

Ox | CEI

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1170352

CEI IMPACT REPORT

2004 – 2024

TWENTY YEARS OF
SPREADING GOD'S WORDS,
REACHING BRITAIN'S BELIEVERS,
AND TRANSFORMING HEARTS.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

For twenty years, CEI has helped communities to adopt and impart a Qur'anic lens to life. CEI's low-or-no-cost courses have made tafseer of the Qur'an accessible in cafés and conference halls, and given students of all ages a holistic grounding in Islamic and British curricula.

This report captures CEI's landscape-defining impact over the last twenty years. From teaching 100 community members in Crawley to serving 1,500 learners a year across the UK, CEI has built a unique track record in education and community building. Key achievements have included:

- Hosting up to **15 concurrent programmes** each year since 2004;
- Slowly and contemplatively teaching **more than 2,500 verses (~40%) of the Qur'an;**
- Running **over 5,000 hours of free or low-cost classes and events** in London, Manchester, Oxford, Crawley, Dover and online;
- Registering **over 10,000 programme sign-ups**, with an average 20% annual increase in attendees, and retention of ~40% of attendees as repeat students;
- Committing and responsibly **managing ~£500,000** in programme expenditures;
- Operating with **entirely voluntary administration** by directors and facilitators.

Moreover, this report sketches the intangible, transformative impact that CEI continues to have on attendees of all ages, backgrounds and levels of study. CEI's approach has uniquely balanced being Qur'anic and credible with staying holistic and accessible. Many students – including some profiled in this report – have attested to the utterly transformative impact of this teaching style on their relationship with the Qur'an, and their view of life.

This is just the start of a mission which, by God's permission, will grow with the Q-Institute. With state-of-the-art facilities, and backed by world-renowned scholars, the Q-Institute will become the destination of choice for formal and informal study of the Qur'an in the heart of London. It will also help to ensure the sustainability and scale-up of CEI as an organization.

Readers are humbly invited to support the future of Qur'anic reflection by contributing to the Q-Institute. You can do this through praying, spreading and pledging. As the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) tells us, "The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an, and teach the Qur'an".

Thank you for being part of this journey, and may God allow us to be of the people who are elevated and attested to by the Qur'an.





ABOUT CEI

CEI AT **A GLANCE**

VISION AND MISSION

CEI is an educational charity helping communities to take a Qur'anic lens to life. For twenty years, CEI has made spaces for Qur'anic reflection in coffee shops, classrooms and conference halls, taking students from informal engagement to increasingly rigorous academic study and production. This is supplemented by courses in classical Islamic sciences, support for youth skills in Maths and English, and wider community events.

APPROACH

CEI's approach is focused on being consistently Qur'anic, credible, holistic and accessible:

QUR'ANIC: CEI places Qur'an contemplation front and centre. The Qur'an commands us to meaningfully reflect on its verses, beyond recitation and memorisation. Our courses put personal reflection on the Qur'an first.

CREDIBLE: CEI brings Yemen to Euston. Successful Islamic education relies on scholars who are connected to tradition yet relevant to their contexts. Our diverse teachers are classically trained in Yemen, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and beyond. Equally, they are deeply embedded in communities across London, Oxford, Leicester and the wider UK.

HOLISTIC: CEI offers a rounded curriculum for seekers of knowledge. The Prophet's (PBUH) way was balanced and all-inclusive. We ground Qur'anic studies in broader academic subjects (English, Maths) and Islamic sciences (Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, Tazkiyah).

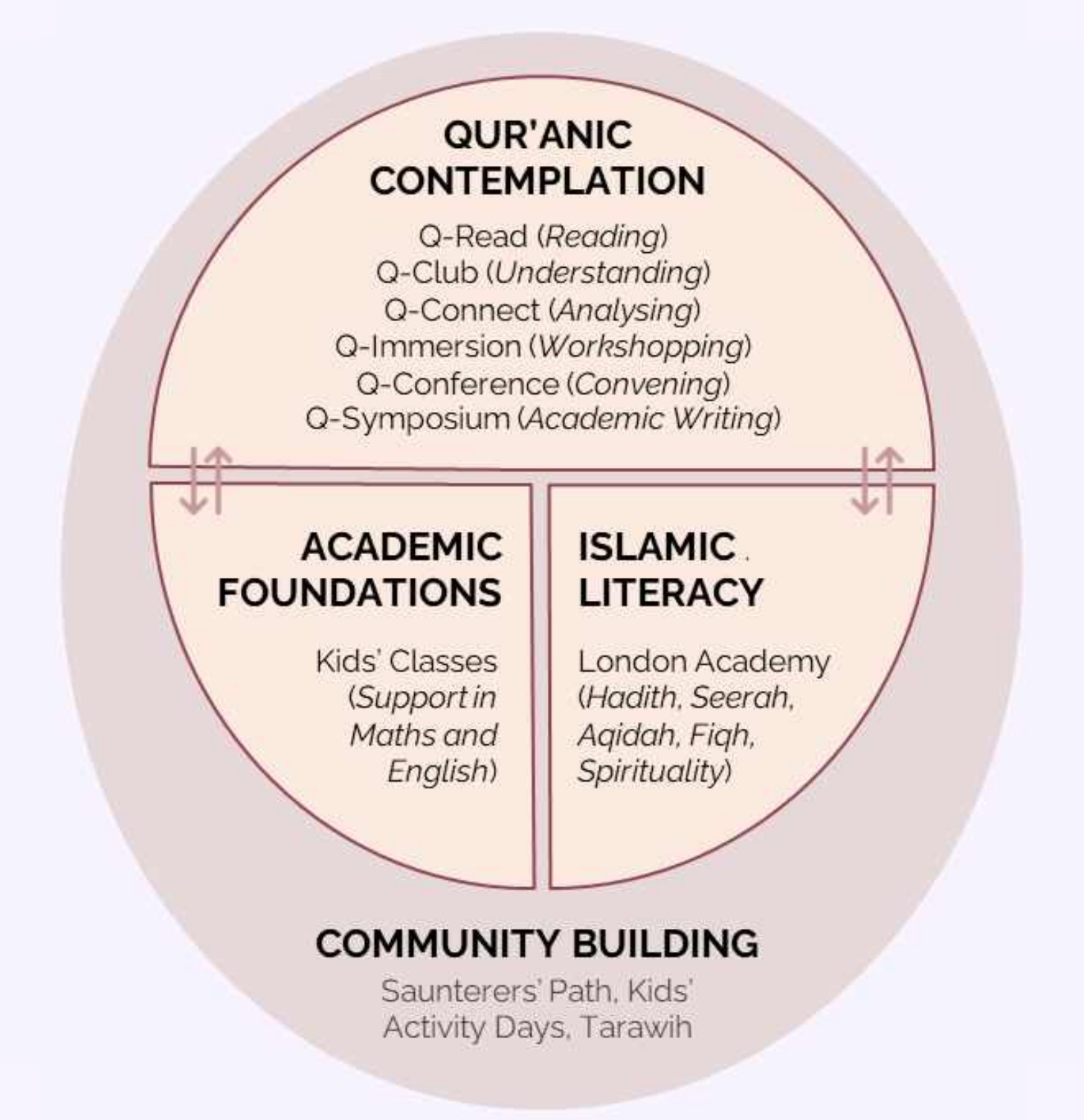
ACCESSIBLE: CEI breaks down barriers between believers in Britain and the Qur'an. The Qur'an tells us that it is guidance for all of mankind. Whilst traditionally rooted, our courses are accessible to non-Arabic speakers and non-Muslims, hosted in inviting and well-connected venues, and offered at low-or-no-cost.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Since 2004, CEI has grown from teaching 100 community members in Crawley to serving 1500 learners a year across London, Oxford and the wider UK. We has delivered in-depth teaching of 2,500+ Qur'an verses across 5,000+ hours of classes to 10,000+ attendees. The next step, God willing, is the Q-Institute: a dedicated institution for all levels of Qur'anic studies. The Q-Institute will provide a world-class teaching, research and community hub at the heart of London's Knowledge Quarter. It will also solidify CEI's future, facilitating financial independence, teaching spaces, full-time staff, media facilities, and more.

PILLARS AND PROGRAMMES

Programmes are built on three reinforcing pillars (Qur'anic contemplation, Islamic literacy, Academic foundations), and supported by community-building activities. These courses and events engage people from all walks of life – from children and youth, to informal and advanced learners, to aspiring and established academics.



OUR **PROGRAMMES**

Since 2004, CEI has organised more than 25 types of educational courses and community programmes – including Academy courses which, alone, comprise of six different subjects and teachers. Below is a non-exhaustive overview of nine of CEI's most popular programmes:

Annual Tarawih

~1000 total attendees | 2016 – Present | London

Serves: Communities

Yearly community event comprising reminders, iftar and tarawih. Includes an English reading and short tafsir and live recitation of the sura covered in the corresponding Q-Club (*see below*).

Kids' Academy

~800 total attendees | 2004 - Present | Crawley

Serves: Children and youth

Weekly, year-long supplementary classes in Maths, English and Islamic Studies for children aged 7 – 16. Curricula include mid-term activity sessions, end-of-term exams and parent consultations.

London Short Courses

~1500 total attendees | 2014 - Present | Central London

Serves: Learners (informal)

Termly courses diving into a single classical text/topic – often grounded in the Qur'an. Courses include 'Road to Ramadan', 'Understanding Prayer', 'Purification of the Heart', and more.

London Academy

~800 total attendees | 2010 - Present | Central London

Serves: Learners (informal and advanced)

Two-year, weekly course providing a holistic grounding in Islamic sciences. Taught by six scholars, the course covers Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, Prophetic Sciences and Spirituality.

Q-Club

~1000 total attendees | 2013 – Present | London, Oxford

Serves: Learners (informal)

Fortnightly English tafseer in a Central London café. Open to all, Q-Club includes a discussion of literary features and everyday implications of a single sura over the course of a year.

Q-Connect

~300 total attendees | 2020 – Present | Online

Serves: Learners (advanced)

Monthly, interactive online class analysing connections between suras. Programme combines a guided reading of a pair of suras from Juz Amma with structural analysis of two suras together.

Q-Immersion

~450 total attendees | 2018 – Present | Oxford

Serves: Learners and academics

Annual weekend intensive at Oxford University. Studying one sura each year, the course comprises tafsir, lectures, formal dinner, participatory student workshops and a Qur'an Khatm.

Q-Conference

~300 total attendees | 2014 – 2019 | Central London

Serves: Learners and academics

Annual convening of scholars and researchers of the Qur'an. Programme includes multiple academic presentations on one surah or theme of the Qur'an.

Q-Symposium

~50 total attendees | 2024 – Present | Oxford

Serves: Learners and academics

Annual programme enabling committed students to produce original research on the Qur'an. Culminates in academic papers and accompanying presentations delivered at Oxford University.

OUR **TEACHERS**

REGULAR TEACHERS



Dr Saquab Ashraf is the founder of CEI. Traditionally trained in Tarim, Yemen, Dr Saquab completed his Masters under Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem, and holds a PhD in Qur'anic studies from the University of Oxford. He is the main teacher of tafseer across CEI's programmes, as well as the executive director of the charity.



Sheikh Thaqib Mahmood has taught at CEI since 2004. Traditionally trained in Yemen, Morocco, Syria, Turkey and Mauritania, Sheikh Thaqib currently teaches Arabic at the University of Oxford. He teaches a range of Islamic sciences at CEI, including Prophetic sciences, aqidah and tafseer.



Sheikh M. Akram Nadwi has taught at CEI since 2010. A world-renowned scholar, Sheikh Akram has conducted research at the Universities of Oxford and Lucknow, completed a 3-volume work on female hadith scholars, and established the Al-Salam Institute. He teaches tafseer at CEI's London Academy.



Sheikh Ahmed Babikir has taught at CEI since 2010. Traditionally trained across Africa and the Middle East, Sheikh Babikir leads Rumi's Cave and Ulfa Aid, and has advised the UK government and royal family on Islamic affairs. He teaches classical texts on spiritual development at CEI's London Academy.

REGULAR TEACHERS



Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam Al-Kawthari has taught at CEI since 2010. Traditionally trained in the UK, Pakistan and Syria, Mufti Muhammad is a director and research at the Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence. He teaches hadith and fiqh at CEI's London Academy.



Sheikh Amin Buxton has taught at CEI since 2018. Traditionally trained in Yemen, Sheikh Amin is a translator of sacred texts and an instructor at several Islamic Education platforms. He teaches classical texts on spiritual development at CEI's London Academy.

GUEST TEACHERS AND SPEAKERS

In addition to regular teachers, CEI has had the honour of hosting some of the Eastern and Western world's most renowned teachers of Islamic sciences. These have included Yemeni luminaries **Habib Ali Jifri** and **Habib Kazim al-Saqqaf,** Syria's Sheikh **Muhammad Samir al-Nass,** US-based scholars including **Sheikh Yahya Rhodus,** and world-renowned translator of the Qur'an, **Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem**, amongst several others.



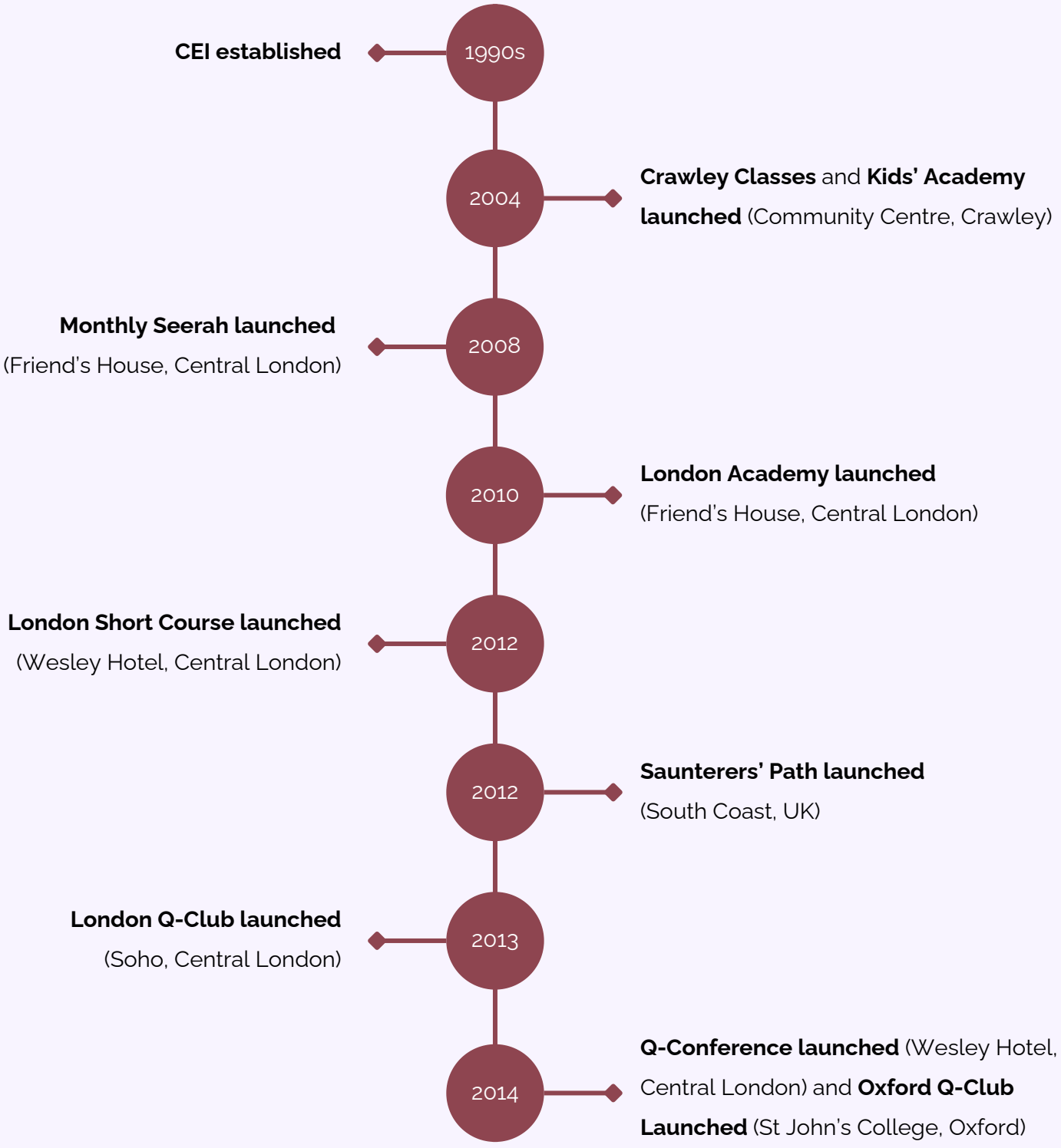


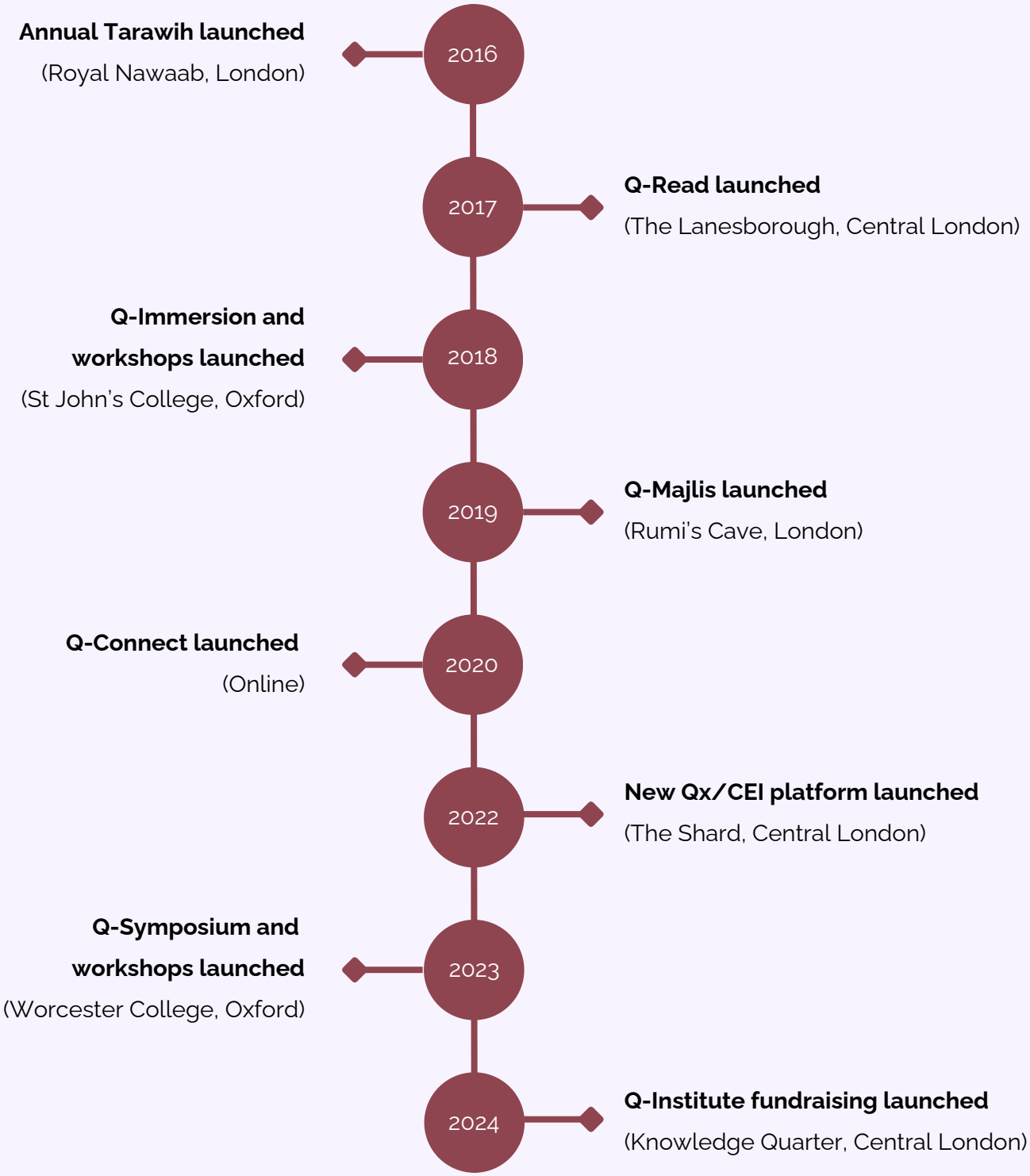




TWENTY YEARS OF IMPACT

TIMELINE


1990s
CEI established
2004
Crawley Classes and Kids' Academy launched (Community Centre, Crawley)
2008
Monthly Seerah launched (Friend's House, Central London)
2010
London Academy launched (Friend's House, Central London)
2012
London Short Course launched (Wesley Hotel, Central London)
2012
Saunterers' Path launched (South Coast, UK)
2013
London Q-Club launched (Soho, Central London)
2014
Q-Conference launched (Wesley Hotel, Central London) and Oxford Q-Club Launched (St John's College, Oxford)


Annual Tarawih launched
(Royal Nawaab, London)
2016
2017
Q-Read launched
(The Lanesborough, Central London)
Q-Immersion and workshops launched
(St John's College, Oxford)
2018
2019
Q-Majlis launched
(Rumi's Cave, London)
Q-Connect launched
(Online)
2020
2022
New Qx/CEI platform launched
(The Shard, Central London)
Q-Symposium and workshops launched
(Worcester College, Oxford)
2023
2024
Q-Institute fundraising launched
(Knowledge Quarter, Central London)



CEI HAS TAUGHT OVER 2,500 VERSES REPRESENTING OVER 40% OF THE QUR'AN IN-DEPTH

COURSES HAVE COVERED TEXTS FROM MULTIPLE ISLAMIC SCIENCES, YET ALWAYS STAYED ROOTED IN THE QUR'AN



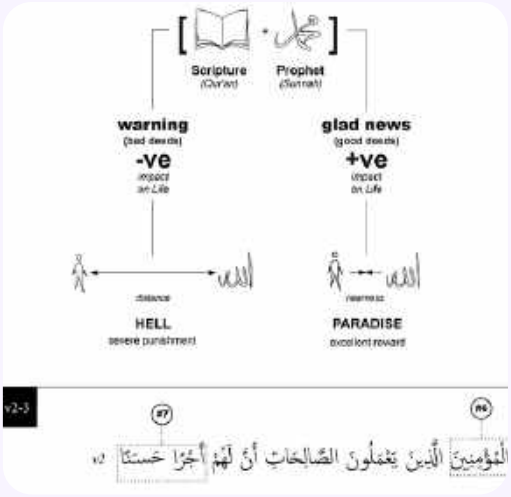
PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN HEADQUARTERED IN CENTRAL LONDON, WHILST ALSO HELD IN MANCHESTER, OXFORD, CRAWLEY, DOVER AND ONLINE

SPREADING **GOD'S WORDS**

TRADITIONALLY ROOTED, CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT

CEI's courses cover the works of Razi, Nawawi, Tirmidhi, Al-Haddad, Ghazali, Ibn Ataa Allah and many more. Each text is taught with accompanying commentary relating to contemporary experiences – developing a personalised connection between students and classical scholarship.





DEEPLY REFLECTIVE READING

CEI takes a slow, contemplative approach to Qur'an study - often spending entire academic years on single surahs. Classes cover macro structures of surahs as well as individual word choices. To ensure deep student engagement, courses also include personal workbooks and interactive workshops.

QUR'ANICALLY CENTRED, HOLISTICALLY GROUNDED

Beyond tafseer, CEI students are trained in Hadith, Shamaa'il, Aqidah, Fiqh, Arabic, Spirituality, and – for younger students – basics of language and literary analysis. This helps students to draw connections between Islamic sciences, and to build robust decision-making frameworks in their lives.



5,000+
hours

CEI has provided over **5,000 hours of low-or-no-cost tuition** by formally trained teachers

Programmes have recorded over **10,000 sign ups** – with over **40% of attendees** returning to two or more courses

10,000+
sign ups

£500,000
In Rental Expenditures

CEI has committed almost **£500,000 in rental expenditures** for Qur'an courses – all managed by entirely voluntary trustees and facilitators

REACHING
BRITAIN'S BELIEVERS



FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

CEI engages students at every stage of life. CEI Kids' Academy students are 7 to 16 years of age. 18 to 35 year-olds – often with leading university and career backgrounds – represent a strong share of course attendees. Uniquely, a number of older students and over 65s are also regular attendees, creating intergenerational learning spaces.



FROM YEMEN TO EUSTON

Courses are priced, placed and communicated to reach as wide an audience as possible. Most classes are held in the Knowledge Quarter of London, ensuring accessibility for workers and students. Other events are held in the North, Centre and South of the UK, as well as online for broader audiences.



FROM CAFÉS TO CONFERENCE HALLS

CEI helps students to go from informal engagement to academic production on the Qur'an. This starts with the Q-Club, held in a relaxed, café setting. Students then study more rigorously through the London Academy and Q-Connect. Highly engaged students are supported in producing academic workshops for Q-Immersion, and papers for the Q-Symposium - both held at the University of Oxford.

TRANSFORMING **HEARTS**

CEI's deepest impact is in people's hearts. Attendees of all ages, backgrounds and prior levels of engagement with Islamic scholarship have attested to the unique and transformative effects of CEI courses. Below are the experiences of four students:

HIFZAH (27, CIVIL SERVANT)

"I'M TEACHING AT THE SAME CLASSES I SAT IN AS AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD – I WANT TO KEEP THAT CYCLE GOING."



"My parents, God bless them, signed me up to CEI's Kids Academy in Crawley as an eight-year-old. I progressed through the classes, the activities, and later the Qur'an courses.

Now, I'm delivering academic presentations at the Q-Symposium, and I'm teaching back at the Kids' Academy. I was one of those kids and I want to keep that cycle going. CEI has made the Qur'an a practical book for me. It brings its lessons to life, and helps me a lot with personal growth, and character traits, and just persevering through certain situations. You can start off from a basic level, and build your layers of knowledge over time. Anyone who has access to English GCSEs should be able to access to classes at CEI."

JAMES
(41, CHARITY MANAGER)

"EVEN WITHOUT SPEAKING ARABIC, YOU LEARN TO NOT JUST RECITE THE QUR'AN, BUT UNDERSTAND IT."



"I started coming to CEI about nine years ago. In that time, I've done day intensives, Q-Club, Q-Immersion, and then the London Academy multiple times. Even with the classes that I've repeated, I'm always learning something new. You never stop learning.

The thing I'm most grateful for is how easily accessible it is.

It's quite difficult for me to do these things by myself, but when I'm in class, we're all so driven by the same purpose, and I have such a warm relationship with the teachers themselves, that it makes it such a comfortable learning environment. And that, in itself, helps to engrain what you're learning.

CEI has influenced me to not just recite the Qur'an, but also to understand it. Even though I can't read Arabic, the tafseer sessions help me to take verses, look at surrounding verses, and connect the dots of what's being said. I can identify the perspectives of each of the verses, and then apply them to myself.

You realise what the deen actually is – the bigger picture of life. You're able to zoom out and be on the outside of life looking in."

MOBEEN
(27, OXFORD GRADUATE)

"BIT BY BIT, CEI HAS MADE THE QUR'AN A LIVING. BREATHING BOOK FOR ME."



"As a young person, I had everything in place for me to understand the Qur'an, but I never did. I came from an Arabic-speaking household where the Qur'an was often recited, and I studied complex literary texts as part of my degree. But I never found an environment that clicked for me when it came to Islamic studies.

CEI was the first space I found to be welcoming and comfortable, but also rigorous and grounded in tradition.

Bit by bit, CEI has made the Qur'an a living, breathing book for me. It started with reading and understanding at Q-Club, then analysing and contextualising at London Academy, then participating in and leading student workshops at Q-Immersion.

Now, I'm applying what I learnt in my literature degree in a Qur'anic context with programmes like Q-Symposium.

But the academic side isn't even what is most important. It's the fact that I have frameworks to navigate my everyday life with, and to inform all of my decisions, both little and large. I can't tell you how transformative CEI has been for me."

ROBINA
(65, GRANDMOTHER)

"THESE CLASSES HELP ME UNDERSTAND MY PURPOSE, AND GIVE ME JOY. MY HEART IS SATISFIED."



"I've been coming to CEI classes since the beginning, and in all of these years, I've hardly missed any.

You don't realise at the time, but over the years, you see how much the benefit you're getting.

Every time I get ready to come to class, leaving my home, I feel a joy. My heart is satisfied. I'm going to learn something which will make my life easy and take me to my destination.

CEI makes the Qur'an so easy to read. It's partly the translation. My Arabic isn't great, so having the tafseer delivered in English really helps me to connect.

But it's not just the translation. Its also the help in getting the purpose behind these stories, and the lessons. For me, it makes it all much more understandable.

Honestly, it's just changed my life. It makes my life so simple. It makes me humble, it gives me the guidance to tackle difficult tasks, and it helps me to understand my purpose in this world. It makes my life very easy and very happy."



THE PATH FORWARD

THE **Q-INSTITUTE**

Looking to the next twenty years and beyond, CEI is excited to launch the Q-Institute. With state-of-the-art facilities, and backed by world-renowned scholars, the Q-Institute will become the destination of choice for formal and informal study of the Qur'an in the heart of London.

MULTI-FACETED, SINGLE-PURPOSE

The Q-Institute will operate as a teaching venue, research centre and community hub, all dedicated to creating a Qur'an-centered space. The building will include:

- **Teaching excellence:** Formal, modular courses to promote deep yet accessible engagement with the Qur'an and the Islamic Sciences;
- **Cutting-edge research:** A comprehensive Qur'an library and academic facility to support rigorous scholarly work;
- **Community Engagement:** A café, art gallery, members' lounge, prayer area and event spaces - each designed to nurture community engagement with the Qur'an.



IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

The Q-Institute will be located in the Knowledge Quarter of Central London, the cultural and academic heart of the English-speaking world. This prime location ensures accessibility for all learners, and will allow the Q-Institute to leverage the vast resources and networks of this global city.

SELF-SUSTAINING

Diverse income streams, including residential units and food & retail opportunities, will ensure the ongoing self-sufficiency of the Institute and its operations. These revenues will also support CEI's transition beyond voluntary administration, helping to scale up the efforts and impact of courses.

HOW **YOU CAN HELP**

CEI is turning to all community members and believers in the Qur'an to support us in raising funds to purchase a building in the Knowledge Quarter of London.

To reach our target, CEI humbly asks you to pray, spread, and pledge:

PRAY

The success of the Q-Institute ultimately depends on the permission of God. CEI requests that you keep the establishment of the Q-Institute in your prayers.

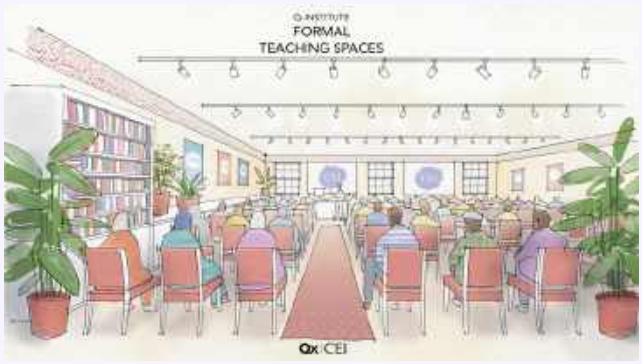
SPREAD

CEI also requests that you spread the word to your communities and networks – from family and friends, to groups and platforms, to funders and philanthropists.

PLEDGE

Within four months of launching, CEI's community of voluntary Justgiving fundraisers helped to raise approximately £250,000 for the Q-Institute. Your contributions are sincerely appreciated through:

- **Donations:** A large gift could supplement CEI's other fundraising efforts to secure a building as illustrated above.
- **Finance:** A large loan with favourable conditions could be repaid through surplus annual income.
- **Gift-in-kind:** The Q-Institute established with a rent to buy option, and supplemented through other in-kind support.







To discuss further please contact **Mobeen Salih (mobeen@ceiuk.com).**



SCAN TO FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT CEI