they were now able to speak directly to senior leadership teams, including Vice Chancellors. Not only was this hugely transformative in allowing those on the ground to bypass or fast-track through policies and standard procedures, but it also sets a precedent for lines of senior accountabilities in future crises. In times of crisis, certainty is needed rapidly by those seeking refuge.

114. No matter the seniority of the responding individuals, the value of bottom-up collaboration should be emphasised. A mechanism for those in crisis to articulate their needs and priorities is important for advice to then be disseminated through senior leadership. This also means that having a lean response team is key; in one of our interviews this was described as being a team where lines of accountability are clear, but also minimal. Decisions can be made quickly, and core stakeholders are involved. This may be a crisis response team that can be activated and deployed where needed. However, it should be noted that those currently coordinating responses within universities are largely doing so on a voluntary basis, in addition to their daily workload. In many universities, resource has not been specifically allocated.

115. As with all international projects in the sector, intercultural competence is important and can often bring sensitivities to a partnership. The response in the Czech Republic for example – a country which also shares a Slavic language with Ukraine – included cultural preservation measures. The Lex Ukraine package supports teaching in Ukrainian at school level. In the UK however, few individuals in response teams were fluent in Ukrainian and cultural differences naturally persist. Whilst English language proficiency may have long term impacts for Ukraine's internationalisation goals, this is not a priority nor always appropriate in times of crisis. The Open University developed a free online 'Introduction to Ukrainian Language and Culture' course for those hosting Ukrainian refugees and should be commended. Newcastle University has also delivered a bespoke English language training programme as part of its response and this is explored in Case Study 5.

116. The huge success of many response projects has largely relied on the great unity and togetherness of the sector. Many have acted charitably and on a voluntary basis, but many have noted the challenges in sustaining this momentum, particularly when the initial shock of the invasion subsides and close media attention trails off. In resourcing crisis responses with appropriate individuals, it was suggested throughout our interviews that a balance needs to be struck between the enthusiasm to support and the need to be 'lean', 'efficient' and 'expert', with the Open University recommending standing up lean capabilities during time of crisis. Agility in any response framework is pivotal.

Government and policy

117. The invasion of Ukraine may represent a step change in the approach to conflict in UK politics. For some, the invasion of a country that shares some familiar values and has proximity to the UK may have represented a major change in public understanding of European security. For universities, an existing awareness of Ukrainian research and researchers – created through many EU-funded projects – resulted in some connections which are absent from more distant geographies. In discussing the policy environment in response to the invasion, two approaches must be considered: the first refers to short-term and immediate measures, such as visa routes; the second is longer term – where we may find capacity-building potential.

118. So far, the government has coordinated a dual-pronged approach to the crisis, consisting of funding provision, including the £5m package of support administered via Research England. The other has involved changes to policy, including three immigration routes available to Ukrainian nationals. Whilst funding has been an enabler of action and programme development, policy decisions have often posed obstacles to the intended actions of UK universities, with policy changes, in some cases, delaying decision-making. The alignment of policy and funding is integral to a successful humanitarian response.

119. On 29 March 2022, the Home Office announced three immigration routes available to Ukrainian nationals escaping the war: the Ukraine Extension Scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme, and the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme. Some have praised these routes as constituting a faster and simpler visa process than previous introductions. Already familiar to UK universities, another option was the Global Talent Visa which allows leaders in research or academia a five-year residency. Participants to the research did raise concerns regarding a brain drain as a potential risk of academics leaving home environments. This was a particular factor in talking to Ukrainian participants and no doubt a concern of any relocation scheme.

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120. In response to a written question on behalf of the Department for Education, the then Secretary of State Andrea Jenkyns replied, "the department has made clear to providers that they should be as flexible as possible when considering applications for […] those from Ukraine." Where universities were willing to be flexible however, it was often government policies disabling them.

121. The Homes for Ukraine scheme allows UK sponsors to commit to providing a minimum of six months of accommodation for a Ukrainian guest. The press release published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities explained that further participation of 'charities, community groups and businesses' would constitute what was perceived as a 'phase two' of the scheme. An anniversary briefing confirmed that there has still been no update to this and has caused many frustrations to UK universities, shared by colleagues during our interviews. Many were ready and willing to offer empty rooms in university halls, something that would have brought together education, the domestic setting and civic communities for those arriving in the UK. One interviewee noted a constant tension between good intentions and the policy regimes being enacted. Slow policy decisions create a disparity between available resources and their use. This lack of unity meant responses were often piecemeal, rather than existing as a complete response system. Where university autonomy can be a great enabler of responses, it also needs the support of policy to be able to deploy resources effectively.

122. To reflect on the funding provision of the UK government to date, the state has been a great enabler of crisis response actions. A total of £12.8m was provided to The British Academy to support its Researchers at Risk programme which has so far supported over 170 fellowships. The £5m granted via Research England intended to support the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative and a further £190,000 was allocated by the FCDO to support the scheme's management and administration. The government also increased its presence in the Ukrainian science and technology space via its Global Entrepreneur programme led by the Department for International Trade. The programme offers temporary relocation for science and technology business leaders, providing a hub where this can no longer be in-country. Through its collaborative Global Wales programme across last year and this, Universities Wales had also funded £265k worth of projects between Welsh and Ukrainian institutions. Capacity-building potential is exemplified here.

123. In a landmark change to the UK HE sector's capabilities in responding to crisis, it was also announced just two months after the invasion, that Ukrainian refugees studying at English universities would be treated as domestic students. This included HE student support, home fee status, [and] tuition fee caps and particularly transformed the financial response measures of universities. Financial means of supporting, such as scholarships, were no longer appropriate in every circumstance and many were able to prioritise more practical measures, such as catch-up courses and community-building activities. This is another example of needs-led and collaborative responding, supporting the continuation of education and equipping young people with the skills to return and participate in the Ukrainian economy post-war. Of course, the possibility of students wishing to remain in the UK and facilitating brain drain is still a pertinent risk.

124. In its facilitative role, the response of the government has received much praise. Further evidence is found in the direct address of Michelle Donelan (then Minister of State for Higher and Further Education) and George Freeman (then Minister for Science, Research and Innovation) who jointly wrote a letter to the sector requesting actions to be taken. Similar addresses were lacking in other industries, therefore giving universities and sector bodies greater licence to respond. However, many of our conversations have acknowledged the overt difference in responses to this crisis, when compared to those in other geographies. Whilst the immigration routes were welcomed, it has been argued that the different treatment of individuals, depending on the country of crisis from which they are fleeing, has been brought to light. Country-specific packages of support have been noted as problematic in other contexts too (see 'Funding and Financial Support'). One factor may well be the 'consensus position' of the UK public in condemning the war, with 88% of Britons supporting the government sending humanitarian aid immediately after the invasion. This was an important lever in allowing the government to act without overwhelming public scrutiny – something challenging for governments outside of Europe. The safe pathways created by the UK government in allowing Ukrainian students and academics to arrive in the UK has accelerated the ability of universities to host these groups.

125. There was also a suggestion during our interviews that the government's Global Britain rhetoric has been served well here, demonstrating the protection and empowerment of European values post-Brexit and the success of the UK in championing European stability. However, there is the tension between a political desire to appear 'global' and the preference to support those with shared European values. The broad exposure to this war, especially within mainstream media and news channels, may also represent wider systemic issues. Whatever the contributing factors may be, the public and state treatment of this crisis must be investigated to create a mechanism for future equity in crisis responses.

126. As we look to the long-term impacts of policymaking however, there may be reason for optimism. A core need of Ukrainian partners has been articulated as maintaining the integrity of Ukraine's HE system. This has both individual importance for citizens, and for the development of civic communities. The UK's familiarity with means of local regional development such as the levelling up agenda, as well as encouragement of the role of universities in enacting this, may provide a blueprint for the role of Ukrainian universities in post-war reconstruction. The UK Government's Strategy for International Development states the intention to drive, 'a more effective international response to humanitarian crises' and to 'strengthen the resilience of countries and communities'. Regarding visas, the leniencies made in response to Ukraine may even be a model to allow for future flexibility. Research, development, and innovation are at the heart of any reconstruction efforts.

127. In its dual-pronged approach, the government has demonstrated a generous, if sometimes flawed, crisis response mechanism. In unifying systems of funding and corresponding policy, future responses can be robust and impactful in the short and long term. It is hoped that where its funding, flexibility and support has been successful, greater parity in future responses will be found. Though UK universities do act autonomously, the policy environment must provide wraparound support to its endeavours.

Funding and Financial support

128. Many responses across the sector have involved some element of financial support. In some cases, this has been overt, such as the £20,000 donated by the University of Sheffield to help rebuild air raid shelters at the Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. In others, less so, such as the temporary secondment of key individuals to project management roles.

129. Whilst this demonstrates the great capacity of the sector to deploy its financial resources generously and effectively, this is tempered by the financial realities of many HEIs. The decline of the tuition fee in real terms, coupled with rising operational costs and industrial dispute, means this generosity can only be extended so far. In responding to crisis, two considerations are pivotal: the market landscape in which the sector is operating at any given time, and the core purpose of an institution when prioritising resource allocation.

130. The sector's generosity is found in its direct pledges of support for those fleeing Ukraine. This has included scholarship programmes, fee waivers, and bursaries. These have also been necessary support measures for Russian or Belarussian students who cannot return home, or whose financial support has been cut off during the invasion. International students are an often forgotten demographic in crisis response measures.

131. Many universities and individuals have also received support from non-central agencies and the private sector. At Newcastle University, a grant of £1m was made available by the Newcastle University Development Trust to fund Sanctuary Scholarships for those fleeing Ukraine and other crises.

132. Amongst this incredible generosity shown by the sector however, momentum must be sustained. In most cases, resource had not been allocated to crisis response endeavours and some of our interviews revealed that the limited capacity of many institutions to financially respond had been unclear. In looking towards a framework of future humanitarian responses, the limited capacity of a university's resource must be emphasised and where resources are even more restricted, stringency must be exercised.

133. Whilst the sector's generosity should be celebrated, some questions have been raised throughout the course of this research. In some cases, institutions that had been unable to support the sector's response to previous crises in other geographies and political contexts, were able to take an active role in the Ukraine response. This may be explained by differing financial positions, or the distinct emotional response to a country close in proximity to the UK – but some have raised moral questions too. This has been particularly emphasised in the popularity of country-specific packages of support, designed to specifically help those from Ukraine. In many cases, universities and external agencies have been advised to make their support packages – mainly scholarships – available to those fleeing crisis from any country.

134. The differentiation in response capacity exercised for the Ukraine invasion may, however, have long-lasting positive impacts. The urgent actions taken in coordinating these responses and finding the resource to bring them to fruition, may set a precedent for future crises, too – the Researchers at Risk programme has been recognised as a blueprint to be repeated in future conflicts and the Displaced Student Opportunities UK portal, which catalogues university opportunities available to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, was inspired by the current invasion in Ukraine but will be maintained and evolved as other situations emerge (see Case Study 8). In this way, many packages of support exercised across the sector will catalyse institutional capacity to respond in future, providing that the limits of that capacity are made clear, or institutions make financial allocations specifically for these causes.

135. Clarity on the capacity of the sector to exercise financial support may be even more pertinent to future crisis situations. The treatment of Ukrainian students as Home students, announced by then universities minister Michelle Donelan in April 2022, had significant impacts on the financial responsibilities of those hosting refugees. Those pursuing studies in the UK were exempt from the international tuition fee and had access to the financial support available to Home students, including loans. This significantly lessened the financial pressures of institutions hosting Ukrainian refugees, although it is unclear whether government policy will extend the same leniency to those impacted by crisis in the future or elsewhere.

136. For this reason, the financial generosity of the sector has been criticised by some. It has been suggested that offers of scholarships or bursaries have been misguided in some cases, due to the Home student classification of those arriving from Ukraine. Doubt has been cast over the role of universities responding to crisis in other areas too, including the charitable remit of UK institutions.

137. In some ways, lines of purpose and responsibility have been blurred – many UK universities are charitable in their values for example, but have a responsibility first and foremost to serve their own student communities. A number of interview participants also talked about the changing nature of support required of their twin, noting how support had changed over time and in response to increasing destruction of infrastructure. Recent support was closer to direct aid, than to educational purpose.

138. There are key questions in relation to the charitable purpose of universities and to whether aid provided by way of donation (cash or other resources) is within the charitable objects of the institution.

139. Charities Commission 2022 advice in relation to support to Ukraine states:

    "Naturally, lots of charities are considering whether they can provide support at this time. You should first consider whether your charity's existing charitable objects allow you to help. These are set out in your charity's governing document."

140. It is a legal responsibility of governors to act within the charitable objects of their university, whether they are an exempt or non-exempt charity.

141. For example, section 12 of the Office for Students[1], 'Regulatory advice 5: Exempt Charities' draws the attention of universities in England to obligations in relation to assets and funds, as follows:

   "The attention of providers that are exempt charities is drawn in particular to the legal obligation to apply their assets and funds only in the furtherance of their charitable purposes. This means that a charity must not use its assets (including land and buildings) and funds to give someone or a group of people a personal or private benefit, unless this is incidental. It must consider carefully how it spends its money so that it can explain how its decisions are, for example, advancing education. These responsibilities apply to all the funds and assets of providers that are exempt charities, and not just to the public funding or grant that a provider may receive."

   The Scottish Funding Council conditions of grant can be viewed at Annex D of the SFC University Final Funding Allocations for Academic Year 2023/24. The Scottish Code of Good HE Governance also refers to the responsibilities of Court or equivalents to observe Scottish Charity Laws. Universities in Wales are also registered charities subject to Charity Commission laws.

142. Charities Commission guidance includes a range of advice for operating effectively in a conflict zone, including reference to effective risk assessment cycles, safeguarding advice, advice for protecting staff working internationally, and due diligence regarding monitoring and verification of the end use of funds.

143. Structural issues in the UK at present, such as housing shortages and rising energy costs, have also impacted those in the university community willing to host. When we look at agencies interacting with the sector, remit must also be considered. In most cases, such agencies are not humanitarian in nature and the financial support offered can only be accounted for to an extent. This also chimes with a core value at the heart of partnerships with Ukraine – that these partnerships are those of equals, not of charity or aid. One interviewee suggested that smaller grants for capacity-building projects are more impactful than single, large gestures of support for this very reason – to better align the goodwill intention with institutional values and purpose.

144. Although this will not be applicable to all crises, financial resources have not always needed to be the key driver in this case. The University of Liverpool demonstrates the great impact of focusing on capacity building and innovation projects, as opposed to direct financial allocations such as staff development programmes. Though still costly in terms of time, resource, and administration, it does show the power of collaboration essential to a partnership. When one UK university approached CCG expressing its interest in the twinning scheme but had a lack of financial resource to allocate, they were reassured that this was not a priority. That university now enjoys a collaborative relationship, where the sharing of knowledge and expertise has outweighed financial donations. Despite this, several universities raised concerns regarding the need to commit financial and other resources for the five-year period required of the twinning scheme. These institutions did not lack empathy and commitment for support to Ukraine but were concerned about the fragility of UK sector finances and the uncertainty around sustaining an initial commitment which was dependent on infrastructure, or even individual people and talent, which they could not commit to being available in the medium-term. A shorter-term commitment of three years, for example, may have encouraged even higher participation in the scheme due to greater alignment to the financial planning cycles we typically see in universities. At the time of writing, some institutions are only now expressing their interest in twinning, having needed to make a more thorough and financially grounded decision than was possible in the immediate phase of the scheme. The sometimes cautious response of universities and the continued engagement in the scheme is an endorsement for twinning, even for those who were initially concerned about the five-year commitment.

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1   At the time of writing the report we had not identified similar publicly available data from HEFCW or DfENI.

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145. Financial support can be a huge enabler in the ability of UK institutions to successfully respond to those in crisis. However, financial resources should be deployed appropriately – whether that be in scholarships, time, or people, and limitation should be exercised - but this also largely depends on circumstance. The treatment of Ukrainian students as Home students reduced the financial need that may be more prevalent in other crises and is another example of multiple systems working together to bring about truly meaningful responses. In those institutions not directly under military attack, it is the building of human capital and intellectual potential that is more valuable than financial resource. Financial support can transform the support offered to those in crisis, often being able to mobilise this support more quickly and enable the continuity of education when it is most important. However, this resource must be allocated appropriately and with some restriction.

146. Longer term, the need to move from funding to financing becomes more critical. Partnering effectively with those specialising in development financing would provide longer-term options and sustained support, particularly as the war in Ukraine ends and the country looks to rebuild its higher education sector. The research evidenced a lack of financing options. Transnational Education initiatives also offer a potential model through which UK and Ukrainian universities could partner to generate revenues for reinvestment. Those partnerships would need to continue to be developed on an equal footing and to be driven by Ukrainian knowledge and capability needs.

Digital capabilities

147. A key enabler in the sector's capacity to respond to crisis has been the facilitative role of UK universities. One area noted to exemplify this has been digital enablement. IT has underpinned the success of many responses – from online content sharing to virtual summer schools, and even the provision of 'anatomy.tv' for medical students. Many resources had already been developed throughout the pivot to online learning during the pandemic.

148. Digital capacity is also weaved into Ukraine's recovery plan. This includes the complete digitalisation of education data and information for the State Education system. This will be transformational for future forecasting and policymaking. The current role of digitalisation, however, has been in accelerating the UK's ability to connect, share, and communicate.

149. The response of JISC meant resilience could be built in-country. Prior to the invasion, Ukrainian institutions were largely relying on local servers to store research data and educational content. The loss of these servers risked being a single point of failure in institutional capacity to continue the delivery of course materials and communications throughout the war. By supplying cloud provision, by means of concessions and vouchers, institutions have been able to undertake emergency data back-up of these materials. Providers holding EU-funded OCRE contracts, including Microsoft, have led this initiative. JISC's connectivity with other National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), including GÉANT and URAN, has allowed this response to be needs-led and collaborative. The network may also prove invaluable in navigating longer term needs, such as funding cloud provision in years to come.

150. There are other ways in which digital capacity has not been so strong. It was noted during the Conference on the Ukraine Crisis that there was a lack of virtual mobility grants, something that would have allowed for flexibility in researcher location, such as those in a third country such as Poland, or displaced in other regions closer to Ukraine.

151. As with all examples of data sharing, especially when potentially triangulated between international providers, risk must be considered. The complex distribution systems underpinning cloud provision pose cybersecurity threats, especially in the sharing of confidential research data or student information. In sharing or facilitating the sharing of information in a country in crisis, local data protection laws may need consideration. Ukraine is an EU candidate and therefore must comply with the relevant GDPR, but the war has delayed its incorporation of this. Poor data governance or unhealthy data practice may therefore become a risk.

152. Outside of the recipient country, content sharing can also be challenging. Whilst organisations like SCONUL were able to broker conversations between UK and Ukrainian library systems, the

sharing of resources was less straightforward. Where a university has purchased resources, such as academic journal catalogues, the licence only extends to those using IP addresses linked to the host institution. It was not a case of simply sharing access, as legislative requirements pose a barrier. This impacts certain service provisions too: when offering mental health support via online platforms for example, insurance and licence regulations in the recipient country must be navigated.

153. Aside from legal and regulatory challenges, digital provision has still been a catalyst for the strength of the UK sector's response. The ability to see and speak with Ukrainian partners via digital conferencing tools has been key in developing healthy relationships, not to mention in establishing and driving activities in the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative. The Displaced Student Opportunities UK portal, in association with STAR, Refugee Education UK and Universities of Sanctuary, offers a portfolio of opportunities available at UK universities for refugees and people seeking asylum. Users can filter their search by immigration status, level of study, opportunity type, and location. Although the portal was kickstarted by the response to Ukraine, it is hoped this will be an evolving framework for future crises too. This has been explored in Case Study 8.

154. The continuity of existing programmes of education is also important to personal and economic development during and post-crisis and online models of learning may be one solution. The Open University, a sector leader in the remote HE offering, delivered a webinar on online learning to over 800 participants from Ukrainian HEIs, demonstrating great interest in the online approach. At a basic level, a similar model may be a framework for educational continuity in crisis. More detail has been provided in Case Study 3.

155. Digital infrastructure has been the catalyst for many institutional responses to date. At its most basic, facilitating the communication between UK and Ukrainian HEIs to assess real needs, again emphasises the bottom-up approach to partnerships. At its most complex, it may even underpin the sharing of UK learning models internationally to support the continuation of learning during conflict. Where universities have been most facilitative, digital capacity has been central.

Local context

156. Akin to the emphasis on considering the context of the host sector in crisis response, the local context of the affected country must also be acknowledged. In this conflict, similar research and academic structures have facilitated or accelerated responses. In other areas, differing structures have hindered responses. Although challenging at times, the UK sector has been able to respond to the needs of Ukrainian institutions efficiently and appropriately. This is likely to differ across geographies.

157. A key request of the Ukrainian HE sector was that any UK responses should aim to prevent brain drain. Instead, intellectual potential should be developed within the citizens engaging with the UK sector to become capacity builders upon their return to Ukraine. The role of universities in producing graduates who will in the future contribute to Ukraine's economy is strongly recognised, and UK influences may even accelerate the move to reconstruction. Ukraine for example maintains a low-technology structure of economy, with agricultural exports totalling $27.8 billion in 2021. This is evidenced by its low expenditure on research and development compared to countries in its neighbouring regions and therefore absence of the popularisation of science among its public. This is a stark contrast to the UK sector, where research is judged according to its real-life impact and its position in an ambitious knowledge economy.

158. Where these positions are strikingly different, a common objective can be found. The influence of UK research and academic expertise may, over a far longer period, begin to stimulate Ukraine's transition towards a knowledge-based economy. This directly aligns to Goal 3 of Ukraine's Draft Recovery Plan under the Science and Innovation theme, 'the development of science and technologies in synergy with economy'. The goal aims to increase innovative activity in Ukraine's key sectors by 40%. The capacity of the UK, a country with its own goals to increase GDP expenditure on research and development and to build an economy based on knowledge and innovation, is high. In other contexts, however, such as those where women are excluded from science communities for example, the UK's position in supporting would be heavily compromised.

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159. The perceived attractiveness of the UK's HE sector, as praised by those connected most closely to UK institutions, does pose risks. Academics and researchers currently hosted by UK institutions may be recognised for their talent and recruited, or decide to remain in the UK to take advantage of its research landscape and funding offering. Organisations like CCG and Cara have taken measures to mitigate this, including the turning down of scholarships or job offers to remain in the UK and the shortening of fellowship contracts to encourage the return to Ukraine when safe to do so.

160. Instead, the role of UK universities can again be facilitative. In line with its levelling up agenda for example, the UK has strong capabilities and unwavering ambition for regional development – much of which relies on universities as the vehicle. The UK is therefore in a strong policy position to support the redevelopment of communities and local economies post-war. This is particularly relevant to the local context of Ukraine when we look at a more granular level. The Ukrainian Catholic University situated in Lyiv, for example, faces a starkly different situation compared to universities situated in the east. Not under direct fire at present, and close in proximity to the Polish border, this institution sees its role as one of developing human and intellectual potential and scaling this potential across the country. For them, human capital is the most valuable resource they can hope to emerge with. The UK's blueprint for regional development, which focuses on local economies, heritage, and capacities, may be transferrable. This has already been exemplified by the 33 joint research and innovation projects funded by Research England and announced and delivered by UUKi in April 2023.

161. In skills planning, UK influences may also be valuable. Ukraine recognises a current disparity between the competencies of its graduates and those demanded by its economy. This may be particularly challenging where there is a lag between the more traditional nature of its exports and production capacity, and the theoretical or classroom-based experiences of its students. However, the current conflict will also increase skills pressures. Aside from economic needs, the country will require more specialist skills in the areas of health, wellbeing, and psychological trauma. This demonstrates the potential of UK universities to transition their existing partnerships across a longer timeframe, where resources allow. Where the University of Leicester has identified trauma work as a priority, it will offer training for practitioners on the psychological impact of war, specifically on children and young people. This is explored further in Case Study 6. Here, the transition to a more traditional academic partnership over a longer timeframe, may be evident.

162. In considering the development of a crisis response framework, local contexts are likely to differ across territories. Factors may include, but will not be limited to: communication of governments, consensus position of governments, cultural values (e.g. gender, sexuality, democracy), corruption, and shared languages. For HE specifically, the 3-level model of Ukraine (Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate) aligns with the UK, as does its participation in the European Higher Education Area under the Bologna Process. Variation in these areas will be a core consideration for the UK's future participation in educational crisis response activity. A suite of options is necessary for a crisis response framework to appropriately meet the needs of a geographical area and its political, social, and economic context.

Case Studies
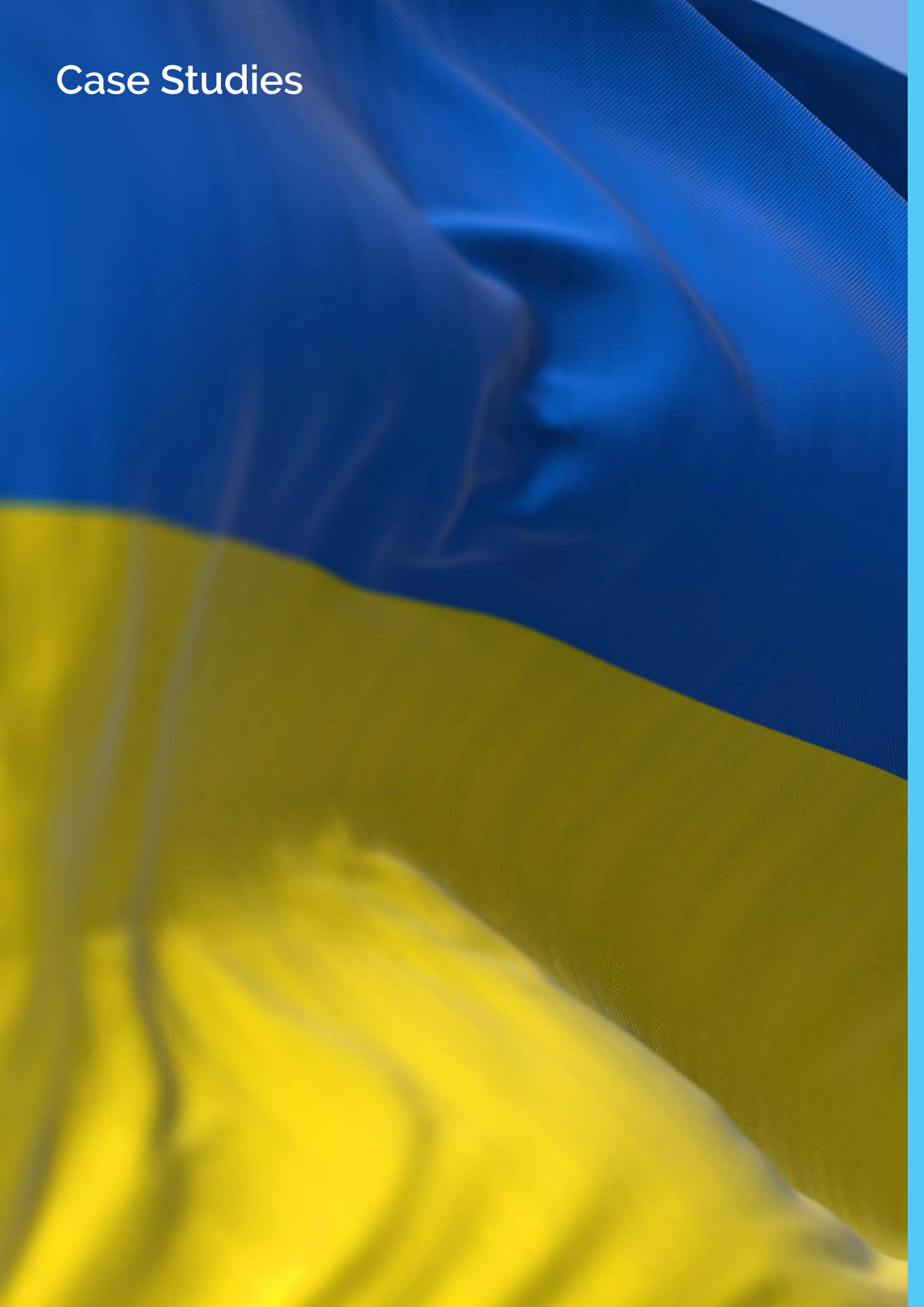
Case Studies

Here we present eight case studies, representing the range of responses employed across the sector. Each is intended to highlight a key theme in the research data. Contributors to each case study have been acknowledged in Appendix 4.

Case Study 1: Ukrainian Catholic University – which highlights a successful twinning programme, built on existing UK/Ukrainian university partnerships. The case study also highlights how twinning as a framework has been replicated successfully outside the funded scheme.

Case Study 2: Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (PNU) – which explores the merits of UK-Ukraine research collaboration and knowledge sharing in a post-invasion context.

Case Study 3: The Open University – which demonstrates the use of digital infrastructure in underpinning pedagogical responses to the crisis, and the suitability of the established remote learning model to be replicated in future crises.

Case Study 4: Bath Spa University – which emphasises the enabling power of existing partnerships with Ukraine and the 'business as usual' continuation of activities through crisis.

Case Study 5: Newcastle University – which provides an example of English language training, a practical response to crisis, and the use of pedagogical technologies to support innovative teaching programmes.

Case Study 6: University of Leicester – which demonstrates the use of academic audit to identify areas for collaboration, and the ambition to deepen civic links in each country, beyond the higher education setting.

Case Study 7: King's College London – which showcases the University Sponsorship Model and the ambition for long-term replicability across the sector.

Case Study 8: Student Action for Refugees (STAR) – which highlights the importance of championing refugees in higher education settings and the policy environment, as well as offering advice and education to those coordinating activities in universities, ensuring appropriate support structures are in place.

Case Study 1:
The Ukrainian Catholic University

About the University

The Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) was the first Catholic university to be established in Ukraine. It is a private educational institution whose history dates back to the 1930s. The UCU inherited – and continues – the activities of the Greek Catholic Theological Academy, which was established in 1928-1929 in Lviv by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytskyi, and was headed by its first rector, Yosyf Slipyi. Having gathered leading intellectuals around it, the Academy became a theological and philosophical sciences centre. However, after the Soviet occupation in 1945, the Academy was finally closed and a significant number of graduates and professors of the Academy were repressed and ended up in the Siberian Gulag. During the period of Ukraine's independence, the institution's activity was restored in 1994 and was continued by the Lviv Theological Academy, which obtained international accreditation in 1998. On June 28 2002, the UCU was founded.

UCU is a modern, innovative University that educates future generations of professionals and leaders for Ukraine and the world, and provides the opportunity to obtain quality education in various fields: theology and philosophy, social sciences, humanities sciences, health sciences, applied sciences, and business. UCU is an independent (non-governmental) not-for-profit and value-based university. The main foundation on which the University functions is 'Witnessing-Serving-Communicating'. At the same time, UCU cares profoundly about the preservation of Christian tradition and values and sees its mission as an open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition, forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally – for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person. The defining idea by which UCU is recognised and which inspires the University to grow as a community is the call to service (UCU Strategy 2025).

Response and support received

The war on the territory of Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 2014 and reached a large scale in 2022, has affected the life of every Ukrainian and, accordingly, affected the University's activities. Fostering global solidarity among academic partners outside of Ukraine became one of the first important tasks. The UCU community took an active position and used all possible global academic platforms, such as the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the Federation of Catholic Universities in Europe, and the European Association of International Education to testify about the real threats and consequences of the Russian invasion for world order and security.

In addition to a financial contribution to the victory of Ukraine, UCU community members fight on various fronts (UCU WARINUA portal): military, humanitarian, medical, media and information, academic, prayer and psychological, and cultural. The war did not manage to interrupt the educational process: rather than suspending classes, UCU has moved to a service learning model. From the first day of full-scale Russian aggression, the academic format was transferred to a community service orientated one, allowing students and teachers to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of Ukraine and the sake of victory. As part of community efforts to help heal Ukraine, UCU has been steadily expanding its programmes in psychology, social work, physical rehabilitation, and occupational rehabilitation.

The involvement of UCU's community in volunteer activities became highly active because, since the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression, UCU hosted internally displaced persons, providing them with appropriate support and prepared humanitarian and medical aid, as well as spiritual and psychological support. In addition, some students, teachers, and employees are in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, defending the freedom and independence of Ukraine and European democratic values. Unfortunately, some of them are no longer alive.

TUCU was – and remains – a small University with few resources but with a significant social impact that meets the needs of the time and context. Ukraine now faces new challenges –healing the wounds war has caused and the restoration and modernisation of the state. That is why UCU has renewed the development strategy 2030 according to the challenges of war, focusing first of all on the quality results of work in the context of rebuilding Ukraine and building partner networks.

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Impact of support

The support of our international colleagues and partners was also important because there was a need to find new educational resources both for UCU students who remained in Ukraine and for those who were forced to go abroad, as well as for other Ukrainian students who suffered as a result of the war. 35 universities worldwide have become part of the Network of Solidarity and Strategic Partnership with UCU, providing support to the University community and contributing to the recovery of Ukraine.

British HEIs (University of Nottingham, University of Warwick, etc.) were prominent among such universities. Thanks to CCG, UCU and the University of Nottingham managed to take the first step on the way to the decolonisation of Russian studies and the new 'discovery' of Ukrainian humanities. This initiative was embodied in the creation of a History Dual Master's programme – Interpretation of Heritage: Culture, History, Literature, which was the result of the scientific and creative efforts of teams of Ukrainian and British specialists in the field of history, cultural studies and philology. This programme will be a new step forward in rethinking the field of Humanities as a foundation of Ukrainian soft power, societal resilience, and building the necessary framework for social reconstruction. It will help resolve the current crisis caused by the isolation of separate branches of humanist knowledge and the persisting impact of Russian-Soviet imperialist narratives.

In addition to the design of a joint master's programme, the administration of both universities created the project, The United in Solidarity: UoN-UCU Faculty Collaboration Research Programme, whose main aim is to form joint teams of British and Ukrainian scientists in the field of law, history, theology, and international relations to implement scientific projects. So far, three projects have been supported with funding, and projects in icon theology, post-conflict memory, reconciliation, and culture wars have been supported, as well as a workshop entitled, Empire, Memory and National Identity: Comparative Historical and Cultural Perspectives.

Last but not least, UCU has started fruitful cooperation with the University of Warwick. In particular, the University allocated 20 scholarships to UCU students for their participation in a summer school, which was designed to meet the needs of Ukrainian realities. The purpose of this summer school was to give the UCU students a wide range of pedagogical experiences by introducing them to many different subject areas, methods and approaches taught by the Warwick Arts Faculty, as well as to create conditions for enriching encounters between Warwick and UCU students and to help international students to better understand Ukraine and the war in Ukraine. Topics considered for the programme included: Yiddish Literature, Jane Austen, Catholic poets, Creative Writing, Sustainability, Eco-literatures, Decolonisation and the entangled history of Ukraine, Reconstruction and Remembrance after the two World Wars, The Reformation in Germany and England, and British post-war society. In addition, the programme also includes field trips and several meetings and events, with a focus on the topic of war and its international repercussions.

Our community expresses deep gratitude to all British partners of the UCU and the global academic community for the incredible power of international academic solidarity and partnership, which supports the lives of many Ukrainian students and teachers affected by the war as well as uniting our efforts towards designing Ukraine's restoration.

Case Study 2:
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (PNU)

About the University

Vasyl Stefanyk PNU is a classic, international, standards-orientated science and education centre in Ukraine. The University is classified with the highest level of accreditation in the country and ranks 11th in the top 200 universities in Ukraine (2023).

Over the past five years, the University has implemented over 30 major international projects, including infrastructure projects. As part of Erasmus + KA2, the University has received grants for five projects and it is also the first university in Ukraine to hold a grant in the project, Modernisation of Pedagogical Higher Education with the Use of Innovative Teaching Tools. Within Erasmus + KA1, the University also implements programmes of academic mobility for students and academics.

PNU trains in seven specialties of junior bachelor's degrees, with 82 specialties and educational programmes at bachelor's level, 70 at master's level, 25 specialties of preparation of doctors of philosophy, and 18 specialties of preparation of doctors of sciences. Currently, it teaches over 15,000 students.

Support received

The University was twinned with the University of East Anglia (UEA) in summer 2022 through the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative offering support in response to the invasion. To develop stronger research links, more than 220 academics from both Universities joined together online in December 2022, discussing key research topics, sharing ideas, and generating new ideas for future collaborations.

In March 2023 the University and UEA, were awarded a grant for their project entitled, Preparing the Ground for Reconstruction – Decontaminating Ukraine's Soil, Eco-Entrepreneurs, and Environmental Journalism. The grant included a £131,000 funding package.

Both Universities are now working together to jointly research soil and water restoration, stimulate the development of eco-startups in Ukraine, and raise awareness of the global impact of war through journalism.

Impact of support

With this funding, the University intends to purchase a spectrophotometer and DSLR camera. £10,000 will also be given to startups in seed funding. During June 2023, representatives of PNU visited UEA, allowing active cooperation between colleagues on the 'Preparing the Ground for Reconstruction' project and the visit promoted knowledge sharing, mutual improvement, and empowerment for both parties. A number of events aimed to further development of the project and to strengthen cooperation between Universities.

Challenges identified

Whilst the collaboration has – so far – been smooth generally, some administrative and legal procedures were complex and time-consuming and this was largely due to differences in administrative systems and legal frameworks between Ukraine and the UK. Extensive planning, coordination, open communication, and a willingness to adapt and accommodate were essential to address these challenges.

Next steps

The most important steps ahead are new projects, joint scientific research, and unique opportunities for students and academics. Collaborations between the Universities will involve joint research projects, staff and student exchanges, knowledge sharing and joint academic programmes. There will also be joint conferences, workshops and seminars to promote collaboration and cross-cultural understanding. In September 2023, UEA plans to host a Hackathon with the University's staff and students.

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Case Study 3:
The Open University

The Open University's (OU) response to the invasion has been wide-ranging, addressing key needs including digital connectivity, financial support, and tailored online courses. Its unique remote and digital offering has led the University to develop creative ways to help and engagement from those most affected in Ukraine has been incredibly high. The University now has a full-time Senior Project Manager to coordinate its response and sees the merit in keeping crisis teams as lean as possible.

The response to date

A pinnacle part of the OU's offering has been the curation of resources for Ukrainian refugees via its OpenLearn platform. A series of free online courses – including English in the World Today, Understanding Your Sector, and Making Sense of Mental Health Problems – are currently available and have been translated into Ukrainian. The site received 55,931 unique views in 2022 and further translations are to follow. October 2022 also saw the launch of a new Introduction to Ukrainian Language course, aiming to provide insights on language, food, and history for those hosting or interacting with people arriving from Ukraine.

In time for the academic year of 2022/23, the OU also launched the Open Futures Sanctuary Scholarships scheme, which is available to support refugees, forced migrants and those seeking asylum and will fund 12 scholarships per year for the next three years. Each recipient receives a £20,000 fee waiver. In its debut year, eight scholarships were awarded to refugees from Ukraine and fees were also waived for students with Ukrainian residency in the year 2021/22. A further 50 fully funded places were also offered on OU Access Modules with the aim of providing qualifying applicants with the skills and confidence to progress into higher education.

The OU has been a member of the Cara network since 2020, with a commitment to six fellowships per year. Two Ukrainian refugees are currently in receipt of these and will be hosted on the New University in Exile Consortium programme. This is a new partnership that was put into place as the crisis continued and which aims to instil a sense of belonging within the academic community, reducing the sense of isolation and dislocation often suffered by those exiled.

Through the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative, led by CCG, the OU is currently in a partnership with the three times displaced Horlivka Institute for Foreign Languages and the HEI of Molecular Biology and Genetics. For the former, it has supported online learning workshops and for the latter, it has shared OU OpenSTEM laboratory training resources. Further discussions on support are ongoing.

Challenges identified

The war in Ukraine has now surpassed its immediate phase and continues to unfold each day. The ongoing, longer-term nature of this crisis presents resourcing challenges, especially in sustaining the initial willingness to volunteer time and expertise after the shock of the invasion subsides. The OU is different from campus-based universities and delivers high-quality, flexible online learning across the four nations of the UK and globally. With no accommodation facilities on campus, the organisation has needed to find ways to respond that reflect the strength of its expertise and provision, whilst making sure they are in line with the sector's response, staying relevant to the needs of the Ukrainian higher education sector. The absence of official guidance, understandably, in the early phase made this more difficult.

Delivery and impact

- Over 55,000 unique visitors on the OpenLearn resources for Ukrainians webpage in 2022
- 8 scholarships worth £160,000 were awarded to Ukrainians in 2022/23, via the Open Futures Sanctuary Scholarships scheme
- 2 Ukrainian academics are currently being hosted via Cara fellowships
- Collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the OU has already hosted a webinar on delivering online learning to over 800 participants from Ukrainian HEIs

Next steps

In partnership with KCL, a series of scholarships will be made available in 2023/24 under the Pathway 2 Scholarships programme. These scholarships are open to postgraduate students from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus where there is risk of persecution, violence, or conflict. STEM subjects will be prioritised.

The OU is currently working with CCG on several initiatives, including conversations on an Open University of Ukraine, 'DigiUni'. The OU sees its supported, remote learning model to be replicable and transferrable in times of crisis, allowing education to continue during displacement. The pivot to online learning has received great interest from Ukrainian partners and the OU will continue to share its learning and expertise as required.

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Case Study 4:
Bath Spa University

Bath Spa University (BSU) has been working in and building collaborations with Ukraine for over a decade, primarily through EU funding. During that time, it has led major projects on Academic Quality Assurance, university governance and, most recently, the teaching of journalism in Ukrainian universities. The University has also hosted multiple staff exchange visits from Ukrainian colleagues (most recently May 2023), and Bath Spa staff have been frequent visitors to Ukraine.

Erasmus-funded Ukrainian projects have included:

• EU-funded staff mobilities with Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Sumy State University (SSU), and Chernivtsi National University (ChNU) – this included mobilities with SSU and ChNU that are due to be completed by July 2023 (lead, €63k).
• 'ALIGN: Achieving and Checking the Alignment between Academic Programmes and Qualification Frameworks' involved six Ukraine partners, three of which the University still work with today. The project ended in 2017 (partner, €1266k).
• 'DESTIN: Journalism Education for Democracy in Ukraine: Developing Standards, Integrity and Professionalism', led by BSU, which focused on improving the training of journalists in Ukraine and involved 13 Ukrainian partners, including 10 universities. This began in 2018 and finished in November 2022 (lead, €798k).
• 'ACCELERATE: Accessible Immersive Learning for Art and Design', led by BSU, involved six partners, including two in Ukraine (Chernivtsi National University and Sumy State University); this began in 2021 and ended in May 2023 (lead, €298k).

These projects were managed by the small European Projects team which, in February 2022, consisted of Professor Ian Gadd, Rachael McDonald, and Adele Keane.

The response to date

In February 2022 BSU was leading on three separate Ukrainian projects: DESTIN (which had been extended due to Covid-19), ACCELERATE, and staff mobilities with Chernivtsi National University and Sumy State University. The ACCELERATE project was meeting in Bath when the invasion took place, with colleagues from Chernivtsi in-person and colleagues from Sumy online. In the immediate hours after the invasion, the University provided support and guidance to its Ukrainian colleagues as they decided what to do, helping them travel to family elsewhere in Europe, issuing a public declaration of solidarity, and sending letters of support to each of its Ukrainian partners.

Over the following weeks BSU reached out personally to colleagues at its partner universities, including those in Mariupol, Zaporizhia, Sumy, Kyiv, and Lviv — all were thankfully accounted for although many had fled, or were fleeing, their home cities or Ukraine itself. The University also formally suspended its collaborations with a Russian partner, RANEPA. A small taskforce was created, chaired by the University Secretary and comprising the European Projects team-leader and the Head of Immigration Compliance and Advice, to coordinate the institutional response.

In May 2022, the University approached CCG to suggest that it twin with one of its smaller Ukrainian partners, the International University of Economics and Humanities (IUEH) in Rivne, as part of their Twinning Initiative and Bath Spa formally twinned in June 2022.

In June 2022, the University also established a new Bath Spa University Sanctuary Scholarship to be awarded to students from refugee and asylum-seeking communities – it provides a full tuition fee waiver for the duration of their undergraduate study, an annual bursary, and a discretionary accommodation fee waiver for their first year. The inaugural recipient of this award was a Ukrainian undergraduate who joined the University in 2022.

The Ukrainian projects continued. The DESTIN project completed its work in November 2022 with a final project meeting in Poland rather than Lviv as planned and BSU's Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise was in attendance and, remarkably, nearly every Ukrainian partner was able to send representation. The twinning partnership secured funding from Research England to strengthen its collaborations (£37k). The ACCELERATE project completed in May 2023, with simultaneous public events in the UK, Ireland, Poland, and Ukraine. CCG also helped support the delivery of project equipment to Ukraine. Twelve colleagues from Chernivtsi National University and Sumy State University also visited Bath for two weeks in May 2023 as part of the Erasmus-funded staff mobility.

Challenges identified

The resilience and determination of Ukrainian partners has been extraordinary, meaning that none of the University's Ukrainian collaborations has stalled, let alone failed, because of the invasion. BSU invoked 'force majeure' and sought extensions for DESTIN (successfully) and ACCELERATE (unsuccessfully); in both cases, the projects delivered on nearly all of what was planned at the outset, despite the extra challenges facing colleagues in Ukraine.

Visa restrictions limited travel from Ukraine (some Sumy colleagues were without passports for several months as they were at the UK visa centre at the time of the invasion), and whilst it is now possible to apply for visas in Kyiv again, the travelling to and from Poland to issue the visas remains disruptive and burdensome. To mitigate this, the University located project meetings in Poland, allowing Ukrainian colleagues to travel without visas. Travel to Ukraine has not been possible, which has limited the opportunities for BSU staff to engage with Ukrainian colleagues.

Erasmus+ funding, especially for staff mobilities, has been critical to the success of Bath Spa's partnerships with Ukrainian universities and yet there is no obvious UK successor to this funding scheme.

For the twinning with the International University of Economics and Humanities, the language barrier has been an occasional problem: BSU has no Ukrainian speakers on staff, and English is not yet widely spoken by IUEH staff or students.

Delivery and impact

In addition to the completion of the DESTIN, ACCELERATE, and (partially) the staff mobilities, BSU has also held multiple online seminars and lectures in Education, Literature, and Creative Writing with colleagues from IUEH, which has strengthened faculty ties; more are planned. There was an online launch event in early 2023 which involved the Vice Chancellor and Rector at both institutions, as well as the Mayor of Bath. More recently, many BSU staff and students contributed to, and participated in, IUEH's annual 'I vote for Peace' event.

Next steps

In the short term, the funding for the IUEH/BSU project is supporting a planning workshop in Poland in June for 19 University faculty and staff. This project aims to deliver training workshops, a leadership and resilience programme, research collaborations and papers, and a collaborative research and innovation strategy. Both BSU and IUEH remain committed to their partnership in the long term.

Ties between BSU, ChNU and SSU have been strengthened by the ACCELERATE project and recent staff mobility visit, the latter has identified many areas for further conversation and potential collaborations. In addition, BSU is exploring a potential Horizon Europe bid on cybersecurity with Sumy State University as a partner.

Professor John Strachan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise at BSU, said, "We have been closely collaborating with several Ukrainian universities for over a decade, and even more closely over the last year since the Russian invasion. Our Ukrainian partners continue to offer high-quality education to their students in the face of a cruel war, and to work with their partner universities in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. We are proud to work with Ukraine."

David Newman, University Secretary at BSU, said of the University's partnership with the IUEH, "At its core, this is all about hope. We should not underestimate the power of coming together as a community of HEIs in response to the horrific and senseless war to give hope to the people of Ukraine. I am confident about the positive impact that we can have on the future success of IUEH."

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Case Study 5:
Newcastle University

English language speaking support for Ukrainian students 2022

After an approach by the International Office, the Language Resource Centre (LRC) of Newcastle University established an English language facilitation programme providing support for 72 students over two six-week periods.

The response to date (language education)

The project provided synchronous online English language support to students in Ukraine. It brought together students from Newcastle University (NU) with students of the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering (NUWEE) studying whilst their country is subjected to war. The project gave language support and a clear message that the students in Ukraine were not isolated. It also gave NU students a real sense of purposeful support and engagement.

The purpose of the engagement was fourfold:

• to provide direct English language support to NUWEE students,

• to demonstrate at a unit level what the Vice Chancellor stated in April 2022, "we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine",

• to give opportunity for NU students to directly reach out and assist in a very practical way to fellow students in a time of crisis and inspiring a sense of agency, and

• to facilitate the LRC to further develop its innovative use of Teams as a pedagogical tool and demonstrate that Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) collaboration can deliver meaningful life and language skills to both sets of students involved. It demonstrated that within a prescribed framework, content and method can be adapted in response to feedback.

Sessions were designed to focus on language confidence building, speaking practice, active listening, peer interaction, presentation experience, and summarisation of content and ideas, thereby giving opportunity for NUWEE students to gain confidence in their English speaking ability, improve their reading comprehension and broaden their vocabulary range.

The methodology was a working of the P-P-P formula of Presentation, Practice and Production. This is delivered through a task-based learning formula that allows for personalisation of the language encountered, reorganisation of ideas and concepts, and practice of language production through guided interlocution.

A Microsoft Teams site was set up with a private channel for each group for the facilitation of the sessions. A separate channel for PAL leaders to share content and collaborate and for project management purposes, ran in conjunction. The project manager and TEL Lead at NU along with the NUWEE liaison always had access to all channels.

Challenges identified

Due to power cuts, some session structures had to change, resulting in 57 delivery hours in addition to the 54 scheduled. As the situation worsened, students could not always attend the sessions, often due to lack of power or WiFi.

Delivery and impact

The programme delivered 1.5 hour sessions once a week, 6 sessions per group for 6 groups, for a total of 54 hours originally scheduled.

A session involved the following:

- Twenty-four hours prior to the live event, an article from Open Access Government and two short videos from How It's Made (available on YouTube) were sent to the students of each group for preparation.
- The PAL leader chose the topics for their own group. Students of each group were divided into teams, A & B, and each had to prepare in order to transfer information to the other team for open discussion led by the PAL leader during the live session.

The programme was prescriptive but did allow PAL leaders a certain amount of choice concerning the topics reflecting their own interests and from group feedback and leaders also shared feedback about topics with each other to establish a 'library' of resources. The PAL leaders used the Teams chat channel to clarify vocabulary items and to build a corpus of language items and expressions to which the participants could have access. The NU PAL leaders gained employment experience, distance learning and teaching practice, experience with preparation of materials, group and class management, collaborative working, and study tools/software. Friendships were also made.

Next steps

Feedback is currently being gathered from participants and peer assistants. This will help the LRC to refine and enhance and its offering, allowing the programme to be shaped by those working closely with it. A second cohort will also be participating soon.

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Case Study 6:
University of Leicester

The University of Leicester was founded by public donation as a living memorial of those who served in the First World War, and this heritage of kindness remains in its DNA today as a leading University of Sanctuary. Its work in support of Ukraine has been wide-ranging, and as part of this, the University sees the twinning arrangements as a sustainable way of making a difference to the people of Ukraine both now and in the future.

The response to date

The University of Leicester has two twinned universities in Ukraine, with agreements signed with Kremenchuk Mykhailo Ostrohradskyi National University (KrNU) in December 2022 and with Poltava State Agrarian University (PSAU) in April 2023. Both Universities are located in Poltava State in central Ukraine about 150km from the war's front line.

Regular meetings every six weeks or so between Leicester and each of its twins, supported by CCG have maintained momentum from the outset. Ukraine was not a country with which Leicester had any links previously, so developing knowledge and understanding has been important. Leicester was clear from the outset that sustainable partnership needed to put research and education at the heart of discussions. An initial audit of possible academic links yielded multiple opportunities, and these bore fruit with the award of £220k of UKRI funding in February 2023, with two projects now underway looking at food supply chain management (PSAU) in the School of Business and artificial intelligence and use of drone technology in agriculture (KrNU) in the School of Engineering.

Challenges identified

The lack of previous links with Ukraine did create some challenges in understanding the country's higher education landscape. People resources were also scarce, so many University staff contributed in addition to their regular roles and day-to-day responsibilities. The University relied heavily on goodwill, which poses a risk to the sustainability of the response so far. More practically, power cuts at Leicester's twinned institutions made communications difficult over the winter months. Shipping resources and materials was also more difficult than envisioned. Whilst this no longer creates difficulty, the systems and networks that may be in place within humanitarian organisations are not located as easily within a university.

Delivery and impact

Leicester is hosting students from KrNU on its campus and has recently won funding to provide four full scholarships to enable students to continue their studies at Leicester. Online English language classes have been provided to staff and students at both KrNU and PSAU, digital learning resources have been shared through the Library, and some physical materials have also been shipped to Ukraine to support students in-country. Online lectures have been provided by PSAU academic staff to UK students to provide real world insight into some degree programmes. Some humanitarian support has also been provided, for example winter clothing for students at KrNU who lost their support networks due to the war. Discussions with KrNU have also led to a collaboration with a social enterprise called WACIT to provide psychological trauma training for KrNU staff supporting children and young people affected by the trauma of war, using a 'train the trainer' model.

It has proven very important to connect and support the Ukrainian community on Leicester's campus in the UK and several events have been held, bringing together British Academy Researchers at Risk Fellows from Kyiv and Kharkiv national universities, Ukrainian students and staff, and UK staff and fundraisers supporting the work. This has maintained engagement in the work and provided opportunities for senior University leadership to engage directly with those affected by the invasion, which is important for sustainable partnership.

Next steps

Looking to the future, the University is clear that the twinning arrangements are for the long-term, not just immediate emergency aid and support, and is considering how to engage the civic city authorities in both countries as a potential means of broadening and deepening the collaborations.

Case Study 7:
King's College London

The University Sponsorship Model is a collaborative cross-sector, participation initiative that provides a safe route to the UK, giving access to Higher Education along with support for forcibly displaced students and academics. KCL piloted university sponsorship in 2021 and expanded the initiative in response to the war in Ukraine. Working in partnership with the Open University, Newcastle University and the University of Leicester, and in collaboration with Citizens UK and Ukrainian Sponsorship Pathway UK (USPUK), King's developed a model that enables the higher education sector to help displaced students and academics to find safety and continue their academic journeys. The wider ambition is to develop a model and policy that supports forced migrants worldwide. By shaping policy and providing forced migrants with unrivalled opportunities to access higher education, the University Sponsorship Model actively contributes to the UNHCR's goal to increase enrolment of refugees in higher education to 15% by 2030 and creates safe and legal higher education pathways.

Response to date

Since March 2022, KCL has worked in partnership to lead the development and delivery of the University Sponsorship Model with the OU, Newcastle University and the University of Leicester. This initiative has also been developed in collaboration with Citizens UK and Ukrainian Sponsorship Pathway UK (USPUK) as part of the Communities for Ukraine Programme. The University Sponsorship Model enables the higher education sector to implement the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme and help displaced students and academics to safely travel to the UK and keep engaged with their studies and research.

KCL first piloted university sponsorship in 2021, becoming the first university to be accredited as a Community Sponsor by the UK Home Office as part of the Refugee Sponsorship Scheme. In December 2021 under this scheme, King's resettled a refugee student and their family, who were displaced as a result of the Syrian conflict. As the first university to resettle a refugee family and offer a scholarship to one family member, King's created a pilot for a safe and legal higher education-led pathway to the UK, opening the door to broader policy change. King's Refugee Community Sponsorship Scheme has also provided a unique opportunity for a refugee student and their family to find a welcoming home in London. King's has provided a three-year scholarship for the refugee student to undertake an undergraduate degree in Engineering, which they began in September 2022. The student has also received holistic support to enable them to thrive within the University community and beyond.

The second stage of King's ambition to create safe and legal higher education-led pathways was to engage and assist other UK universities to become Community Sponsors. To achieve this, the scheme was developed via an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Grant to encourage and support other universities to resettle refugees. The invasion of Ukraine created urgency and momentum to further develop these university partnerships. At the outset of the war in Ukraine, King's acted quickly to begin developing and expanding the University Sponsorship Model and by April 2022, a consortium was created with the OU, Newcastle University and the University of Leicester.

In collaboration with Citizens UK and USPUK, a bespoke online matching portal for Ukrainian students and academics was created – the University Gateway. The partner universities use a relational matching process to carefully match the Ukrainian guests with hosts from their communities. In addition to providing holistic support for hosts and guests on all aspects of the hosting process, each partner university facilitates students' access to education and enables academics to continue their research.

The development of the University Sponsorship Model has drawn upon the strengths and expertise of the partner institutions, for example the OU's expertise in digital learning and the University of Leicester's innovative RefugEAP programme. The collaboration has increased the scope of the support the university partners can provide and enabled them to meet the needs of the individuals that have been sponsored through the model since March 2022.

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Challenges identified

Access to education and support

Students who are registered at universities in Ukraine and are completing their degree remotely are not able to access Universal Credit. This has caused financial strain for students with no other source of income. In addition, there has been uncertainty regarding the continuation of the fee change from international fees to home fees for Ukrainian students, which has caused confusion.

Matching process

The relational matching process has significant benefits, but it is a slow process which can delay the recruitment of hosts.

Recruitment of hosts

It has become more difficult to recruit hosts over time due to several factors. These factors have also been challenges for the university sponsorship model more generally:

• Financial uncertainty for hosts,

• negative media narratives around the Homes for Ukraine scheme,

• most people interested in hosting are already hosting,

• hosts are worried about pressures on housing systems and increasing private rental costs, which makes it difficult for guests to find affordable accommodation after the hosting period,

• wellbeing of, and trauma experienced by, guests which requires adequate training for hosts, and

• not all hosts were fully aware of the demands of hosting with respect to supporting guests and may be less likely to continue hosting beyond the initial period or host again.

English language

English language proficiency can be a barrier to guests accessing education and employment opportunities, and there are limited courses available.

Expanding safe and legal pathways

The Homes for Ukraine scheme shows that creating safe and legal pathways for people seeking refuge works. Expanding these pathways to benefit other forcibly displaced communities may be a significant challenge in the current political environment – one that will require collective reflection and action across sectors.

Delivery and impact

Over 60 individuals impacted by the war in Ukraine have been sponsored so far. This includes academics fellows, students who continue to study their degrees at Ukrainian universities online and recipients of the Sanctuary Scholarships and Fellowships (Pathway 2), which are shared across the university partners. These scholarships and fellowships were funded as part of a £3 million donation from a private donor to support students and academics impacted by the war in Ukraine.

The Sanctuary Scholarships and Fellowships (Pathway 2) use a unique distribution model: centred around the needs of displaced individuals, the scholarships and fellowships are offered by all university partners involved in the University Sponsorship Model, enabling eligible individuals to apply to a range of HEIs. Through this new scheme, 38 scholarships have been awarded to date, covering full tuition fees and a living costs bursary, enabling students who would otherwise have been locked out of higher education the opportunity to go to university. To support displaced academics, the university partners are working with Cara to support eight fellows from 2022-2025. These two-year paid fellowships enable academics to continue their research safely and position them to play a key link role in the future between their colleagues and international counterparts, at both an individual and institutional level. As part of the University Sponsorship Model, the partners have also engaged with several paid fellowship schemes that enable at-risk academics and their families to safely travel to the UK and to continue their research. For example, King's currently hosts six fellows and their family members through the British Academic Researchers at Risk Fellowships. The University Sponsorship Model has therefore enabled the partner universities to support recipients of academic fellowships and sanctuary scholarships, who would not have been able to take up these opportunities without sponsors and accommodation in the UK.

Next steps

The broader ambition of the University Sponsorship initiative is to create a model that can be scaled, replicated and adapted to provide support for forcibly displaced students and academics. King's has tested the adaptability of the model through pilots that have enabled them to support individuals from other regions. For example, an Afghan student, who had spent over a year in a bridging hotel after being forced to flee their home in August 2021, received a Warm Welcome Scholarship from the British Council and was matched with a host from the King's community who lives within commutable distance to the university campus. The University Sponsorship Model enabled the student to take up their scholarship and begin their undergraduate degree in September 2022.

The implementation of the University Sponsorship Model is being evaluated in order to share learnings and contribute to the policy process of creating safe and legal education pathways and widening access to UK higher education for forced migrants. This work is also supported by King's Sanctuary Hub. Established in July 2022, the Sanctuary Hub offers a space for research, advocacy and policy development in the area of forced displacement and higher education through co-productive approaches that bring together migration researchers and sanctuary seekers with civil society, government and business. By shaping migration policy and providing forced migrants unrivalled opportunities to access higher education, the University Sponsorship Model actively contributes to the UNHCR's goal to increase enrolment of refugees in higher education to 15% by 2030 and creates safe and legal higher education pathways.

Case Study 8:
Student Action for Refugees (STAR)

STAR is a national network bringing students together in championing the welcoming and support of refugees in the UK. Across colleges and universities, the network coordinates local volunteering, campaigns for policy change, and promotes education on refugee safeguarding and the journey of asylum seekers. In its response to the Ukraine crisis, it has provided invaluable expertise, championing the right to higher education and equal access to it.

Response to date

Mobilising the STAR network to call for support for Ukrainian refugees

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, STAR joined sector-wide efforts to ensure that the needs of refugees were front and centre in the UK government's response: sharing a public statement calling on the government to support Ukrainians seeking sanctuary, co-signing an open letter in The Times calling on the government to welcome Ukrainian refugees with over 50 charities, and creating an email tool for STAR's supporters to contact their MPs on the issue. The template email included a particular reference to financial and visa support for Ukrainian students in the UK on study visas and students who were studying in Ukraine who may wish to continue their studies in the UK. As the situation developed, STAR continued to share actions and news updates with its network and provided guidance to individual STAR groups that were fundraising to support Ukraine.

Supporting access to university for displaced Ukrainians

To support people looking for information about access to university, STAR collated guidance for students affected by the invasion, building on guidance for students affected by the crisis in Afghanistan the previous year, which was kept up to date as the situation evolved. In response to enquiries from universities and insights shared by Ukrainian universities and support organisations at online events, STAR worked with partner organisations Refugee Education UK and Universities of Sanctuary to share guidance for UK universities on how they can support students, academics and institutions affected by the war.

The network also joined UUKi's regular meetings to coordinate the HE sector's response, which provided a valuable opportunity to connect with university leaders and civil servants (to a greater degree than in previous crises). This meant that STAR was able to engage on topics such as access to student finance and home fees for Ukrainians, and to highlight the need for inclusive long-term structures of support for refugees of all backgrounds. The sector meetings also provided an opportunity to share learning and receive input into the response as it developed. This was vital as STAR joined an expert sub-group on setting up new opportunities for displaced students, led by Refugee Education UK, and worked with partners at Refugee Education UK and Universities of Sanctuary to create a centralised database of opportunities (Displaced Student Opportunities UK, see below).

Challenges identified

In a volatile situation, the organisation heard from people in the refugee and HE sectors that there was a need for clear, accurate information for students and applicants from Ukraine. It became clear that many universities were setting up ad-hoc support and using discretion regarding admissions processes. Whilst this was an encouraging sign of the willingness of universities to act at a time of crisis, it also created challenges in sharing clear guidance with individuals about how to access university in the UK. STAR therefore often encouraged applicants to enquire with individual universities about the support available, but equally knew that many universities were struggling to respond to the volume of enquiries.

The network was encouraged by a clear desire from the HE sector to offer support and flexible admissions processes for displaced Ukrainians, as well as an increased interest from university leadership. A challenge, however, was ensuring that universities' responses built on their existing work to improve access for displaced students, rather than diverting resources to short-term and nationality-specific support. A further challenge was ensuring that this increased interest could be translated into sustainable, long-term support for all forced migrants. The network was also sensitive to calls from the Ukrainian higher education sector to preserve the long-term viability of Ukrainian universities and to mitigate a possible brain drain by encouraging short-term, flexible opportunities for Ukrainian students that were organised in partnership with Ukrainian universities or would allow students to return to Ukrainian universities at a later date.

As well as seeing a need to harness the enthusiasm of universities to set up new initiatives, STAR was aware of the challenges of maintaining and promoting ad hoc initiatives established by individual universities. Together with partners, it saw a need for a new platform to advertise a wider variety of opportunities for displaced students and to model possible initiatives that universities could set up to support displaced students on an ongoing basis. Inclusive, long-term structures of support were essential.

Delivery and impact

A key part of STAR's response to the above challenges was the launch of a new online portal with information about accessing higher education for people who are displaced in the UK. Following efforts to secure funding and after six months of website development, STAR, Refugee Education UK and Universities of Sanctuary launched Displaced Student Opportunities UK on 16 January 2023. The new website provides a one-stop shop for access to HE opportunities for people from refugee backgrounds – from people who have arrived through the Ukraine schemes, to those who are seeking asylum or have arrived on a resettlement scheme. Universities, charities, and other organisations are able to add information about opportunities that they offer, which are then checked by a moderator before being published on the site. The role of the moderator helps to ensure that the opportunities featured on the site are of good quality and accessible for applicants. The site also features resources to help applicants on their journey to university.

The types of opportunities vary, but include: open events and information sessions for applicants; summer courses; scholarships for undergraduate, Master's and PhD courses; English courses, including IELTS preparation; and mentoring support. Currently 83 providers have set up an account and the portal features 107 opportunities, of which four are specific to Ukraine, and almost all remaining opportunities are open to people of Ukraine. The portal has been viewed 51,832 times and used by 8,173 individuals. Feedback from both providers and applicants has been positive, and universities have told STAR that the portal has helped them reach a wider range of prospective students. The site won 'Third Sector Website of the Year' at the UK Dev Awards in February.

Next steps

STAR is currently focusing efforts on making Displaced Student Opportunities UK a comprehensive source of information for both applicants and providers, and reaching out to providers to encourage them to upload opportunities. The network is also exploring future funding opportunities and a funding model that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the portal.

To prepare for the second phase of the Displaced Student Opportunities UK portal, STAR is working with partners at Refugee Education UK and Universities of Sanctuary to gather feedback about the portal and how it can be developed to better serve the needs of applicants and higher education providers. Possible next steps that have been identified so far include adding resources for universities to the site and integrating a wider variety of opportunities (e.g. international scholarships).

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Higher Education Humanitarian Framework

Humanitarian frameworks

In developing our framework, we have considered the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education. We have also drawn upon several historic frameworks and approaches, including:

- **Sphere Standards**
  Sphere Standards provide a set of internationally recognised guidelines for minimum standards of humanitarian response. Cross-sector, Sphere brings together international actors to 'reinforce its leadership role in promoting the global relevance, importance, and consistent application of humanitarian standards for accountability to affected communities'. The focus is on protecting the human rights and dignity of those impacted by crisis. Sphere, alongside the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance and Groupe URD, are the founding members of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

- **The Core Humanitarian Standard**
  The CHS is a globally recognised standard that describes the essential elements of accountable, principled, and high-quality humanitarian aid. The CHS sets out nine commitments to which humanitarian actors can adhere to improve the quality of the assistance they provide.
  - Appropriateness, relevance
  - Effectiveness, timeliness
  - Strengthening local capacities
  - Communication, participation, feedback
  - Complaints mechanisms
  - Coordination, complementarity
  - Learning, improvement
  - People management
  - Resource management

- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**
  The IASC, which includes the United Nations, NGOs and others, has developed several frameworks to support humanitarian response.

- **The Do No Harm Framework**
  This framework encourages prioritisation of local capacities, community participation and conflict sensitivity. The analytical framework includes seven steps:
  - *Step 1:* Understanding the Context of Conflict
  - *Step 2:* Analysing Dividers and Tensions
  - *Step 3:* Analysing Connectors and Local Capacities for Peace
  - *Step 4:* Analysing the Assistance Programme
  - *Step 5:* Analysing the Assistance Programme's Impact on Dividers and Connectors (using the concepts of Resource Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages)
  - *Step 6:* Considering (and Generating) Programming Options
  - *Step 7:* Test Programming Options and Redesign Project

- **The Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC)**
  This framework guides the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response. The framework consists of interconnected phases and aims to ensure a systematic and coordinated approach to humanitarian action.

  More recently, and partially in response to criticism of Eurocentricity in earlier humanitarian frameworks, several new frameworks have emerged. These include:

- **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**
  This framework details seven targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks:
    – Understanding disaster risk.
    – Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.
    – Investing in disaster reduction for resilience.
    – Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

  The framework seeks a substantial reduction in disaster risk and in lost lives, livelihoods, and health alongside the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries over the next 15 years.

- **The Agenda for Humanity**
  The Agenda for Humanity, adopted in 2015 at the Third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, sets out five major areas of action and change, alongside 5 Core Responsibilities, that are needed to address and reduce humanitarian need, risk, and vulnerability. It details 24 key transformations that will help achieve them.

  Collectively these frameworks present a range of concepts that relate particularly to the research findings.

Higher Education Humanitarian Framework

In line with the findings of our research, the framework positions those needing humanitarian support as the guiding force in the sector response to humanitarian need, ensuring that **accountability is to those affected people**. It acknowledges **the pivotal role of the policy and regulatory environment** as underpinning the strength and scale of any response and centres networks and **partnerships as being absolutely core to a coordinated response**.

The framework acknowledges the sector's commitment to ongoing humanitarian support through teaching, research and knowledge activities whilst proposing a cycle of response through which institutions, partnerships and the sector can consider their position and effectiveness to a specific humanitarian occurrence (whether crisis or ongoing humanitarian need). Given the outcomes of the research, there is a clear bias towards a response which draws on the collective strengths that come through a partnership approach.

That said, the framework has been developed to ensure that institutions, partnerships, and the sector consider the full cycle of engagement in any humanitarian response. It has been designed to have relevance and applicability at the university, partnership, and sector level.
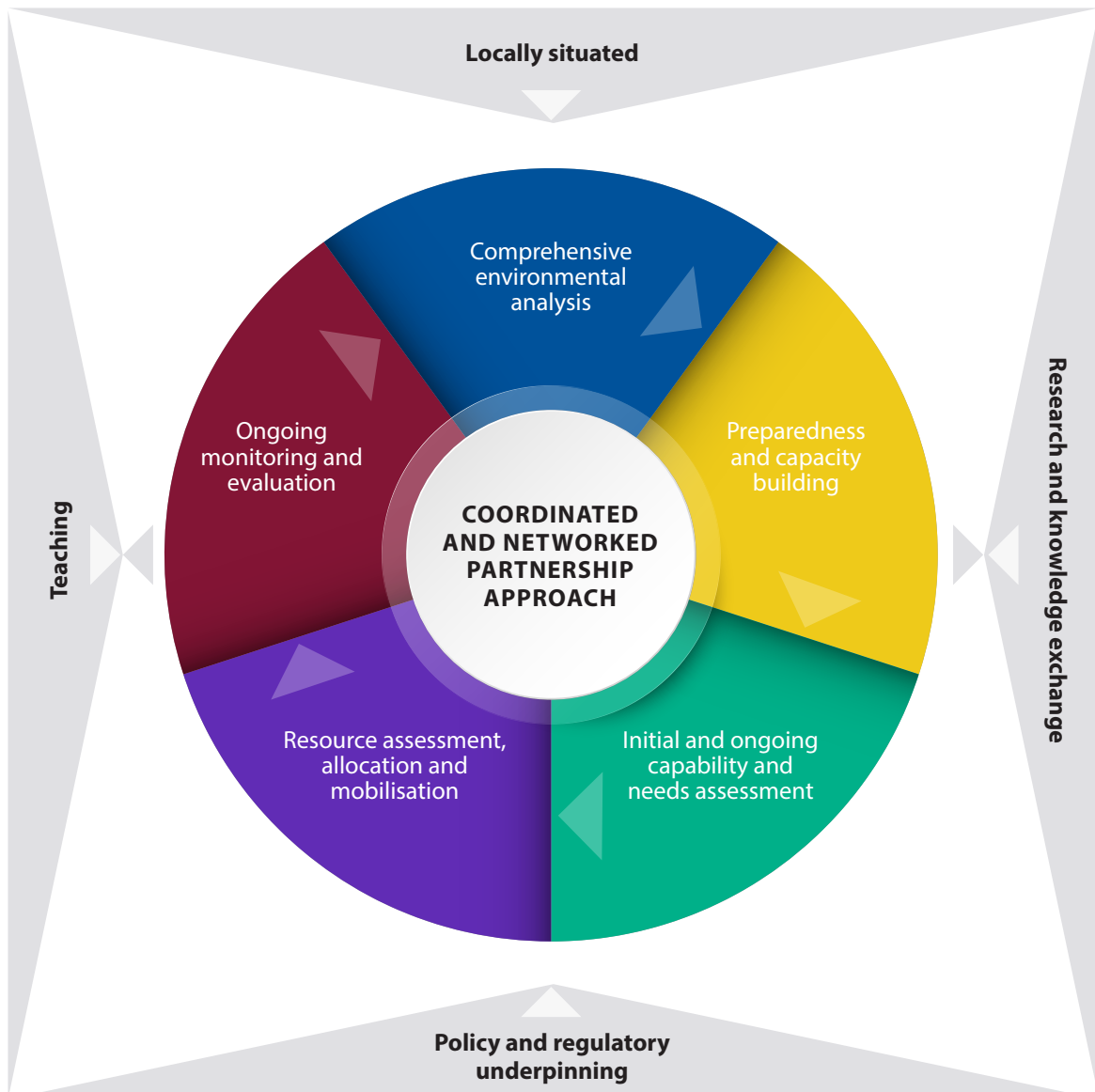
Diagram 1: Partnership Cycle

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Table 1: Higher Education Humanitarian Framework

Comprehensive environment analysis	Preparedness and capacity building	Initial and ongoing capability and needs assessment	Resource assessment, allocation, and mobilisation	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation
What is the political environment in which we are delivering, the constraints and enablers of all countries involved in the response?	What is the purpose of our intervention? What are our collective objectives and how will we measure the impact or success of delivery?	What expertise and knowledge are required to deliver?	What are the physical resources that will enable us to effectively deliver?	What is the ongoing purpose of our intervention? Is it still valid?
What are the economic resources and constraints?	What response are we intending to deliver and for how long?	What partnerships and networks would strengthen our response?	What partnerships and networks would strengthen our response?	What are our ongoing collective objectives and how will we measure the impact or success of delivery?
What are the social and cultural environments in which we are delivering? Do these present any values based or other conflicts?	How does the response differ from the ongoing research, education, and policy work through which we already deliver?	Are we adapting our people resources (knowledge, expertise, and experience) to reflect the changing nature of disaster, conflict, and other humanitarian need over time?	Are we adapting our physical resources and infrastructure to reflect the changing nature of disaster, conflict, and other humanitarian need over time?	What critical friends and/or evaluation partners could support impact evaluation?
What technological enablers or challenges are there to delivery, including infrastructure, connectivity, cyber and other challenge?	What type of response are we best placed to deliver?	How do we optimise our collective capabilities through effective partnerships both in and out of country?	How do we optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of physical resources and infrastructure through effective partnerships both in and out of country?	Are we deploying the correct evaluation frameworks at differing stages of intervention?
What is the legal and regulatory environment in which we are delivering, the constraints and enablers of all countries involved in the response?	What is our capacity and what expertise do we bring?			Are we ensuring that our response remains accountable to impacted communities?
What are the environmental considerations of engagement?	What existing partnerships and networks will we engage in our response to ensure we have the skills, knowledge, and experience to deliver?			
What is the education system/s with which we will be interacting? How do these support or limit our response?	What is our ongoing commitment to developing the skills, knowledge, experience, policies, and process to effectively deploy during times of crisis or ongoing humanitarian need?			

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The framework poses a series of questions which are intended to guide the user in five distinct phases of a cyclical response.

Whilst much of the tool is analytical, delivering on the need for a reflective, considered, and meaningful response, the framework is also designed to answer the 'so what?', or perhaps the 'should we?' by posing questions regarding when, if and how individual universities, the sector and its partners should respond, and what capacity and capability can support at various stages of the delivery. In doing this it points directly to the findings of the report:

• The need to understand humanitarian response through those who are impacted.

• The need to work in partnership to deliver greater effectiveness and efficiency.

• The need for any response to be within the legal and regulatory capacities of the institution and geography.
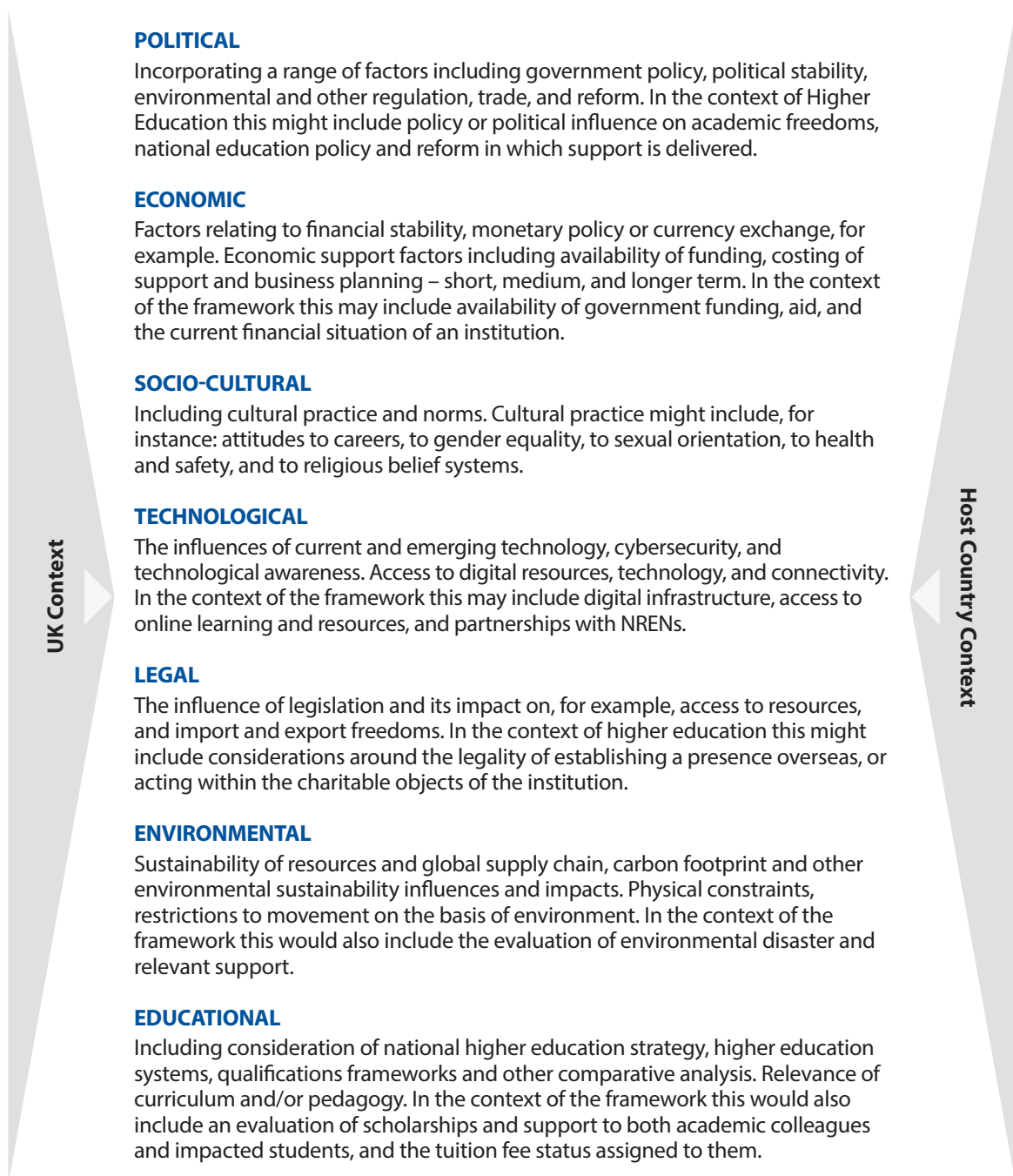
The framework intentionally poses a significant number of questions which are intended to be answered at the institutional and then sector level. It is a self-reflective, self-analysis tool where responses in relation to capability and capacity can be consolidated to give a comprehensive understanding of the aggregate resources and skills available to be deployed in any given situation.

Phase 1:
Comprehensive environmental analysis

The inclusion of an environmental analysis draws on the existing PESTLE tool in considering the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental context in both the impacted region and the region providing support. The tool is extended to specifically include an assessment of the education system in the impacted geography, its academic frameworks, pedagogical norms, and other educational factors that might impact response.

The environmental analysis is intended to be undertaken at both an institutional, partner and sector level. The primary purpose of the environmental analysis is to ensure a well-developed understanding of the environment in which humanitarian need is to be delivered, however, the analysis is intended to be used in both the home and humanitarian context.

Diagram 2: Environmental analysis

POLITICAL

Incorporating a range of factors including government policy, political stability, environmental and other regulation, trade, and reform. In the context of Higher Education this might include policy or political influence on academic freedoms, national education policy and reform in which support is delivered.

ECONOMIC

Factors relating to financial stability, monetary policy or currency exchange, for example. Economic support factors including availability of funding, costing of support and business planning – short, medium, and longer term. In the context of the framework this may include availability of government funding, aid, and the current financial situation of an institution.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Including cultural practice and norms. Cultural practice might include, for instance: attitudes to careers, to gender equality, to sexual orientation, to health and safety, and to religious belief systems.

TECHNOLOGICAL

The influences of current and emerging technology, cybersecurity, and technological awareness. Access to digital resources, technology, and connectivity. In the context of the framework this may include digital infrastructure, access to online learning and resources, and partnerships with NRENs.

LEGAL

The influence of legislation and its impact on, for example, access to resources, and import and export freedoms. In the context of higher education this might include considerations around the legality of establishing a presence overseas, or acting within the charitable objects of the institution.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Sustainability of resources and global supply chain, carbon footprint and other environmental sustainability influences and impacts. Physical constraints, restrictions to movement on the basis of environment. In the context of the framework this would also include the evaluation of environmental disaster and relevant support.

EDUCATIONAL

Including consideration of national higher education strategy, higher education systems, qualifications frameworks and other comparative analysis. Relevance of curriculum and/or pedagogy. In the context of the framework this would also include an evaluation of scholarships and support to both academic colleagues and impacted students, and the tuition fee status assigned to them.

UK Context

Host Country Context

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Phase 2:
Preparedness and capacity building

The framework advocates for considerable time and resource being engaged in preparedness and capacity building.

It is an area in which the sector already delivers through teaching, research, and knowledge exchange. Research groups play a particularly critical role in preparedness, and a recommendation of the main body of the report is to develop a comprehensive map of research expertise that could be reviewed and engaged dependent upon the particular humanitarian situation and local needs assessment.

It is at an institutional level that universities should consider whether engagement is or is not the right thing to do prior to response to a crisis. This may be achieved through a series of questions, including:

- Do you have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of those seeking humanitarian support?
- Do you bring the right knowledge and skills to deliver support? What are these?
- Do you have adequate and ongoing financial and other infrastructure resources to sustain your efforts? What are those infrastructure resources and how could they be deployed?
- Have you ensured that you are not duplicating existing programmes or the work of existing partners that are better placed to deliver?
- Is there anything in your policy or regulatory environment that would prevent or hamper engagement?

The analysis also leads itself to the potential heatmapping of collaborate responses. Brought together, individual responses could be used to develop a partnership or even sector ecosystem through which accountabilities be allocated to individual university or partner contributors.

Phase 3:
Initial and ongoing needs and capability assessment*

This is about the skills, expertise and experience required to deliver effective solutions at an institutional and sector/partnership level and should be revisited throughout humanitarian response to ensure that capabilities are appropriate at every stage of engagement.

Given the complexities of humanitarian need, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive view of the skills, expertise and experience required of any specific humanitarian situation, however, we propose that capability needs be assessed under the following headings:

- **Human Resources**
  Appropriately skilled and experienced workforce to plan, coordinate and deliver humanitarian interventions.

- **Coordination Mechanisms**
  Identification of existing and new networks to facilitate an effective response through collaboration, information sharing, and efficient resource allocation across actors. It is here that there is the maximum opportunity for a joint needs assessment, reducing duplication of effort, identifying gaps and agreeing priorities.

- **Community Engagement**
  To facilitate an ongoing understanding of need, ensuring relevance, strengthening local coordination, and supporting local decision-making.

Phase 4:
Resource assessment, allocation, and mobilisation*

- **Financial Resources**
  To support various aspects of humanitarian response, including emergency aid, medical supplies, food and water, shelter, and long-tern recovery efforts in the short, medium and longer term should be assessed and planned.

- **Logistical Resources**
  Including transportation, storage and distribution networks, procurement and supply chain management.

- **Infrastructure and Facilities**
  Access to infrastructure and resources including availability for deployment in a range of humanitarian situations.

- **Information and Communication Systems**
  These are increasingly key, ensuring accurate and timely information in relation to needs, resources, ongoing activities, and any gaps in response. They include digital capabilities and infrastructure to support and enhance data sharing and improved coordination.

Phase 5:
Ongoing monitoring and evaluation

Recognising that resource requirements and capabilities needs are likely to evolve through the phases of humanitarian response, the framework advocates for ongoing review of the mechanisms and interventions being deployed. Flexibility, adaptability, and coordination being essential to meet the changing needs of humanitarian crisis.

It is in this phase of the framework that there is also the potential, over time, to introduce performance indicators that are appropriate to the stage of humanitarian response.

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*   The creation and periodic refresh of shared capability and capacity assessments through effective and coordinated partnerships are a key recommendation of the report which advocates for the creation of a sector-wide competencies, expertise, and resource mapping exercise.

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Summary of Lessons Learnt

L1   Locally led

Humanitarian response should be driven by the local context and by the capacity and capability needs of those requiring humanitarian support. It is imperative that responses to humanitarian crises are led by those who are impacted.

UUKi can play an important convening role in bringing stakeholders together to understand the scale and scope of challenges and help establish the parameters of possible action.

L2   Delivered in partnership

The sector and its partners – including bodies such as UUK – should ensure a coordinated and connected response. It is in this response that resources are maximised, and any duplication of effort mitigated. Cross-sector coordination is critical to an effective response.

The partnership approach also enables connection with those who bring local knowledge and broader charitable purpose, enabling a comprehensive structure of support.

The partnership response should be coordinated through a central body such as UUK, with appropriate, adaptive, relevant measurement and monitoring of performance being embedded at key stages of the response.

L3   Policy and regulation

UK HEIs and sector bodies should work collaboratively with government bodies to enable the most effective policy and regulatory environment for delivery. Establishing a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with the FCDO, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), UKRI and others directly in support of humanitarianism would ensure preparedness for future response, as well as a clear understanding of the policy and regulatory parameters of any intervention. A direct call to action from relevant ministers would no doubt also energise the sector to respond.

Identifying policy, regulatory and funding issues at an early stage would facilitate a high-impact response. A standing committee could be established of key government departments and sector stakeholders that could be mobilised as required. An early assessment of the potential barriers and the scope for addressing these can save considerable time and resources, and direct activity towards appropriate channels.

L4   Funding and financing

Sector-wide funding to support the continuation of higher education internationally, through humanitarian response, should be discussed with government bodies and other funding agencies. That discussion should include an upfront agreement of suitable performance measures of funding at each stage of humanitarian support: from preparedness to emergency response, through recovery and rehabilitation, to reconstruction and development.

Longer term, options for sustained financing should be explored as a priority by government bodies, including FCDO and DSIT and public bodies including UKRI and others in discussion with representatives of the sector and its partners. These discussions should include an upfront exploration of the deliverables, expected outcomes and restrictions of particular funding streams.

L5   Effective leadership and governance at an institutional level

Ownership at the institutional level is key to an effective response. There needs to be senior buy-in to ensure that advocates and champions have the support to develop an appropriate institutional response.

Individual institutional responses should be overseen by an appropriate committee with accountability to the senior team for ongoing resource allocation and monitoring. Governance mechanisms should be embedded into ongoing governance frameworks and stood up or down as needed. Responses should be supported by a business case, business plan and risk assessment within the institution's existing risk management processes.

A specific recommendation of the report is the need for UK HEIs to ensure, through their Board of Governors/Council, that any response is within the charitable objects of their university.

L6   **Thorough environmental analysis**

Analysis should be undertaken at institutional and sector level in order to understand the unique situations and complexities of each humanitarian situation. This analysis should include an understanding of the political, social, and cultural context, as well as an understanding of the higher education sector of the host country.

A transparent and open discussion of the conflicts and potential constraints of working within, or in support of, a specific population, geography or region should be included and should address challenges relating to, for example, differing perspectives on equalities and other human rights concerns, or the relative autonomy of the higher education sector in that country.

L7   **Sector-wide competencies, expertise and resource mapping**

UUK should hold a comprehensive record which maps sector knowledge and expertise in relation to humanitarian response and which can provide a frame of reference to be used in future humanitarian crises. That mapping exercise should include key research groups, education providers and other partners that are able to contribute to the full range of humanitarian situations. A key element of preparedness for future humanitarian need, UUK should coordinate an initial review of expertise and experience which should be maintained for use when the need arises.

Responses must be pragmatic and deliverable. Responses must be tailored to the capacity, capability, and resources of all parties. For the UK institution, this means a realistic assessment of the art of the possible – including an objective assessment of the operational, funding, and regulatory conditions that will shape any response.

L8   **Framework response**

The sector should adopt a framework approach to new humanitarian responses.

Section 7 of the report includes a descriptive framework to support universities, their partners and the sector in implementing these recommendations and in responding to future humanitarian events.

The framework poses a series of questions which collectively seek to respond to the emerging themes within the research, including capacity and capability assessment, environmental analysis, and effective planning for long term support. It supports a deliberate and considered response to humanitarian need through greater preparedness and greater coordination.

Conclusion

Over the course of the research, we have observed the incredible power of the sector in uniting, collaborating, and generously sharing reflections and insights. As we look to the future of humanitarian crises responses, we hope that the lessons presented throughout the report will become valuable considerations.

The sector is still very much in the crisis response phase and it should be noted that the reflections and evaluations emerging in the long-term will happen beyond this commission. We also note that there is now a need for ongoing coordination that is inclusive and draws fully upon the range of experience, expertise, partnerships, and networks available. Notably, the response itself continues to generate a new group of sector leaders who have emerged with their own experiences and expertise in the humanitarian landscape. There is also a need to introduce elements of longer-term responses that ensure preparedness for reconstruction and rebuilding the Ukrainian higher education sector post-war. To aid this, we also suggest the continuation of a repository of case studies which showcase ongoing work and outcomes as the response continues, partnerships mature, and we hopefully see a transition into peacetime.

We understand that there have been limitations to this research. Particularly, the lack of capacity for Ukrainian colleagues to fully engage in the research at this time, as well as the inability to be fully reflective of the impact of interventions, whether positive or negative. This, again, will outlive the research project.

Our ambition for the framework is that it becomes an adaptive tool for the wider UK higher education sector and that it eventually supports a deliberate and considered response to humanitarian need, with an emphasis on greater preparedness underpinned by sector coordination.

Appendix 1: Team Biographies

Susie Hills
Project Director

Susie supports HEI leaders and teams, often during times of significant change. She is a champion of best practice governance and is responsible for developing Halpin's cross-sector governance expertise. She has led high-profile, complex reviews of governance processes which have informed strategy and led to operational change.

She previously worked in the charity, corporate, and HE sectors, and brings her cross-sector perspective to Halpin's clients.

Susie has worked with a number of clients on highly customised governance reviews, including University College London, Universities UK, Quality Assurance Agency, Universities of Kent and Westminster and the Royal College of Art. Other recent governance clients include University of West London, University of Sunderland, Leeds Trinity University, London Institute of Banking & Finance and University of Bath.

She was previously CSR Manager for Tesco PLC, where she was responsible for CSR policy and practice, setting and reporting on KPIs for environmental and social impact across the international business and working with the plc Board.

Susie writes regularly on governance, leadership, and management topics. She is a Trustee of the Halpin Trust and until recently was a member of the Board of Governors at Plymouth College of Art and Exeter College.

She was listed in 2019 as one of '50 Leading Lights' by the FT in recognition of her work on kindness in leadership.

Paula Sanderson
Lead Consultant

Paula currently works in consultancy and interim leadership roles. She has held Chief Operating Officer roles at Middlesex University, Queen Mary University of London, SOAS University of London, and the University of Reading Malaysia, as well as senior operations roles at the University of Sydney and University of Exeter.

She is passionate about data-led strategy. A positive-change agent, she is committed to developing excellence in professional services and to the contribution of professional services to student outcomes and in supporting research, innovation and knowledge transfer.

With a background in internal and performance audit, Paula is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. Paula has a DBA in Higher Education Management and holds a sustainability-based MBA from the University of Exeter and a Masters of Tertiary Education Management from the University of Melbourne. Her doctoral research considers governance and ethics in transnational education. Paula is undertaking her executive education at the Harvard Kennedy School and is a member of the HKS Women and Power network.

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Emily Owen

Consultant

Emily is a trainee consultant who is committed to working in the fast-paced and ever-changing higher education landscape. With a particular passion for strategy, analysis, and diversity within the professional environment, Emily is developing her skills in higher education leadership and management via Halpin's trainee consultant pathway.

After graduating from Durham University with an English Literature degree in 2020, Emily began her career in the sector on the Graduate Management Programme at the University of Nottingham. Replacing the former Ambitious Futures national scheme, this gave Emily significant exposure to university leadership and management at faculty, school, and professional service levels.

Under the mentorship of senior colleagues, Emily contributed to the creation of a 3-year departmental business plan, independently coordinated a demographic review of student residences, and presented a number of findings and recommendations to internal directors and advisory boards. She is now a Trustee of Her Path to Purpose, a charity which supports young women in fulfilling their personal and professional ambitions.

Emily brings experience in analytical approaches, bigger picture thinking, and seeks to identify the narrative in any set of findings. Her keen eye for detail and commitment to organisational goals and values energises her work with Halpin. She is particularly interested in the strategic alignment of university planning and the contribution of all colleagues to a core organisational goal.

Beth Adams

Project Manager

Beth is a calm, pragmatic and highly experienced coordinator of projects, both within the UK and internationally. She brings to Halpin extensive project management and stakeholder management experience from the television industry, where, as a production coordinator, she demonstrated her skill at managing complex assignments from kick-off through to delivery.

After graduating from Lancaster University in 2017, Beth held roles with the Devon and Somerset Law Society and Together Drug and Alcohol Services, before embarking on a career in television production management where, over three years, she developed her skills in administration, logistics management, compliance, health and safety, and budget control.

Already a much-valued member of the Client Services team, Beth is currently working across Halpin service areas, supporting our HE clients and Consulting Fellows to ensure we deliver quality consultancy as planned.

Appendix 2: Research Methods

The research took place between early April and June of 2023. Overall, over 50 people have contributed to the research through interviews, case studies, focus groups and informal conversations. Interviewees and case study contributors are listed at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

Diagram 3: Halpin Project Methodology

Research Process

DESK REVIEW

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
27 interviews with 10 UK Universities, 2 Ukrainian universities, and various sector and governmental bodies

CO CREATION OF CASE STUDIES
8 case studies developed: 2 Ukrainian universities, 5 UK universities, and STAR

LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORK REVIEW

DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT FRAMEWORK

FOCUS GROUPS TO EXPLORE AND DEVELOP FRAMEWORK FURTHER
Three focus groups: Welsh Sector Committee UK HE Humanitarian Group Group of Ukrainian university representatives

REVIEW AND PUBLICATION OF FINAL REPORT

1. Desk review

A broad initial desk review was undertaken, including:

i. Documentation provided by UUK which included the relevant minutes of the UUK Board and UUK Board Advisory Committee.

ii. Publicly available documentation relating to the Ukrainian higher education sector, including:

- Higher education in Ukraine, UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (2006)
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine website
- National Open Science Plan, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2022)
- Draft Ukraine Recovery Plan (Materials of the education and science working group)
- Media coverage of the war in Ukraine and of higher education media coverage in relation to the conflict.

iii. Publicly available information and documentation provided by partner organisations.

iv. Documentation provided by partner organisations, including information from those leading elements of the sector response.

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2. Semi-structured interviews

We conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with UK universities, sector partners and Ukrainian university leaders. Interviews were qualitative, drawing on the experiences of those who led and delivered on the sector response to the war in Ukraine. Those interviews posed broad and open questions, asking participants to describe their involvement in the crisis response, whether at a national or institutional level, and to outline the enablers and the challenges that they encountered. A listening exercise, as far as possible, we allowed participants to drive the conversation.

Altogether, 34 individuals were interviewed across 27 separate interviews. Participants are detailed at Appendix 3 where they were comfortable to be identified. Four participants remain anonymous.

3. Development of case studies

The interviews also informed the selection of the eight case studies included in the report. Case studies were co-created and selected specifically to highlight some of the core themes in the data. Case studies represent five UK universities, two Ukrainian universities and one partner organisation.

4. Literature and framework review

A literature review, informed by the research, covered the exploration of a range of humanitarian frameworks. Several existing frameworks and data from humanitarian response organisations informed the development of the higher education framework. These are presented in more detail in the 'Higher Education Humanitarian Framework' section.

5. Development of draft framework

The research data alongside the literature review, and in particular the review and critique of existing frameworks, informed the development of a draft framework for the higher education sector.

6. Focus groups to review and critique framework

The draft framework was reviewed in three focus groups:
- Groups of Ukrainian university representatives
- UK HE Humanitarian Group
- Welsh Sector Committee

7. Review and publication of final report

We are grateful to have had ongoing guidance and support from a steering group and from those who contributed to the research and in particular, those who contributed case studies, as acknowledged at Appendix 4.

There are of course limitations to the research. One relates to the timing of the commissioned report. With crisis still very much ongoing in Ukraine, it has been difficult to engage as fully as we would wish with universities in Ukraine, particularly with those in war-torn regions, hence the voice of Ukrainian universities is less evident than we had hoped. We opened several engagement slots for Ukrainian universities and invited feedback via a number of channels but did not feel it appropriate to add additional pressure into such a challenging environment.

Over 50 people were engaged in the research, from across more than 25 organisations and institutions. However, given the breadth of both the Ukrainian and UK higher education sectors, and the diversity of the response to the war in Ukraine, the research will undoubtedly have failed to capture all of the experiences of the last 17 months, whether positive or more challenging.

The depth of passion and the significant emotional investment in humanitarian response means that it is impossible to mitigate for all bias. In particular, Ukrainian colleagues tended to be extremely complimentary of the support that they were receiving from UK counterparts.

Appendix 3: Interviews

We interviewed 34 individuals across 27 interviews, representing universities, sector bodies, the UK government, and non-governmental organisations. Each interviewee was invited to participate in a 30-minute conversation with a member of the consulting team. Interviews took place via Microsoft Teams between April and June 2023.

The interviews were semi-structured with a series of prompt questions covering UK university responses, Ukrainian institutions as recipients, and partnerships where appropriate. Interviewees were encouraged to respond conversationally and to focus on areas they felt were important due to the exploratory nature of each session.

We would like to thank all participants for their generous contributions and expert insights. These conversations formed the basis of much of our analysis and reporting.

A list of interviewees, where consent to share this information has been given, can be found below.

Interview participants

Table 2: Participants in semi-structured interviews taking place between April and June 2023

Interviewee	Role	Organisation
Otakar Fojt	Senior Science & Innovation Advisor	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
Representatives of the UK Government's Science and Innovation Network		Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
Mike Bright	Associate Director (International Policy)	UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)
Stephen Wordsworth Zeid Al Bayaty	Executive Director Deputy Director	Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)
Charles Cormack Anzhela Stachchak	Founder & Chairman Director for Projects	Cormack Consultancy Group
Ann Rossiter	Executive Director	Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL)
Jamie Arrowsmith	Director	Universities UK International (UUKi)
Vivienne Stern	CEO	Universities UK (UUK)
Hugo Clarke	Deputy Head of International	The British Academy
Catherine Gladwell	CEO	Refugee Education UK (REUK)
Emily Crowley Siobhán Coskeran	Chief Executive Campaigns Manager	Student Action for Refugees (STAR)
John Strachan	Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)	Bath Spa University
Jhumar Johnson	Chief of Staff	The Open University
Renata Schaeffer	Head of International Partnerships	University of Cambridge
Geoff Green	Registrar & Secretary	University of Leicester
Gavin Brown	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education	University of Liverpool
Dafydd Moore	Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor	University of Plymouth
Saul Tendler	Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost	University of York

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Interviewee	Role	Organisation
Simon Meacher Gary Morton	Head of Executive & Governance Office Business Resilience Manager	Newcastle University
Leonie Ansems de Vries Nicole Mennell	Sanctuary Programme Director Sanctuary Programme Manager	King's College London
Chris Yeomans Michelle Beagan	Director of Global Engagement Senior Partnerships Advisor	University of Edinburgh
Nicholas Thomas	Director (formerly Director, British Council Ukraine)	British Council China

Appendix 4: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank every individual who has contributed to our research process and the development of the framework. In particular, the project Steering Group and those who have contributed case studies or participated in focus groups.

Steering group

Jamie Arrowsmith, Director, Universities UK International

Rosie Boxall, Partnerships Manager, Universities UK International

Celia Partridge, Assistant Director Partnerships & Strategic Insight, Universities UK International

Hugo Clarke, Deputy Head of International, The British Academy

Alan Mackay, Deputy Vice Principal International and Director of Edinburgh Global, University of Edinburgh

Tania Lima, Director of Global Engagement, King's College London

Case studies

Ukrainian Catholic University

Contributed by Galyna Protsyk, Director of the International Academic Relations Office

Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (PNU)

Contributed by Valentyna Yakubiv, First Vice-Rector

The Open University

Contributed by Jhumar Johnson, Chief of Staff

Bath Spa University

Contributed by John Strachan, PVC Research & Enterprise and Ian Gadd, Head of Development for European Projects

Newcastle University

Contributed by Simon Meacher, Head of Executive and Governance Office and Gary Morton, Business Resilience Manager

University of Leicester

Contributed by Geoff Green, Registrar and Secretary

King's College London

Contributed by Nicole Mennell, Sanctuary Programme Manager and Leonie Ansems de Vries, Director of the King's Sanctuary Programme

Student Action for Refugees (STAR)

Contributed by Emily Crowley, Chief Executive and Siobhán Coskeran, Campaigns Manager

Focus groups

Welsh Sector Committee

Stuart Robb, Acting Registrar, University of Wales
Sarah Taylor, Head of Strategic Development, Aberystwyth University
Cara Aitchison, President and Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Mike Chick, Senior Lecturer and Refugee Champion, University of South Wales
Emma Frearson Emmanuel, Associate Director of Marketing, Recruitment and International, Swansea University
Kieron Rees Assistant Director, Universities Wales

UK HE Humanitarian Group

Alan Mackay, Deputy Vice-Principal International and Director of Edinburgh Global, University of Edinburgh
Celia Partridge, Assistant Director, Partnerships & Strategic Insight, Universities UK International
Philip Horspool, Director of Centre for International Training and Education, University of Leicester
Leonie Ansems De Vries, Director of the King's Sanctuary Programme and Chair of Migration Research Group, King's College London
Aleks Palanac, Head of Sanctuary, University of Leciester

Groups of Ukrainian university representatives

Galyna Protsyk, Director of International Academic Relations Office, Ukrainian Catholic University
Solomia Rozlutska, Academic Relations Manager, Ukrainian Catholic University
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Appendix 5: List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
Cara	Council for At-Risk Academics
CCG	Cormack Consultancy Group
DfENI	Department for the Economy Northern Ireland
DSIT	Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Higher Education
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NREN	National Research and Education Network
NRFU	National Research Foundation of Ukraine
ODA	Official development assistance
OCRE	Open Clouds for Research Environments
RaR	Researchers at Risk
REUK	Refugee Education UK
SCONUL	Society of College, National, and University Libraries
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
STAR	Student Action for Refugees
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
UKRI	UK Research & Innovation
UUK	Universities UK
UUKi	Universities UK International

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