

# **Longitudinal Evaluation: Long-term Outcomes and Impacts of the Naz Legacy Foundation Interfaith Iftar (2016-2018)**

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**In Partnership with The Randeree Charitable Trust and Pears Foundation**

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**NAZ**  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Naz Legacy Foundation aim to raise aspirations and provide educational, cultural and inspirational experiences for young people from ethnic minorities or deprived communities in the UK. They encourage integration among diverse communities living in the UK by bringing groups together for discussion, to promote understanding and encourage public service.

For three-years running, The Naz Legacy Foundation in partnership with The Randeree Charitable Foundation and Pears Foundation, have presented an annual Interfaith event, centred around an Iftar<sup>1</sup>. Over one hundred young Londoners from different faiths, or none, come together to discuss their faith and how to bring different communities in London together within a spirit of community, unity and public service. Each year this is held in a different religious location across London. The event is divided into three segments as follows:

- **Round Table Discussion:** enables small groups of young people from different faiths and denominations to discuss faith, belief and culture. Moderators at each table encourage the group to deliberate how communities in London can be brought together and encourage the group to think about social action projects that could aid this.
- **Speeches:** Young people, faith leaders and politicians present speeches to the delegates centred around bringing people together and the commonalities that different faiths share
- **Presentation of ideas:** Young people present their ideas on how to bring communities together to the dignitaries to discuss and disseminate ideas.

A meal with further opportunities to discuss ideas follows. In 2018, an optional tour of the St Johns Synagogue followed the meal and a third of the delegates attended.

Summative evaluation was undertaken at these events. This provided immediate feedback on the impact and reception of the event<sup>2</sup>. These evaluations demonstrated that the events were successful in enthusing and inspiring young people to want to pursue further social action and/or interfaith activity immediately following the Iftar event (on average 93% agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to take part in more social action projects). The following evaluation report provides a longer-term assessment of the participants actions following their engagement at the Iftar. This evaluation was undertaken two years, one year or six months after attending the Iftar depending on the year they attended.



Figure 1: Mayor of London's 'selfies'. 2017, 2016 & 2018

<sup>1</sup> An Iftar is a feast that marks the daily breaking of the fast after sunset during Ramadan for the Muslim religion.

<sup>2</sup> Summative evaluation, in the form of Pre and Post evaluation of the 100 young people was undertaken in 2017 and 2018 see Evaluation reports.

## METHOD

300 participants who attended one of the Interfaith Iftar events from 2016 were emailed an e-survey (via Survey Monkey) to assess if, and how far, attending the event had impacted on their views or actions surrounding interfaith activity longer-term<sup>3</sup>. The survey was posted as part of a newsletter alongside an invite to attend a further Naz legacy Event held in November 2018. 59 responses were gathered (20%). This does not provide a representative sample, but the responses given, and the free-text answers provided a good overview of the impact of the Iftar on those who responded to the survey.

## SAMPLE GROUP

The sample group consists of the self-selecting group who responded to the e-survey. The following table provides the key demographics for this group:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Male	41%
Female	59%
<b>Faith</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Muslim	53%
Jewish	12%
Unsure/No faith	8%
Christian	7%
Atheist	5%
Baha'i	3%
Spiritual	3%
Hindu	3%
Sikh	3%
Catholic	2%
<b>Year Attended</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
2016	17%
2017	25%
2018	58%

Most of the respondents had attended the most recent Interfaith Iftar in 2018. Although there were responses from all the different faiths that attend the Interfaith event, more Muslim attendees responded to this survey. It is not known from this data what long-term impact attending the Iftar had on those who did not respond to the survey.

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<sup>3</sup> Although the E-Survey only garnered a 20% response rate, it was felt to be the best and most cost-effective way to evaluate a large number of people in a relatively short period of time. Consideration was given to undertaking random-sample telephone interviews, but this was felt to be too time-consuming in the timescale given for the evaluation.

## RESULTS

The results section presents the findings of the closed-questions (presented in the charts) and the free-text qualitative questions which are able to provide greater insight into the longer-term impacts and outcomes of the Interfaith Iftar. The participants were asked two open-ended questions regarding what impact attending the Interfaith Iftar had on them long-term and what social action, if any, had they taken since attending the Interfaith Iftar to follow up on what they had learned. These responses were coded into key themes using hybrid thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Some of the responses were coded into two or more sub-themes. The key themes and subthemes are represented in the table below for both questions:

Key theme for LONG TERM IMPACT	Sub-theme	Number of comments
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>		<b>28</b>
	Insight and raised awareness of other faiths and own	12
	Greater knowledge and understanding of other faiths and own	16
<b>Attitudes and Values</b>		<b>37</b>
	Attitudes and assumptions about other faiths were challenged	7
	Inspired to support others, be more open, respectful and appreciate people from different faiths	13
	Reaffirmed the power of Interfaith events to bring communities together and break down barriers	14
	Provided hope or courage	3
<b>Behaviour and Progression</b>		<b>20</b>
	Made new friends/inspired by people met	8
	Motivated to do more (engage in other interfaith activity, join or start interfaith groups, Learn more and pass on learning to others etc.)	12

Key theme for SOCIAL ACTION taken	Subtheme	Number of comments
<b>Direct Action</b>		<b>19</b>
	Joined another Interfaith group or attended another Interfaith event	10
	Started or organised a social action group or event	9
<b>Transmission</b>		<b>13</b>
	Influenced others: formally	5
	Influences others: informally	8
<b>Knowledge</b>		<b>22</b>
	Researched more about own or other faiths	13
	Visited places of worship	4
<b>Networks</b>	Met up or formed communication networks	<b>5</b>
<b>Careers, volunteering and training</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Attitude change</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Inspired to do more in the future</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>No Answer/no change</b>		<b>9</b>

The key themes drawn out from both questions are explored in greater detail in the following sections using examples provided by the free-text (qualitative) comments given by the Interfaith Iftar Alumni (2016-2018)

## NETWORKS AND FRIENDSHIPS

One of the key aims of the Interfaith Iftar was to provide an occasion for young people to network with people from other faiths (or no faith) and to promote opportunities to develop links and friendship groups. It was anticipated that many people might meet and network with people from faiths that were normally outside their friendship circle. Figure 2 demonstrates that, longer-term, many of the respondents kept in contact with other attendees following the Iftar. 50% of these kept in contact in person, and 35% were able to establish networks via social media. Some of the respondents kept in touch in person *and* via social media; taking this into account 59% of the respondents kept in touch either in person, via social media or both (see figure 5 below).

Figure 2: Follow-up evaluation: The percentage of new friendships or networks established as a result of the Interfaith Iftar

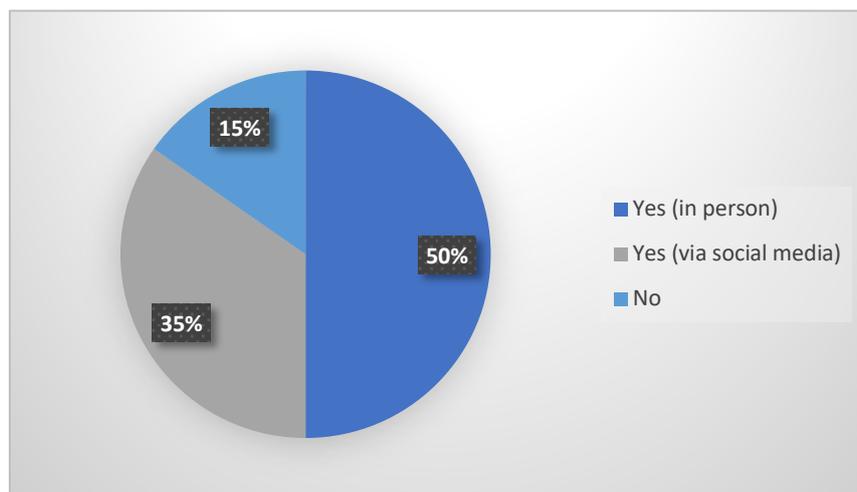
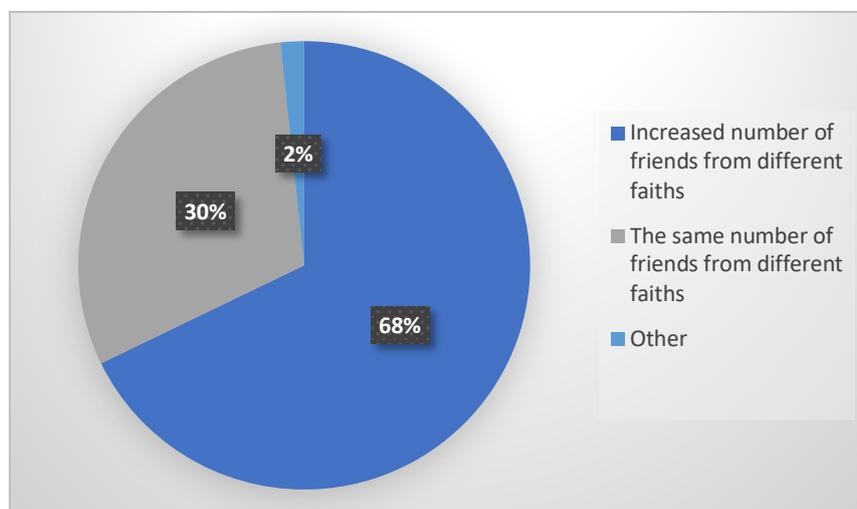


Figure 3 illustrates that 68% of the respondents felt that following the Interfaith Iftar they had increased the number of people from different faiths within their friendship circle. This figure is slightly higher than the figure given in Figure 5, suggesting that some attendees may not have kept in touch with people that they met at the Iftar. 30% of the respondents already had a friendship circle that included many different faiths, so for these people attending the Iftar did not increase this number, but does not preclude a friendship developing.

Figure 3: Follow-up evaluation: Chart showing the percentage of respondents for whom the number of people from other faiths in their friend circle increased since the Iftar



Analysis of the free-text comments demonstrated that many of the attendees were able to establish network groups and/or friendships that extended beyond the event itself (see above). The comments given illustrate how valuable these new friendships have been for developing a greater understanding of people from different faiths and also of being challenged and inspired by new networks, for example:

*It introduced me to a whole new world of people that think differently*

(Spiritual Male attendee, 2017)

*It broadened by perspective. I could see how much I have in common with those of other faiths. I have shared my experiences with other friends of my faith tradition which has helped to change their perceptions too I think*

(Muslim female attendee, 2018)

*(I am) continuously being inspired by a new friendship circle*

(Christian male attendee, 2018)

*Absolutely! I made my first Jewish friend at the iftar!*

(Muslim female attendee, 2017)

For others, the event itself spurred on an online social network group that enabled further knowledge transfer and meetings,

*the group I was in at the Iftar event created a social media group where we could all speak and invite one another to religious based community events and also just allows us to ask each other questions we may have about each other's religions*

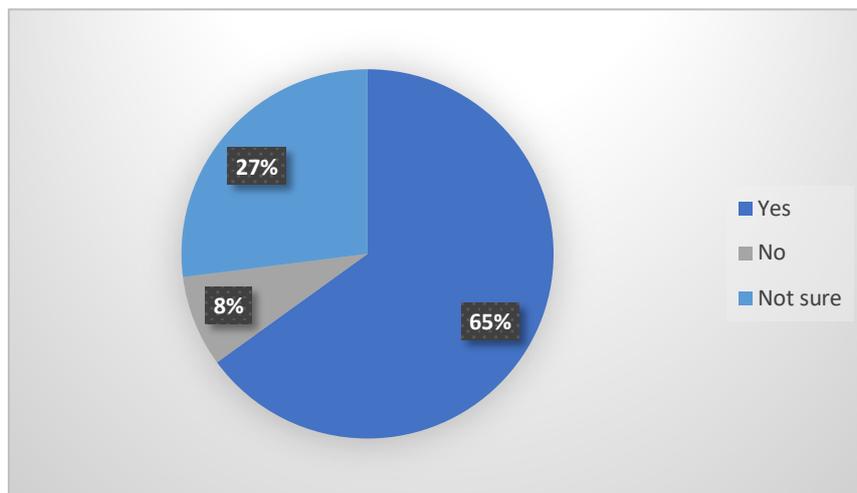
(Jewish Female attendee, 2018)

From the responses gathered, social networks (in person and online) were an integral part of the longer-term impact of the event. Placing the attendees in cluster groups supported this development.

## ACTIONS AND SOCIAL ACTION

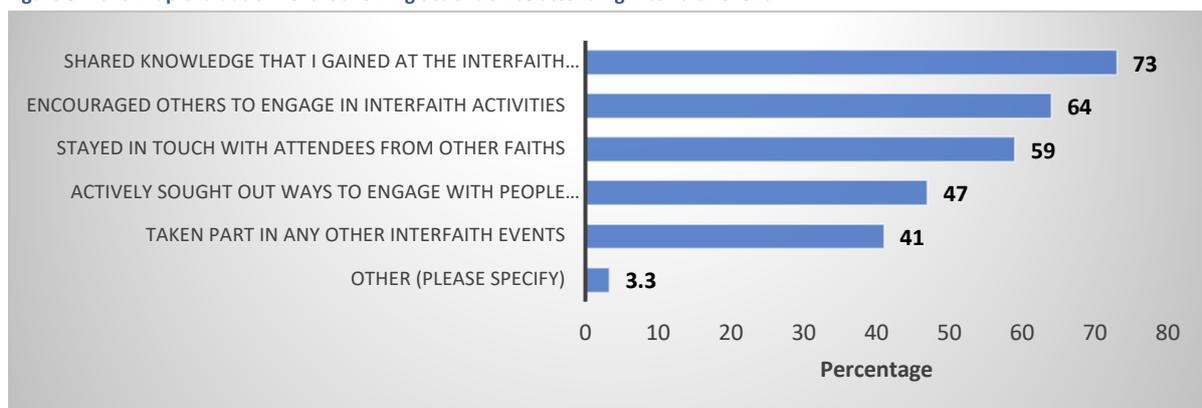
The Interfaith Iftar aimed to inform attendees about the role they could play in social action and to inspire them to act themselves or within their groups. Each cluster group was challenged to think of ideas and strategies that could bring different communities in London together. Figure 4 shows that following the Interfaith Iftar, 65% of the respondents were confident that they had been involved in more social action projects. 27% of the respondents were unsure, which may indicate a lack of clarity about what social action is, or that they may have developed new friendship groups, but are unsure whether this counts as social action. 8% of the respondents did not follow-up with social action.

Figure 4: Follow-up evaluation: Chart showing whether the event encouraged attendees to get further involved in social action projects



The respondents were asked to stipulate what action they had taken since attending the Interfaith Iftar (this was a multiple-choice question and respondents could specify as many choices as they wanted). The results, see figure 5, show that 73% of the respondents were able to transmit knowledge that they had learned at the Interfaith Iftar to others. This is significant because it extends the 'reach' of the Interfaith Iftar beyond the event itself, potentially disseminating to a wider range of people. 64% of the respondents were instrumental in encouraging other people to attend another Interfaith event indicating both enjoyment and perceived significance of this type of event, with 41% taking part in further Interfaith events following the Naz legacy Foundation event. 59% stayed in contact with people that they had met at the event and 47% actively sought out ways to engage people from other faiths in further action or networks following the event.

Figure 5: Follow-up evaluation: Chart showing actions since attending Interfaith event



Analysis of the free-text comments clarified the types of action taken following the Interfaith Iftar. These included being motivated to: seek out other Interfaith events, find out more about other religions (or their own), join faith or interfaith groups, plan future social action projects or share knowledge about Interfaith and different faiths with others. For some, attendance provided 'hope' about the world and for another it gave them confidence to challenge others:

*I met some very interesting people from all sorts of backgrounds which I have since stayed in touch with. Learning more of other people's religion has given me more courage to stand up to those who share hateful messages due to ignorance lack of education in a correct non-confrontational way.*

(Atheist Male attendee, 2017)

Other attendees commented that they had taken direct action following the Interfaith Iftar. One attendee invited others from their group on a tour of their place of worship (and this was reciprocated), another gave a speech about the event at another Interfaith group that they have since become more involved in, another set up an Interfaith book group (see appendix A for a full list of activities). One secular Jewish attendee was prompted to pursue learning more about her own faith and has joined a Jewish faith discussion group to become more informed. Others formed social network groups or friendship groups that are continuing to discuss and perform interfaith activity. This is demonstrated in the comment below,

*(the long-term impact was) having the chance to come together as a whole community, irrespective of one's faith/non-faith, and finding a way to bring communities together in London. I went on to invite people to visit the mandir, and chose to also go and visit other religious establishments*

(Hindu female attendee, 2018)

Although not all of the respondents demonstrate taking part in direct or indirect social action following the Interfaith Iftar, it was clear that for some the inspiration and opportunity to participate further in social action was presented at the event.

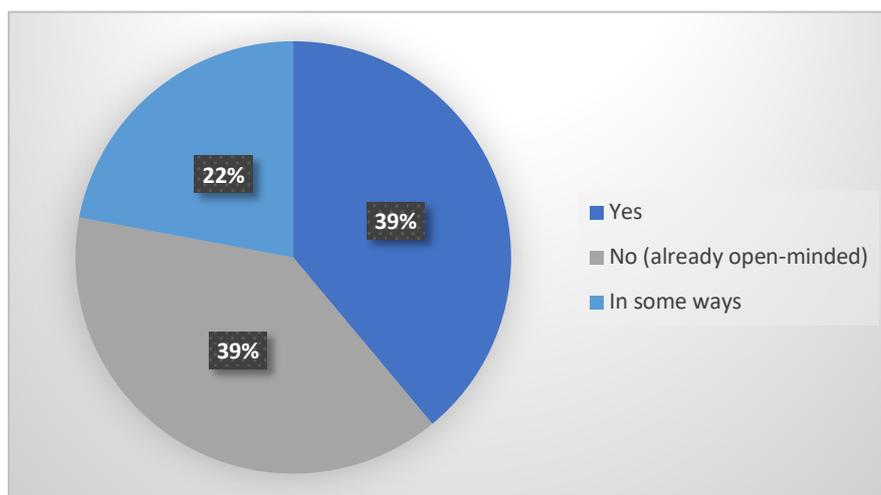
## NEW CAREER, VOLUNTARY OR TRAINING

There was some evidence to suggest that attending the Interfaith Iftar formed part of a social action process that led to some attendees pursuing training, voluntary work or even employment in groups connected to social action and/or the interfaith movement. It is unclear from the comments received whether the Iftar had a direct or an indirect role in this. Alumni are now involved in The Social Mobility Foundation, Patchwork Foundation, involvement in World Harmony Week, Charity Sector roles and involvement in a workplace diversity network leadership team amongst others.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Figure 6 demonstrates that 61% of the respondents suggested that attending the Interfaith Iftar changed their views on people of other faiths (definitely or in some way). This is discussed in further detail in the next section.

Figure 6: Follow-up evaluation: Chart showing if attending the event changed attendees' views on people of other faiths



There was a substantial number of the free-text comments that referred to the impact attending the Interfaith Iftar had on changing or reaffirming attitudes towards other faiths and the Interfaith movement. Many of these comments related to the power of people (from different or no faith) coming together to break down barriers. For these respondents, the legacy of attending the Interfaith Iftar was a realisation or reaffirmation that coming together can result in change. This is emphasised in the comment below,

*In the long-term, the Interfaith Iftar has shown me the power of bringing communities together and by doing so how issues can be addressed*

(Male, no religion stated, attendee 2018)

Another respondent gained an,

*Increased understanding of the need to work together with the wider community to build more cohesive community*

(Muslim male attendee, 2018)

For others, the opportunity to meet people from different faiths and discuss issues and religion challenged views that had been reinforced by media representation,

*attending and being part of the Iftar allowed me to see the positive impact the event has in breaking down those invisible barriers between the 3 Abrahamic religions, a lot of the times our opinions are swayed by what we see in the news, and how believers of a certain religion are portrayed.*

(Muslim Female attendee, 2017)

Other respondents commented about being challenged on their assumptions about other religions or becoming more open-minded about other faiths, as shown in the selection of comments below:

*Made me more open minded about other faiths and also promoted an understanding of differences and how we can learn from each other and come together around common goals and objectives for the betterment of society*

(Muslim male attendee, 2016)

*It made me more sympathetic to people of other faiths. And more aware of our similarities and differences*

(Christian Female attendee, 2018)

*It made me realise that people of different faiths are more similar than I thought. Different faiths are also more open minded to different ideas than I had first anticipated.*

(Non-specified religion Male attendee, 2018)

*Attending the event made me realise that identity is very complex and the way religion can be woven into a persons' life differs from each individual to the next. This is the beauty of it and as a result when you open up discussion you can get a plethora of views and opinions that can be respected and understood*  
(Muslim female attendee, 2018)

*The event allowed me to ask questions and explore people of different faiths beliefs and lifestyles. It changed my view by broadening my understanding of other's religious customs and beliefs.*

(Agnostic female attendee, 2018)

*I've learnt not to be quick with my judgement and forming opinions of people, as well as talking to my parents and older family members and encouraging them to be more accepting.*

(Female Muslim attendee, 2017)

The longer-term impacts on the respondents' attitudes and values show that attendance at the interfaith Iftar was instrumental for some in becoming more open-minded, understanding and respectful about people of different faiths. In particular, there was a value in meeting people face-to-face and being able to ask sensitive questions and see people as individuals.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The qualitative responses revealed the significance of gaining both knowledge and understanding that extended beyond the event itself. Many of the respondents felt that they had gained new and more nuanced knowledge and understanding about different faiths. For some, this was centred around a raised awareness and gaining a greater insight into individual people's beliefs. This was of critical importance to those attendees who have limited exposure to people from other faiths. This is illustrated in the two comments below,

*I believe it's made me more aware! Although I have always had a knowledge of other religions from school through religious education, that was all it was knowledge. What the Interfaith Iftar allowed me to understand is how the person behind each of these religions is different, their interpretations are different and therefore their outlook and how they perceive situations. This has been really important for me as a healthcare professional because I will be treating individuals from a whole range of religions and the interfaith has allowed me to gain a greater perspective on humanity that I would not have been able to experience anywhere else.*

(Female Muslim attendee, 2018)

*I think growing up in a Jewish community where I attended Jewish schools my entire education meant I was in somewhat of a bubble. Before joining 'Parliamentors' I had never really had any dialogue with those of other faiths. When the opportunity to attend an iftar came up I knew it was something I really wanted to attend because I know how important it is for young people of all faiths to come together and establish connections and dialogue, so we can know how we can help each other's communities. The Iftar allowed me to actually learn a lot about the faiths of those people who were around my table and it also meant I had knowledge I didn't have before that I could share with others.*

(Jewish Female attendee, 2018)

The above comments illustrate that attendance at the Interfaith Iftar provided an opportunity to openly discuss religion and faith and to learn from others which provided opportunities significantly different from what is learnt at school. These comments are reinforced by others who suggest that the Iftar offered an open and safe environment in which to discuss issues that are not often discussed within friendship groups. This is demonstrated in the comments below:

*Attending the iftar made me appreciate the diversity of faiths, their different practices, and encouraged me to feel more comfortable asking and understanding their faith. It has offered a perfect opportunity for individuals like me who has not frequently engaged with faith communities, to come together, build bridges and develop a mutual understanding, tolerance and friendship with many different faiths on a grass root level.*

(Female attendee of no faith, 2018)

For another attendee the event opened-up sensitive dialogue,

*I was not afraid to ask people about things I would have been afraid to ask before*  
(Muslim Female attendee, 2017)

Many of the comments referred to new knowledge about other faiths (or their own faith) being gained. This is illustrated in the following comments:

*The amount of knowledge I received about other faiths was astonishing*

(Sikh Male attendee, 2018)

*Having a better knowledge and understanding of all different religions (even ones I have never heard of before) and seeing how we can all be part of a cohesive society. The event provided a platform and safe/open space for everyone to learn from one another and ask as many questions about people's faith as desired, which doesn't happen enough in society*

(Agnostic Female attendee, 2016)

The free-text comments indicate that for many the opportunity to learn more about other faiths and to develop a deeper understanding of different faiths and believers enabled them to develop their own understanding, empathy and respect. This is explored in the section 'attitudes and values' above. For other attendees an opportunity to discuss faith instigated a deeper engagement with their own faith (or cultural values) or further exploration into the similarities between religious communities. The below comment illustrates this,

*(the long-term impact was) Learning more about my own faith - which actually includes writings from both Muslim and Hindu poets in our main holy book - the Guru Granth Sahib*

(Sikh Male attendee, 2016)

The follow-up evaluation demonstrates that the Interfaith Iftar was able to provide a level of knowledge exchange that was significantly different from a school experience. The opportunity to meet with others and discuss faith was in itself valuable in shifting attitudes and deepening connections between attendees of different faiths and denominations. Many of the respondents were prompted to continue to research their own and other faiths following the event and crucially share this knowledge with others.

## TRANSMISSION

The knowledge and understanding gained prompted some attendees to share their knowledge with others by campaigning or by influencing others. Transmission of knowledge was formal (i.e. a campaign or organised discussion) or informal (i.e. between family and friendship groups). The sharing of knowledge is significant because it signifies that knowledge is being exchanged beyond the scope of the event itself and therefore its messages are shared by a wider audience. Some of the comments connected to transmission are presented below,

*I have had multiple conversations with friends, colleagues and others around the importance of faith particularly from those who do not practice their faith. For myself I am not religious, but I value the Importance that religion has in our Society.*

(Atheist male attendee, 2017)

*I discuss interfaith matters more openly at home and at work*

(Muslim female, 2018)

*After I attended my first Interfaith iftar in 2016, I was invited to speak at an event organised by an interfaith charity in my local area. I have since been in contact with the organisation and regularly attend their events.*

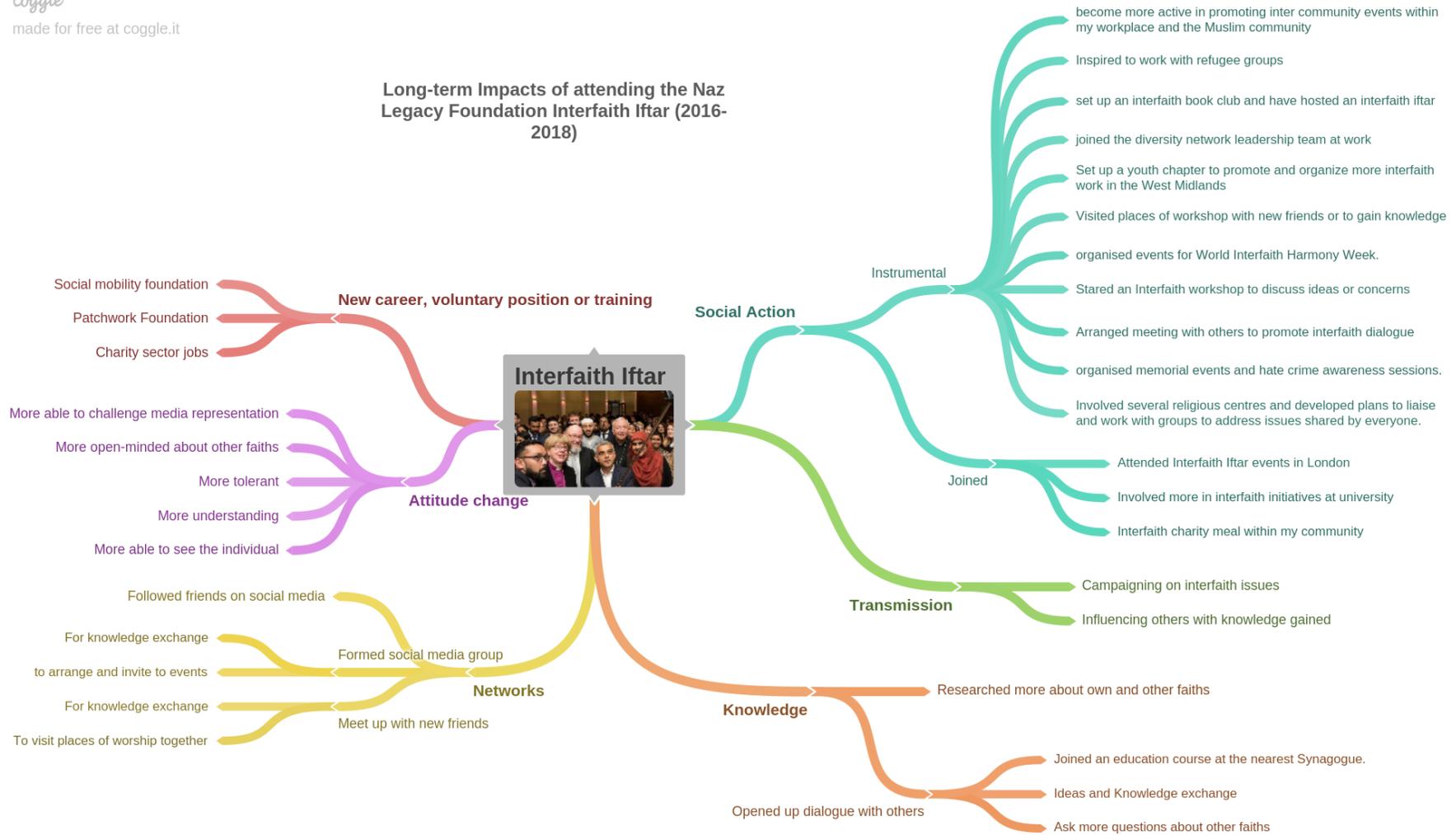
(Muslim Female attendee, 2016)

The dissemination of key knowledge and messages gained at the event is central in spreading the Interfaith message to older and younger audiences who cannot access the Interfaith Iftar event. The qualitative comments show that the event enabled attendees to open-up discussion surrounding understanding and tolerance both within friend and family circles and within the workplace. This is central in spreading the message to a wider audience (note: social media posts would be instrumental in this process too).

## CONCLUSION

The long-term impact of attending the Naz legacy Interfaith Iftar are attitudinal change, knowledge development and dissemination and demonstrable uptake of social action. The chart below illustrates the outcomes of attendance at the Interfaith Iftar.

### Long-term Impacts of attending the Naz Legacy Foundation Interfaith Iftar (2016-2018)



Results are based on 59 follow-up questionnaires two years, one year or six months after attending one Interfaith Iftar event

## APPENDIX A – SOCIAL ACTION

Year	Social Action
2018	I have engaged in an interfaith project at work where we are gathering data on all the faith institutions in the borough to create a workshop which will allow different faith groups to come together and discuss ideas and concerns, they have.
	I have been active in organising events during World Interfaith Harmony Week.
	I have followed up by attending another Iftar and I have done more research into some of religions of people I have met so I can gain more of an understanding.
	Meeting with people from the event
	I have caught up with people that I met from the Iftar to discuss ideas from the day further.
	I have attended many more multi faith events and even made time to revisit the Synagogue on a Saturday to get a better understanding.
	Have worked with friends to promote interfaith dialogue and fight all forms of hate
	Continued to engage communities, organising memorial events and hate crime awareness sessions.
	Involved more in interfaith initiatives at university
	Joined a course at the nearest Synagogue about Jewish faith. Interested in meeting with friends made at the Iftar to discuss action/ community interfaith projects in London
	Inviting people to various Hindu community events and reciprocal visits to places of worship
	I've been more involved with FBF, a charity that encourages interfaith dialogue and activity. We set up a youth chapter to promote and organize more interfaith work in the West Midlands.
	I have attended St Johns Wood Synagogue to further develop my understanding of Judaism.
2017	I have joined our diversity network leadership team and work, I went on a trip to the US with the US embassy to explore youth empowerment and civic engagement among ethnic communities, I also volunteer with the social mobility foundation
	I have been more active on social media in researching other interfaith groups and looking into how these groups could be used to improve relations between different communities
	I've become involved with Patchwork Foundation
	I recently met with the Jewish friend that I made and learnt so much more about her religion
	I've worked with another person of faith to set up an interfaith book club and have hosted an interfaith iftar myself.
	I have contacted several religious centres and have been developed plans to liaise and work with groups to address issues shared by everyone.
	Refugee teams via synagogues and churches
	I now work to promote equality and am a campaigns officer for a leading British charity.
2016	I have attended other iftars, engaged in conversations with people to learn more and also researched aspects I don't have knowledge in
	Taken part in campaigning more
	Moved to a new role where I am able to actively encourage integration and cohesive communities
	Invited my new friends from the event to a Discussion evening I hosted.
	I've become more active in promoting inter community event within my workplace and Muslim community, I've also undertaken social mobility work
	Interfaith charity meal within my community of Mayfair engaging my children's church school and local mosque.