Interfaith Workshop: Working with young people from faith schools to empower students to recognise and challenge hate speech in person and online

Evaluation Report

February 2022

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Introduction

In February 2022, The Naz Legacy Foundation and The Chief Rabbi's Office hosted a one-day Interfaith Workshop focusing on empowering young people to recognise and challenge hate speech in person and online. The session aimed to encourage productive and positive dialogue between students from Islamic and Jewish faith schools in London. 26 students from 5 different faith schools attended.

These sessions were planned to be interactive with a focus on learning through experience and not through passive listening. Each session revolved around a question or an idea encouraging the participants to go on a journey towards understanding the complexities of the issues at stake. The intention was not to provide solutions to every issue, but to raise awareness of the prevalence of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, how it can present, its causal factors, and how to challenge these. The Key Pedagogy of the workshops were collaborative working, problem-solving, interaction, and cooperation between groups.

The Workshop

The day-long active discussion workshop included:

Introduction by The Chief Rabbi and Imam Mahmoud

Session 1: Examining language use and prejudiced terms. Recognising bias and unconscious bias. Understanding how and why stereotypes and generalisations can play a role in reinforcing prejudice. *Session led by: Dr David Rich, Community Security Trust*

Session 2: Exploring the role social media plays? How can students better examine and be critical of their own and others' social media content? *Session led by: Danny Stone & Yusuf Patel, Antisemitism Policy Trust & Redbridge Council*

Session 3: Conflict resolution: how to respect and understand each other if we have different opinions. Developing an awareness of how to begin a process of conflict resolution/reconciling differences. Session led by Solutions, not Sides

Session 4: Reflection and Learnings. Encouraging students to reflect on the challenges, changes, impacts and learnings from the workshop. *Session led by Richard Sudworth, Interfaith Advisor for The Archbishop of Canterbury*

Aims of the workshop

- To raise awareness of prejudiced language use, stereotypes, and biases - how it can present and its causal factors.
- To challenge and explore students' understanding of the role of social media - to encourage critical thinking
- To encourage students to become more empathetic and understanding of the complexity around different opinions and how to approach these

- To empower, motivate and equip students to challenge hate speech and make a positive difference in their community.

The schools

26 pupils from 5 schools attended the workshop.
The schools who attended were:

JFS School, Brent, London (Jewish Faith School)
Yavneh College, Boreham Wood, London (Jewish Faith College)
Kantor King Soloman School, Ilford, London (has both Jewish and Muslim pupils)
Eden School for girls, Waltham Forest, London (Islamic girl's school)
Lantern of Knowledge, Leighton, London (Islamic boy's school)

Key Demographics

- 58% of the students who attended the workshop were from Jewish Faith Schools and 42% of the students who attended the workshop were from Islamic Faith Schools
- 46% of the students were male and 54% were female
- Students ranged from age 14 to 17
  (25% were 14, 17% were 15, 25% were 16, 33% were 17)

Evaluation

Evaluating the Student Experience

The evaluation comprised of a pre-post paper evaluation form that was completed by the students before the session began and after the session finished. This enabled immediate changes and impacts to be recorded. The evaluator conducted an informal observation during the session to assess content and pedagogy. Session 4, led by Richard Sutcliffe, provided a verbal learning reflection exercise for the students to contribute which was notated by the evaluator. Following the Interfaith workshop day, one school took part in a follow-up virtual focus group to gather reflective thoughts and suggestions[1].

Evaluation of the Process

A virtual focus group attended by all of the presenters or organisers was undertaken. The focus of this was to discuss and assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Interfaith workshop and to extrapolate ideas to guide a pathway forward for future delivery.

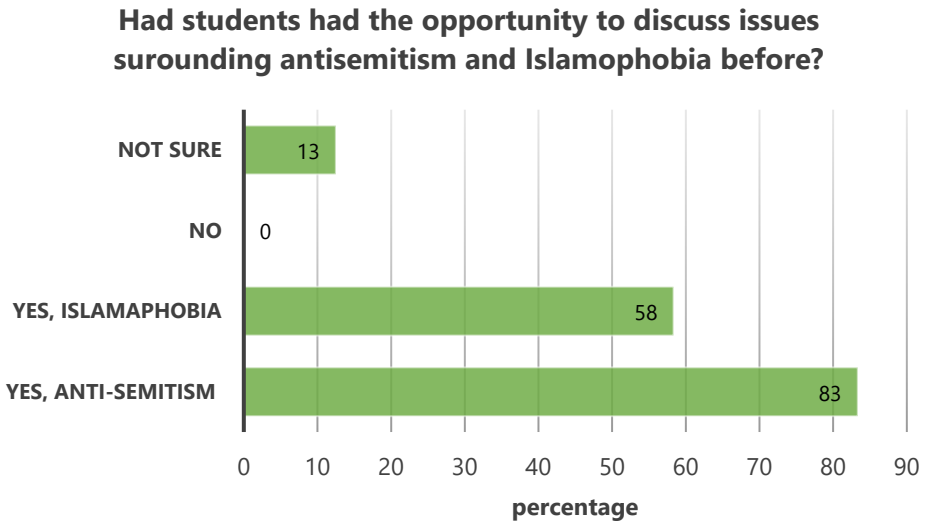
[1] All 5 schools were invited to take part in focus groups – only one was able to arrange

The Student Experience

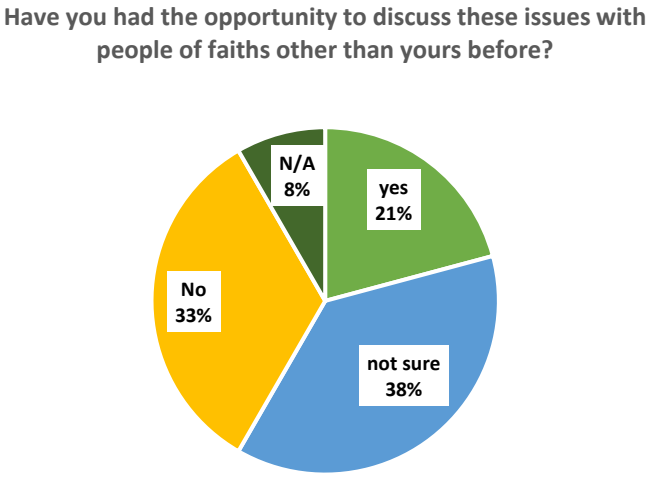
24 out of the 26 students completed both pre-post evaluation forms.

New experience

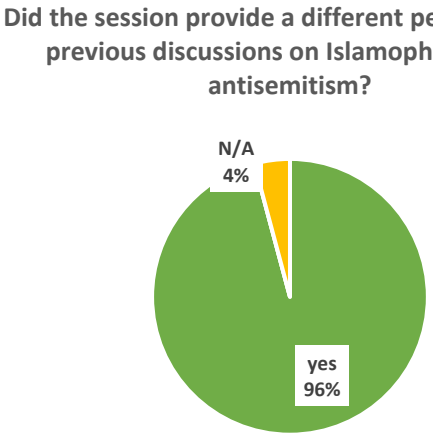
Most of the students had discussed issues around either Islamophobia or Antisemitism before. More of the students had the opportunity to discuss Antisemitism (83%) than Islamophobia (58%) before this workshop.



When asked whether they'd had the opportunity to discuss these issues with people of faiths other than their own, 33% of the students had not and a further 38% were 'not sure' if they had done this. Only 21% of the students had discussed Islamophobia and Antisemitism with people from faiths other than their own before this workshop, as shown in the chart below,



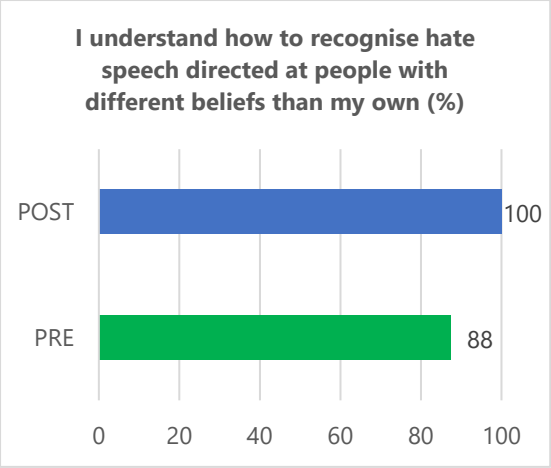
Although many of the students had received sessions that covered these issues before, 96% of the students felt that the Interfaith Workshop provided a different perspective from the previous discussions that they had previously had, as shown in the chart below,

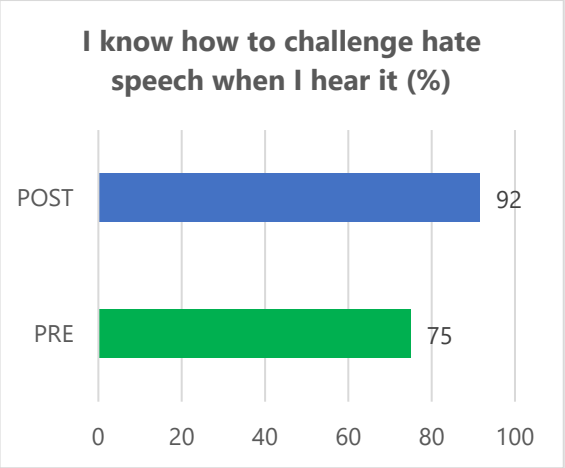


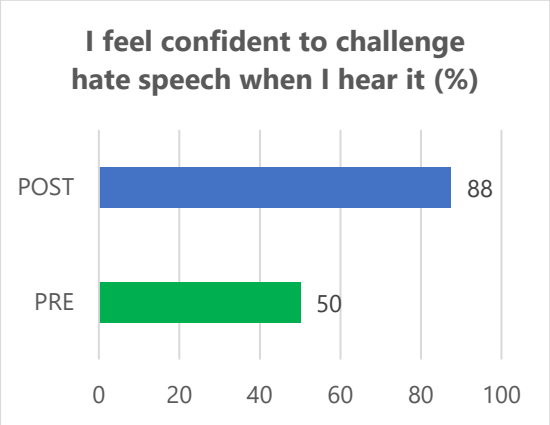
Knowledge and Understanding

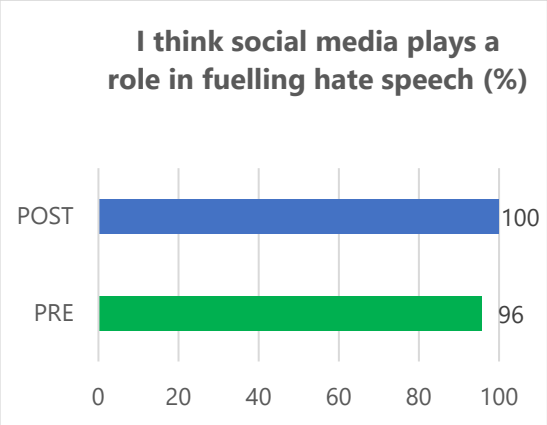
The key learning outcomes were measured using a pre-post rating scale question (Likert 1-5 scale). The students were asked the same questions before the session began, and again once the session was finished. Across all measures, an increase in knowledge and understanding was evidenced. The students showed to following increases in knowledge and understanding,

- **38%** increase in confidence to challenge hate speech when heard
- **17%** increase in knowledge of how to challenge hate speech when heard
- **12%** increase in how to recognise hate speech when directed at people from different faiths
- **4%** increase in the role that social media plays in fuelling hate speech









Thinking Differently

18 of the students provided free-text comments about whether the sessions made them think differently about how to challenge or understand Islamophobia or antisemitism (5 students left their questions blank and 1 student felt that they already knew a lot about this topic and so the sessions hadn't changed anything). Of the students who did respond, the key changes evidenced were as follows: raised awareness, increased confidence to challenge hate speech, increased knowledge of how to challenge hate speech, increased understanding of shared the issues between faiths and how to approach sensitive issues (with conflict resolution techniques). These themes are illustrated in the below comments,

Raised Awareness

> *"I learnt ways that antisemitic images or memes could be sent online and that it should be noticed and reported as quickly as possible. I also learned that many people have experienced hate crimes and it is a common thing in our society. This means we need to be more aware of what hate crime is" (Muslim Student)*

> "I learnt more about islamophobia - became aware of it on all levels of society" (Jewish Student)

Increased confidence

> *"I think it has given me the courage to stand up to hate more after seeing and hearing real-life situations some people have been in from the session" (Muslim Student)*

> *"I feel that you have to challenge Islamophobia and antisemitism by questioning the nature of the hateful assumptions to stop it from happening" (Jewish Student)*

> *"I think I would challenge any hate I came across and try to be braver and report comments on the media" (Muslim Student).*

How to confront hate speech

"As a Muslim, I believe firmly that Islamophobia and antisemitism can be tackled by the use of social media and contacting organisations as well as educating the one who is spreading the hate" (Muslim Student)

"I learnt that you have to report Islamophobia and make sure you appreciate the issues. Don't share misinformation. Same for antisemitism, it is a lot more extreme and common, and we should report it when we see it" (Jewish Student)

"I have learnt that there are appropriate foundations set up to help with these kinds of issues. I am confident that I can use these. I know legal actions are available if necessary and understand that policies can help with dealing with them" (Muslim Student)

Increased understanding of the issues shared across different faiths

"I now understand that we are similar, and therefore have an obligation to challenge antisemitism and Islamophobia" (Jewish Student)

"This day has made me know that more people experience hate speech. I can feel more comfortable telling someone if I am a victim of Islamophobia. Also, if I hear or see others being abused then I could give them advice on what to do" (Muslim Student)

"I have learnt that there are people that I can confide in. I feel like I have learnt about hate aimed at others. I have also learnt about Judaism and how they are treated and that there is not always only one side of the story. You should learn about the other side to see the bigger picture" (Muslim Student)

How to discuss sensitive issues

"I think that it just helped me not to be so defensive when discussing the Israel and Palestine conflict" (Jewish Student)

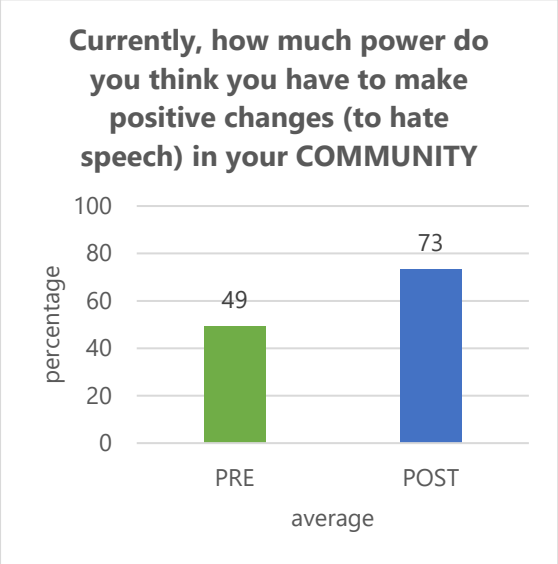
"I learnt how to approach hate comments and defend myself in a non-heated argument, but rather in an educated manner and a way that won't further harm myself (or my feelings)" (Muslim Student)

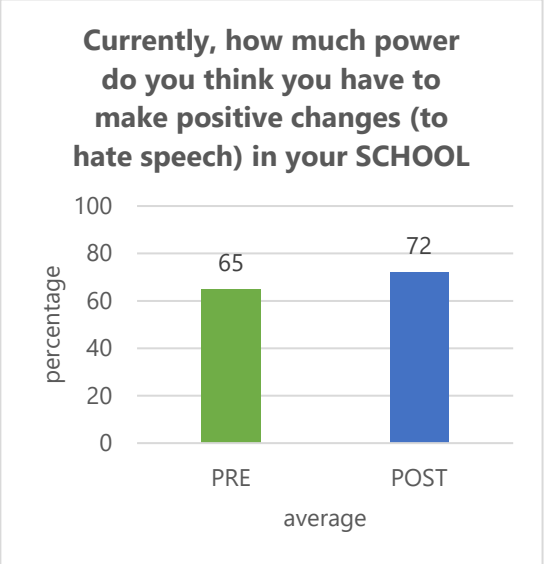
"I learnt how to discuss the Palestine-Israel conflict" (Jewish Student)

"I learnt that there are more antisemitic attacks than I was aware of and that the social stigma around me as a Palestinian Muslim girl is now not an issue to me. I am confident about my identity while respecting others" (Muslim Student)

Power to make changes in their Community & School

The students were asked a pre-post question about how much power they felt that they had to make positive change in their community and their school (the students had to mark out of 0-100% how much power that they felt they had before and after the session). Before the session, the students rated their average power to make positive changes in their community as 49%. This rose to an average of 73% after the session (+24%). The students were slightly more confident about their power to make positive changes in their schools, with an average of 65% before the session rising to 72% after the session (+7%). Both measures show increases in the student's confidence to create positive change in their school and community.





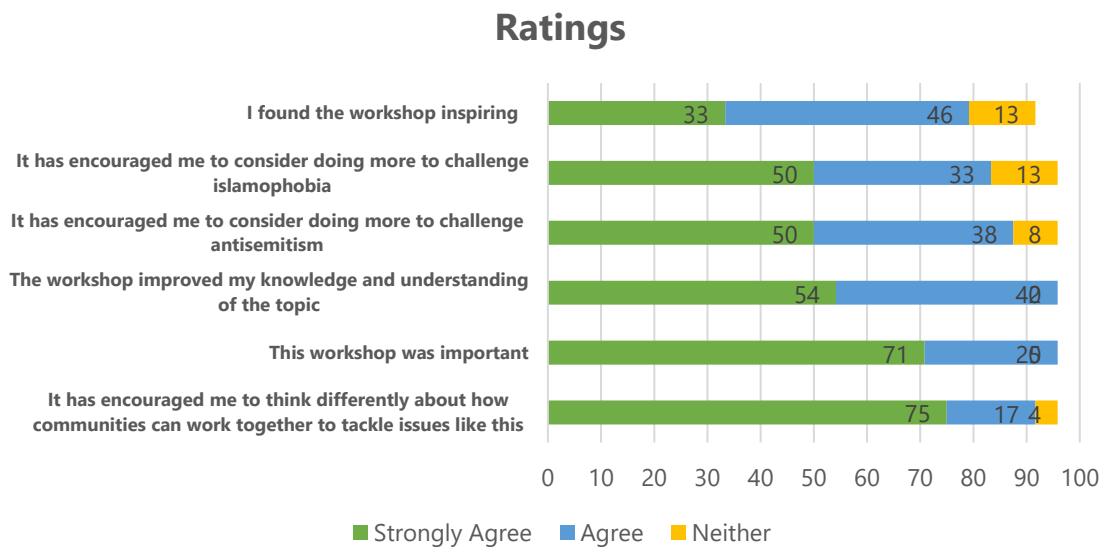
Ratings

After the session the students rated six statements that link to the generic learning outcomes[2] and the aims of the session, the student rated these as follows,

- **96%** agreed/strongly agreed that the workshop was important
- **96%** agreed/strongly agreed that the sessions improved their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered
- **92%** agreed/strongly agreed that the sessions encouraged them to think differently about how communities can work together to tackle these issues
- **88%** agreed/strongly agreed that the sessions have encouraged them to consider doing more to challenge antisemitism
- **83%** agreed/strongly agreed that the sessions have encouraged them to consider doing more to challenge Islamophobia
- **79%** agreed/strongly agreed that the sessions were inspiring

[2] Generic Learning outcomes are: Enjoyment & inspiration, knowledge and understanding, behaviour and progression, skills and attitudes and values.

The below chart illustrates the breakdown of these ratings,



(Note: where the columns do not add up to 100% the remaining students did not provide an answer to this question)

Overall rating

Overall, the students rated the Interfaith Workshop 4.4 stars out of 5 (Excellent)

Recommendations from the students

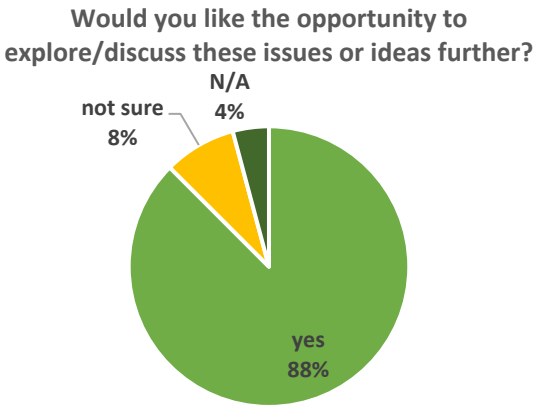
13 students provided recommendations to improve the workshop. These focused on three main improvements,

- More interactive, hands-on, and practical tasks (5 comments)
- More time for group discussions (5 comments)
- More time to explore the Israel-Palestine conflict (3 comments)

One student also suggested inviting students from Christian backgrounds to the sessions

Further Discussion

88% of the students would like the opportunity to explore or discuss these issues further.



Feedback during the session

Directly after the workshop sessions, the students were asked to reflect on the workshop and what they had learnt. This session was led by Richard Sudworth (Interfaith advisor for the Archbishop of Canterbury). This session encouraged discussion and reflection between the student and teacher groups. The responses illustrate the immediate impact of the workshop on the students and teachers following the sessions. Students answered the questions as follows:

1) ***What surprised you about the sessions/what would you now do differently?***
   - *That the hijab is not allowed to be worn in France if women work in public workplaces (schools/libraries etc).*
   - *The shared roots/heritage of Islam and Judaism*
   - *How respectful the students were when discussing the Israel – Palestine Conflict*
   - *How many of the Jewish students had received anti-Semitic comments – too little is covered in the media on this.*
   - *Surprised (and worried) about how 'normalised' hate speech has become for these two groups – awful that we all recognised and nodded that we had experienced similar behaviour.*

2) ***What might you do and say differently after today?***
   - *There are two sides to every story – we need to see the big picture*
   - *Religion can be a similarity and not a difference – I've learnt that there are lots of similarities between us.*
   - *I've learnt about the extent of antisemitism because coming from an Islamic school, we don't get to meet many Jewish young people (to ask)*
   - *I've learnt to put defensive language to one side – and to start to listen to others. You don't always need to be defending a position – as listening to someone else's thoughts is just as important*

- *Teachers learnt that they could work and collaborate more with other faith schools to keep the dialogue going*

These reflections illustrate initial positive changes in awareness and behaviour directly following the workshop.

Focus Group

Four of the students from one of the Jewish Faith schools were able to take part in a focus group that enabled a reflective exploration of the Interfaith day[3]. The students who took part in the focus group were enthusiastic about all the sessions and they felt that the sessions covered important information that often challenged them. They felt that the introduction was handled well and was able to foreground the workshops to come. The ground rules enabled the students to feel comfortable, as one student commented,

> *"having the ground rules set at the start of the session meant that we had them in mind as we were going through the session and that made it a lot better for us when coving some of the topics" another suggested, "having the ground rules at the beginning set a more serious tone so that everyone could understand that there were some topics that could be mentioned that could be sensitive to other people and that we all needed to be aware of this"*

The speeches given were also well received. The students who were all from a Jewish faith school were all aware and excited to meet the Chief Rabbi, but some were not aware of Imam Mahmoud's role and history. One student said, *"I was told about what the Imam had done at the Finsbury Park Mosque just before the session, and I think that he should have talked a bit about this because it is very inspirational – and a message of peace. I think if he talked a bit more about this then people would understand more about where he is coming from and what he is saying"*.

The students felt that both speeches set the tone for the day and added gravitas to the day, one student commented, "*the speeches showed us how we should be talking to each other, I remembered how the Imam talked about what he had learned himself from the Chief Rabbi's speech and even that showed us how important it is to have a connection with each other and that was a really good example to give"*. Even after a month, the students remembered two of the Chief Rabbi's three things he mentioned in his speech (photograph and cheesecake but not dialogue).

The students were asked how they would feel about the dignitaries appearing on a video rather than in person for future workshops. The students felt that this was a viable alternative if the dignitaries could not attend in person. One of the students that it was, *"an honour to hear the two speakers speak regardless of how you hear it –so I think that it would have an impact whatever way it is presented - if it is live or recorded"*

[3] All teachers were contacted to arrange focus groups – only one school was able to arrange the focus group in the time frame given.

The students were impressed with the dialogue that was prompted during session 1: Examining language use and prejudiced terms led by Dr David Rich (Community Security Trust) and Safya Khan-Ruf (Researcher- Hope not Hate). The students felt that the session was important in not only setting the scene and examining the definitions of antisemitism and Islamophobia but that they also gained from the dialogue that this session prompted around the room hearing first-hand experiences of prejudice experienced by both Muslim and Jewish young people. One student commented,

> *"I think that it was really important that this session covered not just the definitions, but the effect of Islamophobia and Antisemitism on the students in the room. It really helped us to understand this from other perspectives. From a Jewish perspective, I obviously know about antisemitism, and I know about Islamophobia as well, but what I didn't know was about the everyday life of people who are living with this. So, for me, it was really important to hear from the other perspective how they faced these prejudices in everyday life"*

and another student suggested,

> *"I think the most powerful thing about this session was being the space to have the conversations we had around the table and understanding each other's perspectives. If the same session had been held in just one faith school, I don't think it would have been as impactful. What worked was hearing first-hand from Muslim and Jewish people and seeing how similar their experience was"*

The students felt that all the sessions would have benefited from having more time to discuss the issues raised during the day. Some of the students were at tables where not everyone got to speak, and they would have liked some more dialogue with the students present who were from faiths different from their own. Some of the students felt that more time might have helped some of the quieter students feel comfortable and contribute. One student said that her table was a bit quiet and that people around the table were shy to speak, so more time might have made it more awkward rather than less. All students felt that different strategies to encourage the quieter student to contribute would be useful and welcomed.

The second session, 'Exploring the role social media plays in promoting prejudice and how to examine social media content?' led by Danny Stone (Antisemitism Policy Trust) and Yusuf Patel (Redbridge Council) was also well received by the students and felt to be of critical importance to their generation. One student said,

> *"It is definitely very important because it is such a prominent issue for everyone because you can't really live without social media anymore. It definitely opened up a lot more conversation within my group as people were talking about their Instagram accounts – it inspired a lot of conversation around my table"*

The students felt that it was important to be involved in the wider policy work that was happening at government level. They were all interested in this, and one of the students had even emailed Danny Stone to find out more following the session. The students felt that social media impacts all our lives whether we actively engage with it or not. So, it was an important issue to be discussed with students (even if they don't engage heavily with social media). The wider influence of media, in general, was also felt by the students to be connected to this – especially how to recognise bias. The students provided no suggestions to improve this session.

The four students had not visited the Central Synagogue before, so they were just as interested in taking part in the tour as the other students. One student felt that the tour was slightly over-simplified using words that are not normally used within the Jewish Community, she felt that the Muslim students would have benefited more from hearing the words that would be used by the community so that the young people could feel more connected and informed.

The session covering Conflict resolution: how to respect and understand each other if we have different opinions led by Solutions, not Sides was well received and felt to cover important issues. However, the students felt that it was too short and that if it is not going to be a 4-hour session, then the focus needed to be rethought (away from the Israel-Palestine conflict and towards a greater focus on the techniques of conflict resolution).

> *"The session was really good, but the problem was that we didn't talk in-depth about the Israel-Palestine conflict and we didn't really get a chance to discuss it in our groups – although I know that this wasn't the point of the session. I felt that this could have resulted in conversations afterwards informally that potentially could have been problematic. I know that the full workshop handles this within a four-hour session, and I think this would have worked better so that those types of conversations could have happened within a professional context"*

However, the students felt that the discussion of the topic of the conflict was important, especially in showing them how to discuss it respectfully,

> *"I am Israeli and someone else on my table was Palestinian. We actually had a really respectful conversation. I thought the presentation was good, but we just didn't have enough time to discuss the issues"*

The students noticed that some of the students at their tables were not aware of what the conflict was, and they would have needed more foregrounding on this before being able to discuss it. They were surprised at this lack of knowledge but also cautious to give their opinion in case it was biased or guided by media reports that might also be biased. They also felt that some of the students themselves were presenting what they considered to be biased opinions which were difficult to field, especially for 17-year-olds who lack experience. The students felt that there was an assumption made that because they were Jewish that they would support the Israeli Governments position, as highlighted by a student comment below,

"the student on my table assumed my position on the conflict and about the Israeli government just because I am Jewish. It would have been nice to have had it flagged up that people can have different perspectives that don't always correlate with their religion. For example, just because I am Jewish, it doesn't mean that I agree with everything the Israeli Government does – and I had to explain that to the group"

"That also goes for not only being Jewish but being Israeli as well. I don't agree with everything the Israeli government does just because I am Israeli"

The students felt that a pre-session on the history of the conflict would be useful to give everyone a base knowledge of the conflict as this would put the table on a more equal footing to discuss. They would have liked to have received the full 4-hour session, but they all felt that if they couldn't have the full 4-hour workshop then the focus should have been shifted away from the Israel-Palestine conflict onto other topics just as relevant to conflict resolution but not as complex. However, one student wondered whether if the conflict hadn't been the focus whether it would have been raised anyway considering the students were all from Islamic and Jewish schools and this could lead to un-facilitated conversations that could be problematic.

In general, the students felt that the mixed age range of the students who participated in the day (14-17) was a positive and beneficial experience as it gives a younger person's perspective. However, they felt that the balance of year 12 and year 10 students could have been more equal as there were fewer year 10's than year 12 students on each table (note: these students are all 17 – the younger students may have a different perspective). The students suggested mixing up the groups at each session or after lunch, so you had different people on the tables. They felt that this could have broadened discussion and encouraged greater dialogue.

The students offered the following ideas take the workshop forwards (roll-out) and have a legacy for the day:

- Link up and help Jewish and Islamic Schools to work together more on shared projects (Charity projects for example). (note: the teacher said that covid had prevented planned interfaith events from happening and that normally this would happen in the school)
- Students would like to invite Muslim students to see a Shul service or attend a Friday night dinner so that they can experience a real Jewish household. One student commented, *"It is about understanding how a faith works in practice and not just a religion (that you read about)"*
- The students would like to visit a Mosque
- It would be nice to highlight the Jewish customs, holidays, songs, and rituals to others so that they can experience them with us.

Process Evaluation: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A focus group was held with the organisers of the workshop and many of the presenters of the sessions the week after the event. The aim of this was to gather reflections on the strengths. Weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the workshop. Taken together with the student evaluation, the following observations, outputs, and outcomes are presented,

Strengths

- The layout of the room with circular tables and a table for the teachers worked well to promote conversation and inclusivity
- Rearranging the students to sit in mixed groups with pupils from faith schools other than their own worked well to promote conversation and bond groups of pupils to share experiences first-hand
- The teacher table worked well to bond and network the teachers and encourage them to discuss issues and what solutions their schools could offer. Teachers exchanged contact details to keep in touch.
- The setting and pre-circulating of the ground rules were constructive and worked well to set the scene for the tone and general conduct expected
- Speeches by dignitaries were well received and provided something inspirational for the students. Breaking down boundaries between dignitaries and students.
- The scheme of work and topics covered worked well together and fed into each other well
- 3 of the sessions were led by a Jewish and an Islamic presenter working together – this provided a positive example to the students
- Ice-breaker activities were able to relax and bond the groups
- The sessions were well-delivered and well-pitched – all included some interactive elements
- The sessions followed each other in a logical order
- It was important and relevant to the students to discuss the role of social media (all students were engaged in this session)
- Presenters were experienced and able to manage the sessions well. Even those that covered sensitive issues
- Presenters and students enjoyed the day and leant from it
- Students showed increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and confidence around the topics discussed (evidenced in the student evaluation)
- Some difficult topics were covered with sensitivity and encouraged the students to listen to others and understand other people's perspectives
- The tour of the Synagogue was of interest to the students from both Jewish and Islamic Schools
- The technology worked well and no technical hitches

Weaknesses

- The sessions would have benefited from more interaction of different types planned throughout the day. Some of these could be group activities or tasks, discussion groups, or quizzes. Pens and papers on the tables were not used.
- The Conflict Resolution workshop was condensed from 3 hours to 45 minutes – the condensed workshop lost some of the important content and scene-setting that foregrounds the workshop (especially when covering the Israel-Palestine Conflict)
- More time was needed during all sessions – more time could have provided a space for group discussion, activities, and socialising between the groups
- Introductory speeches overran (but were valuable and well-received by the students)
- Permissions and publicity permission needed to be agreed upon at the beginning of the session
- Some of the younger (mainly male from the Lantern of Knowledge) students did not contribute to all the discussions. This could have been because they were the youngest in the room. Strategies to engage younger or shy students should be sought (see below).
- There were many key issues covered in a relatively short period some of which required some prior knowledge from the students - knowledge of Islam/Judaism, antisemitism/islamophobia, handling antisemitism/islamophobia on social media, Israel/Palestine issues. Focus on fewer topics might garner more clarity and focus.
- Microphones could have been used more throughout the day, also practical guidance for the presenters to repeat comments or questions from the floor that may not have been heard by all in the room and inviting speakers to say their name and school before they speak (gives them a chance to own responsibility and be affirmed)

Opportunities

Current workshop

- Pre-reads for some aspects of the workshop could have been sent to schools to set the scene for some areas covered
- Icebreaker activities need to be at the very start of the day, to ensure the participants are more comfortable with each other
- Provide more breaks for social 'down-time' during the day
- Use a range of different strategies to engage the quieter students to encourage them to engage (see below) – not just hands-up or group discussion.
- Could technology have been utilised more during the sessions – Mentimetre, Padlets, interactive whiteboards.
- Could other spaces in the room have been used for breakout sessions/conversations
- Could the dignitaries have provided an activity or discussion time to further connect with the students
- More open discussion asking for the student's opinion would be valuable. For example: when discussing the French laws on religious dress the students could have been asked to discuss the French laws together – why have these laws been passed? what implications do these have? Let them draw their own conclusions rather than stating 'this is wrong'.

- Care is needed when discussing religious beliefs with others who are not of that faith. Respect that different religions have different beliefs – using words like "In my tradition, we believe" rather than "we all believe…". Sometimes religions are different and that is OK.
- The workshop needed to build in from the outset the importance of follow-up work and set out clear aims for the day. (i.e. After today's sessions we are going to be asking you what you would like to do next to spread the messages learnt or to promote community cohesion in your school or community) .This could lead to new and innovative ideas that the organisers could help to support.

Future workshops

- The workshop be scaled-up to reach more schools across London or beyond (roadshow)
- Create a kit or pack of activities (toolkit/online resources) for teachers to use in school (see threats)?
- Spread the workshop over two days, allowing more discussion and activities to be integrated
- The Conflict Resolution Workshop could focus on conflict resolution methods if only an hour to 45 minutes is provided – more of a general discussion of methods used in conflict resolution using another example of conflict rather than the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Could further workshops be held in or in a building connected to a Mosque or in a neutral space?
- Roll out to a larger number of schools could include some pre-recorded sessions that could then be used by facilitators to discuss with the students? (see threats)
- Community Security Trust have a young person engagement team, 'Stand-up' who could help support future sessions
- Students could be invited to the Naz legacy Foundations Interfaith Iftar Events to continue the connection and dialogue

Threats

- Some of the topics covered are sensitive and could potentially create conflict or disagreement within the group. If these sessions were to be rolled out *without* the current very-experienced presenters, training needs to be provided (to teachers) to ensure the sessions are well-managed.
- Covering 'live' topics such as the Israel-Palestine conflict that have a political element is potentially difficult to present in a way that isn't seen to be offering solutions (that are themselves politically loaded) – the emphasis for this workshop was very much on educating young people about the conflict and how conflict resolution techniques can help in this. However, with a different group of students or less able moderators, these issues could be raised creating disagreements within groups.
- Would a neutral space have been more appropriate to hold the workshop? (however additional learning through the tour would then be omitted)

- Funding to roll out the programme
- Would pre-recorded sessions hold the same gravitas as the in-person sessions? Could these engage the students in the same way?

Appendix A: Pre-workshop discussion

This was held online with all presenters and organisers two weeks before the workshop. Some valuable planning and ideas were shared that this session as summarised below,

1) **Venue**: The workshop is to be held in a hall in the location of the Central Synagogue. It was suggested that a more neutral space might be more conducive for these discussions to be held – as it may shift the balance of power to be located in a location that some are familiar with and others are not.
2) **Setting Clear Ground Rules**: It was felt necessary to set clear ground rules for the student before the sessions start, these include – but are not exclusive to:
    a. Why are we here and what is the purpose of the day?
    b. What areas are we going to cover in the workshops?
    c. What is acceptable language and what is not acceptable language when speaking to others (what are the red lines? Could we have a signal for these if it happens so that pupils, presenters, and teachers can signal if they feel a line has been crossed – football red card or special hand signal)
    d. Preparing the students that this is a safe space for discussion and not an opportunity to argue with others
    e. Encouraging the students to listen to each other (and not to be led by emotion?)
    f. Encouraging students to allow other students their voice/opinion without interrupting
    g. Preparing students that they are permitted to leave the room if they feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with the discussion – no questions will be asked, and students must respect the student's decision to leave if this happens. Students may return to the discussion at any time if they feel able.
    h. Students must show respect to others even if they might have different opinions.

    Ground rules should be sent ahead to the coordinator teacher so that they can reinforce these rules before arriving too.
3) **Hand-over time to be built into the day:** As not all presenters can attend the whole day, it was felt important to provide a set time between each session for feedback from the previous session and time to flag up any issues or observations that were noted. This will help the next presented to manage the group effectively.
4) **Evaluation –** Observation. Natasha is to be introduced at the beginning of the session as an observer to the session – as she is observing, she won't be able to help students out with tasks or questions nor will she attempt to direct the session in any way. Check that all students are happy with this.

Appendix B: Observations: Exploring the workshops in detail & suggestions

Set up

The workshop took place at the Central Synagogue in Central London. Circular tables set up – these are excellent for conversations. Teachers and pupils are seated so that each table of pupils is mixed (1 pupil from each school, where possible) and teachers are also seated together so that they can take part in the workshop as well. It was great for the pupils to see that the teachers were contributing and learning at the same time. The students themselves were encouraged to create the seating plan rather than it being pre-defined, giving some autonomy to the students from the outset.
As mentioned in the initial consultation meetings for this workshop, there was concern over the power dynamics of holding the event at the Synagogue and not at a neutral space, however, the choice of location allowed for a tour of the building that was of interest to both the Jewish pupils and Muslim pupils.

Suggestions for set-up

Suggestion: a bit of time was needed for the young people to get to know each other at this stage before the speeches
Suggestion: the pupils were from year 12 and year 10 – perhaps future workshops could have students from similar age groups. Ensure the spread of year 12 and year 10 students was more equal (confidence is likely to be higher in the year 12 students).

Introduction Opening by Richard Sudworth

Richard gave a good opening that focused on mutual respect and learning. He went through the ground rules very well (and it was nice to hear that the teachers had been given the ground rules beforehand so that the pupils were well prepared). A supporting PowerPoint illustrated these ground rules.

Suggestions for the introduction & ground rules

Suggestion: A run-through of what each section was going to be about would have been useful, to foreground the pupils to what was about to come and what we would like to come out of the day (i.e., new ideas – how they could spread the knowledge in their schools/communities etc). "Today we are going to be covering…." "We would like you to… (discuss, think, learn and listen etc)"

Suggestions: could an icebreaker be done at this point before speeches?

Something to consider: not sure if young people appreciate the fact that the older generation might be not very good at something, so it is up to the next generation to do it right (even if this might seem true at times). I think a focus on some positive actions by the current

generation might be useful here – and a suggestion that the next generation might want to do things differently/in a different way.

Introduction Speeches by The Chief Rabbi and Imam Mahmoud

Two very accomplished speakers both of whom do not use notes – very impressive

Chief Rabbi's speech was successful because it focused on telling a story through the lens of his own experience. It had three main points that were easy to remember – photograph, cheesecake and dialogue.

Imam Mahmood also gave an interesting speech that covered a lot of ground and was of interest to the pupils from both faiths. Imam Mahmood interacted with the pupils by asking them questions about what they might know or think which was good – although I think the pupils were a bit nervous that this point. Imam Mahmood is excellent at responding to questions and reflects well on these (i.e. when a pupil said that they thought that Islam means 'Peace' he talked about why this interpretation came about).

Suggestions for Introduction Speeches

Suggestions: Shorter more succinct speech from the second speaker with some foregrounding at the front of the talk (i.e. "I am going to show you the common threads between the two religions – which doesn't mean that they are the same but…"). Perhaps some of the content could have been simplified for the year 10 pupils.

Suggestions: Instead of directing the questions to one person, you can use whiteboards and pens which means all pupils have to contribute and hold up their answers. This could have been done for the question about "what does Islam mean?" – perhaps more interactive and fun (but with the caveat to the pupils, "don't worry if you get it wrong – it is not a test")

Suggestion: Talking from personal experience is powerful – I want to know why Imam Mahmood reacted the way he did on the night of the attack at Finsbury Park Mosque? Why did he choose a message of peace when others around him did not? And what are his thoughts on why he doesn't want to promote this part of his life – what do the young people think about this? This could be a workshop in itself – and speaks to the ethos of how you don't have to turn to violence if you don't agree with someone – or if someone threatens violence against you. Conflict resolution in action!

Session 1: Examining language use and prejudiced terms. Recognising bias and unconscious bias. Understanding how and why stereotypes and generalisations can play a role in reinforcing prejudice. Session led by: *Dr David Rich, Community Security Trust and Safya Khan-Ruf, Researcher- Hope not Hate*

A good icebreaker that engaged the pupils and staff and relaxed the room ready to engage. Great to see the session presented by a Jewish and Muslim presenter. There was a focus on definitions of Islamophobia and Antisemitism that included discussion/Q&A with the students. There was a lot of useful information in this session that set up the following sessions well. It was good to see the raising of conscious and unconscious bias (see

suggestion below to demonstrate this to the students) and that we all have biases (big or small). Interesting that the students themselves brought up people in power who have made problematic statements (Islamophobic or anti-Semitic – Jeremy Corbin and Boris Johnson's comments on the hijab). It was good that the speakers highlighted how people in positions of power can have power and influence over others, but that we can question them even if they are a leader or a journalist. A good focus on what to do if you do experience or hear Islamophobic or anti-Semitic remarks: report them, confront them, and open up dialogue (if safe to do so) and education (spreading the word about what language is problematic and why and questioning people/media). There was some straying onto the territory of social media that could have been diverted to the next session. It felt like this session over-ran a bit on time.

Suggestions for session 1

Suggestion: I think some small group discussions might have worked here – rather than asking directly for the student's experiences of Islamophobic or anti-Semitic remarks it might have been better to get the students to discuss this in pairs or with their tables and then out to the room once this discussion had been established. It would have been interesting to know who thought that they hadn't directly experienced any form of racism, islamophobia, or antisemitism. There is an exercise where you get students to think about this for a few minutes themselves, then share in pairs, then share in groups – then out to the whole group.

Suggestion: More time to debate and present open questions to the students – i.e. what you think about the French laws – rather than the presenters giving their opinions. Let the students discuss and decide what they think? Why have the French government taken this route and what issues do the pupils themselves think this raises? What about other counties that have followed suit (Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Austria). What other religions have been affected by these laws? - encourage open dialogue between the students. Could you also bring in Boris Johnson's comments here – what assumptions do people make about women and their status based on their dress and how can we challenge these?

Suggestion: An exercise with the young people to explore unconscious bias would have been useful so that the young people themselves understand what this means. Some exercises are here 'A-ha' Activities for Unconscious Bias Training | Include-Empower.Com (culturepluconsulting.com) and here: UnconsciousBiasWorkbookSample.pdf (cookross.com) And videos here: 8 Resources for Teaching About Unconscious Bias - Institute for Humane Education. *A good quick exercise is to tell this story:*
"A nurse is walking to work when a white van pulls up. The person in the white van whistles and jeers at the nurse. When the nurse gets to work, they immediately tell the doctor in charge what happened" – then ask the students, "What gender and ethnicity was the nurse? What ethnicity or gender was the white van driver? What gender and ethnicity was the doctor?" – when neither of these was discussed in the story. More often than not your brain will reach for an immediate answer to this based on what we have seen in the media or around us without consciously thinking about it, therefore reinforcing stereotypes without questioning them.

Suggestion: Have a large whiteboard where students' questions can be written up if they are best answered/tackled by another presenter later in the day.

Session 2: Exploring the role social media plays? How can students better examine and be critical of their own and others' social media content? *Session led by: Danny Stone & Yusuf Patel, Antisemitism Policy Trust & Redbridge Council*

A good session that was well presented. It raised important issues connected to social media and its influence. Again, good that the session was presented by a Muslim and a Jewish presenter. Raised issues of freedom of speech. Included the students and was interactive. A good example was given about how quotes can be misassigned and misused in social media (by far-right groups etc.).

Breakout discussion about whether anonymous social media accounts should be banned. This seemed to generate lots of discussion within the groups (see suggestion to further this). The discussion generated lots of interesting ideas and solutions from the students (i.e., removal of anonymous accounts should be based on actions and not accounts – for example, someone with an anonymous account might not be using it for 'problematic' reasons. 2-point authentication could help to mitigate the number of anonymous accounts). The presenters talked to the students about these are 'live issues' that are currently being discussed at policy-level, and that their contributions are welcomed. The presenter was asked whether he could feedback to students on what was decided.

There was also a section on identifying antisemitism and Islamophobia on social media (memes, videos, and pictures) – this was a good section that highlighted how students need to analyse images carefully to decipher what is being portrayed, the presenter included the students in the discussion as a whole group with Q&As but this section could be extended (see suggestion). The session encouraged students to use their critical thinking skills when accessing social media. Presenters talked about a range of things that the students could relate to – including football (racism in), cricket and politics.

Students were encouraged to report hate crimes on social media, write to their MP and report content and systems online (note: students had already said in the previous session that some had reported posts, and nothing had been done about it). Presenters highlighted the online safety bill.

Suggestions for session 2

Suggestion: it might be a good idea to ask how many students use social media? One of the girls had already told me that she isn't on social media before the workshop began. It might have been a good opener to discuss the pros and cons of being on social media (some students might not have a choice, social media use might be limited by their parents, some students might have made the choice themselves not to access social media)

Suggestion: For the breakout group discussion presenters could use pre-prepared cards that encourage interaction within the groups if they feel that some students are not joining in. Halfway through the discussion – give out the cards that direct the student to what position

they have to argue next (i.e., you are now the: pessimist/negative about everything, optimist/positive about everything, clarifier, problematise-r, or the one that sees both sides of the argument). This can provide a useful exploration of alternative dialogue and encourage everyone to speak.

Suggestion: Students raised the issue about Tik Tok, where the algorithm can filter out keywords that might relate to hate speech or racism. The issue with this is that it also does not allow anti-racist groups to discuss and educate using this medium either. This could be an interesting discussion point for the student bringing in freedom of speech etc.

Suggestion: Students might have benefited from being given printouts of memes or images from the internet for them to analyse in groups. This could help to equip the students with analytic skills and questioning skills, why might this be offensive? Who might it be offensive towards? Etc. The students could be given 10 minutes to discuss and then present their findings.

Suggestion: Not sure the video added to the already good presentation. Perhaps presenters could have used this time for a group activity instead.

Tour and Lunch

The tour was important as it allowed the students an opportunity to see the Synagogue and learn more about Jewish practices, rituals, and beliefs. Students from the Islamic boy's school were interested in the Torah Roll scripture.

Lunch and refreshments were provided, as was an opportunity for all faith groups to undertake prayers.

Session 3: Conflict resolution: how to respect and understand each other if we have different opinions. Developing an awareness of how to begin a process of conflict resolution/reconciling differences. Session led by Solutions, not Sides

A good presentation was well-presented and well handled (some difficult and contentious issues were raised). The time was limited to get the most out of this session – and to give enough time for the students to have conversations/discussions. The presenter was very careful to foreground this session to allow the students to understand more and go away and debate and decide what they think. The focus of this workshop was on the sanctity of human life (rather than conflict and reasons for conflict). A film was shown, "rage, revenge and repair" that followed personal stories from both a Palestinian and an Israeli who had both lost siblings during the conflict. This presented a powerful motivation for unity and peace.

The presenter focused on a win/win solution rather than a lose/lose or a win/lose solution. The presenter also highlighted the slogans used 'Free Palestine' and 'Save Israel' and what implications these have (see suggestion). The presenter fielded questions from the students well and diplomatically. The questions raised were,

1) Is Hamas a terrorist organisation and if so, how can solutions be found?

(Answer: tackled diplomatically, saying that this statement could be problematic for some people. The presenter highlighted Jonathan Haidt's metaphor of the elephant and rider – see suggestion)

2) How do we find/access unbiased news about this?

   (Answer: seeking out diverse news sources. Solutions not sides have a well-researched news stream that might be useful)

3) Are politicians themselves in dialogue about this?

   (Answer: not clear)

4) What are the solutions 'on the table' around this issue?
   (Answers: 2-state solution, one binational state or a confederacy solution)

Suggestions for session 3

Suggestion: This is a complex and multi-levelled issue to cover in a short session. It was not clear how much all the students knew or understood about the Israel-Palestine conflict anyway (some were only in year 10 – we can't assume that because someone is Jewish or Muslim means that they know about this conflict in detail). A short explanation might have been useful at the start of the presentation (if this is possible?). Most pupils I suspect would have heard of it, but some might not be fully aware of what it is. I noticed some of the students not contributing to this discussion.

Suggestion: I think this session might have benefited from setting the students a task – perhaps using a problem-based learning technique – where the students have to use the principles of solutions not sides to help solve an issue/scenario? The scenarios don't necessarily have to involve Israel and Palestine – but could be other issues (inter-family conflict, The Will Smith Oscar's slap, political conflicts etc). This could be based on the basics of conflict resolution – students could be asked how to approach these conflicts using the conflict resolution approach.

Could the students have been set a task to explore the slogans 'Free Palestine' and 'Save Israel'?

Suggestion: I liked the use of Jonathan Haidt in the presentation – I wonder if his moral foundations (care/harm, fairness/cheating, liberty/oppression, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion and sanctity/degradation) could be used as discussion points for the students – we often discuss what people do and why as connected to history but not social psychology (i.e. how the human mind works in societies) – this could be an interesting topic to discuss.

Suggestion: The presenter mentioned that a fuller workshop would have included an Israeli and a Palestinian representative to answer questions – I think this could have been useful if time permitted.

Session 4: Reflection and Learnings. Encouraging students to reflect on the challenges, changes, impacts and learnings from the workshop. *Session led by Richard Sudworth, Interfaith Advisor for The Archbishop of Canterbury*

The presenter closed the session by asking the students to reflect on the workshop and what they had learnt. This allowed for discussion between the groups and some reflection. Students were engaged and contributing. Students answered the questions as follows:

What surprised you about the sessions?

- That the hijab is not allowed to be worn in France if women work in public workplaces (schools/libraries etc).
- The shared roots/heritage of Islam and Judaism
- How respectful the students were when discussing the Israel – Palestine Conflict
- How many of the Jewish students had received anti-Semitic comments – too little is covered in the media on this.
- Surprised (and worried) about how 'normalised' hate speech has become for these two groups – awful that we all recognised and nodded that we had experienced similar behaviour.

What do you see and understand differently today?

(answers similar to above)

What might you do and say differently after today?

- There are two sides to every story – we need to see the big picture
- Religion can be a similarity and not a difference – I've learnt that there are lots of similarities between us.
- I've learnt about the extent of antisemitism because coming from an Islamic school, we don't get to meet many Jewish young people (to ask)
- I've learnt to put defensive language to one side – and to start to listen to others. You don't always need to be defending a position – as listening to someone else's thoughts is just as important
- Teachers learnt that they can work and collaborate more with other faith schools to keep the dialogue going

Suggestions for the closing session

Suggestion: the challenge set for the young people was good (to think of one thing you might go on to do following this session) – it might have benefited from a tree of hope – young people pledge onto the 'leaf' and tie to the branch to illustrate what they are going to do. This could also have been expanded to ask the students what they could do in their schools/communities to spread this message?

General Observations

- Students also brought up the difficulty of finding unbiased media sources – can we prepare a list for students on what media is biased towards what (i.e. political biased etc.)

- Caution to avoid encouraging group to think about a nation – i.e. France (session 1 & 2 focused on some of the issues around France) – Many French People and Organisations do not support the governments' laws on this (could we highlight this too?)

- Some of the boys seemed shy and didn't always appear to be integrated into the discussion. This could have been because they were younger than some of the other students? Could these students have been encouraged to contribute more by using different techniques (not every child responds to a Q&A style)? Perhaps consider using a round-robin brain-writing task (similar to the game consequences – where a question is posed at the bottom of the page, each student contributes their ideas and folds down the page over their idea and passes it onto the next student. The next student writes their suggestions. Once all students have answered the page is unfolded and the answers each student presented is discussed.

Appendix C: Suggested Order of future workshop

Introduction with ground rules and order of the day and what is expected from the students – also foreground that we want to know, by the end of the session their ideas for passing these messages/education onto others and/or promoting community cohesion in their school or community.

Icebreaker and time for students to get to know each other

Could consider the exercise: Stand up if you think the person to your right probably knows more than you (normally most people stand up! This relaxes the students).

Speeches (shorter and foregrounded a bit) – recorded for future events if dignitaries cannot attend.

Session 1 (slightly shorter with more interactive opportunities or discussion for the students, allow the students to discuss key issues)

Short break – 10 mins

Session 2 (drop the video in favour of an activity with the students – more tasks and discussion time – ensure all students are engaged)

Tour

Lunch and Prayers

Session 3 (slightly longer and more discussion time or an activity for the students to get involved with. Consider discussion cards – scenarios – etc)

Session 4 (allow time for students to suggest what they would like to do next – pledge tree – work out a way that students can all contribute to the discussion)

End