Aurora Capacity Development Support Programme (CDS)

Action Plan for V.N Karazin Kharkiv National University Ukraine

Due to Russian Federation's recent aggression on Ukraine and the ongoing war since February 24th, the priorities of the Aurora Capacity Development Support Programme towards our associate partner, Karazin University in Ukraine, have drastically changed.

The university is located in Kharkiv, in north-eastern Ukraine, 41 kilometres from the Russian border and in close vicinity of Luhansk and Donetsk, from where the invasion and military attacks have been launched. The city has been exposed to heavy warfare during the last 2 months, and many people have left for western parts of the country or across the border, while others still remain trapped in the city, spending most of their time in underground shelters. They can currently receive governments' humanitarian aid, supplying them with daily food and medicine rations.

Our two colleagues and Aurora's contact points have been directly affected by the situation, and we have worked to establish contact and exchange information on how to best help in the developing situation. While one of our colleagues has been able to evacuate his family to safety in the western part of the country where he is now displaced, the other made it safely to Olomouc and is now hosted and employed at Palacky University, working on coordinating the aid towards Karazin university.

Due to the war situation, the university has been closed, and its functions are currently suspended. Its main building and support buildings have come under heavy shelling and have been destroyed. Already in the early days of the invasion, the educational building of the Physics and Technology Department was damaged. Fortunately, lecturers, students, and employees stayed at home, and there were no casualties as the educational process was already suspended. On March 2nd, Russian troops struck and damaged the building of the Faculty of Sociology which caused a large-scale fire on the site. University supporting buildings like sports centres, various sciences labs, and the university library have all been destroyed, with numerous book volumes vanishing. A video by colleagues from Karazin Kharkiv university has been made and posted on the UP Aurora website, demonstrating the university's infrastructural damage and asking for aid.

Proposed Scope of Action within the CDS programme

The Aurora actions of support are based on this Action Plan document updated on a monthly basis as a joint collaborative work between the CDS task team and representatives of the International office of the Karazin University. It takes into consideration an assessment of the needs in the immediate (humanitarian), mid-term

(recovery) and long-term (development) phases. Here below, it is divided into staff and student support taking into account these different support periods.

Supporting Karazin staff:

We propose focusing our capacity support both *internally and externally* to support the Karazin staff.

Internal support refers to lending our Aurora university resources to support the capacity of the institution under siege and/or dislocated by helping it continue its core educational mission and resume (part of) the online education programmes already developed during the COVID pandemic. To resume the online education as soon as possible has also been the decision of the University President of Karazin that our Aurora colleague communicated to us via zoom call on March 7th.

Supporting Karazin staff externally means activating our resources to host its staff in a refugee situation at our Aurora universities. Here, a number of activities have already been undertaken by the CDS team: Scholars at Risk scheme is activated, and many internal relocation of staff/support programmes are operative (UP, VU, Innsbruck, UDE, URV, CBS) and CARA (East Anglia).

Overall, Aurora President and UP President, as well as a number of other Aurora universities presidents and leadership of associate partners (Kosice, Slovakia, SWU, Bulgaria, Tetova, North Macedonia), have offered help in officially stated letters communicated per email to Karazin's President and our Aurora Karazin contact persons and published on Aurora website(s). In addition, UP is coordinating the initiatives to help Karazin staff and students, given its leading role in the Aurora CDS programme.

➢ **Aurora CDS Action:**
- Continue supporting our Aurora points and International office colleagues through continuous communication and exchanges to understand and assess their priority needs as the situation evolves
- Provide an accurate overview list of staff relocation schemes as per Aurora university and post info and calls to reach Karazin staff with a concrete number of placements
- Continue securing the participation of colleagues trapped in war/siege in training/edu offers of Aurora CDS programme and expand it (an important aspect of psychosocial wellbeing in the war).
- Engage in collaboration across T.T.s in Aurora (e.g Service learning/Co-creation, Social Entrepreneurship, I.T., OER) and identify more relevant training/participatory and collaborative events to offer and secure for Karazin staff
- Ensure direct communication of Aurora colleagues from Karazin in Aurora Biannual during the panel address and use Biannul for fundraiser and collect further support suggestions for Karazin's staff
- Enable co-teaching opportunities –hosting Karazin classes, courses, summer schools in person at Aurora universities

Supporting Karazin students:

For students in the *refugee situation*: Many Aurora universities have secured their own mechanisms to embed and integrate the students who fled the war in Ukraine. We propose to use Aurora Alliance's strengths and resources to provide concrete support to Karazin students and prioritise them in accessing their continued education in exile.

> **Aurora CDS Action**:
- INFO on Aurora helping refugee students from Karazin at Aurora universities needs to be gathered and shared. Each Aurora partner university must inform UP about the number of student scholarships/posts they can offer to Karazin students (see UP Aurora website) and share this at Aurora on the main website and internal ones
- Direct orientational info for Karazin students already in Aurora universities through Aurora offices needs to be established/secured
- Aurora Student volunteers put in place to help peers to navigate Aurora institutions could be organised (e.g. Student Buddy programmes as an idea to be elaborated)
- Student Biannuals' fundraisers and collecting support from students to students, as well as organising a dedicated slots for Karazin students' experiences and voices

For internally displaced students in Ukraine: Our Aurora colleague, Head of the International office of Karazin, has relocated with his family to safety in Ivano-Frankivsk city in Western Ukraine, where he is now hosted by Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. This university is also UP partner already and has recently asked for help with the exchange scheme for their own students.

In all likelihood, Precarpathian University will act as a host of the Karazin university during the war situation and help re-establish education and its continuation for Karazin students in online distance learning. This has been the decision of the Karazin President. However, for this to happen, Karazin needs to have an overview of its displaced students and staff, good communication lines, and secure good I.T. support.

> **Aurora CDS Action:**
- Securing funding and purchase of necessary technical equipment to support online teaching
- Securing the backup server to store student data, including administrating examination records directly liked to recognition or validation issues.
- Securing the server space and safe VPN for online teaching
- Securing the access to open online educational materials
- Engaging more solidarity to help Karazin with EOR from other universities outside of Aurora that individual Aurora institutions collaborate with.

- Pooling expertise from Aurora to teach (online) in war-peace studies, international law, forced migration, mental health/psychosocial wellbeing etc. E.G Donate a course.