

CUGOANO CHANGEMAKERS

Applicant Pack and Application Form

Aged 18 to 30 · UK-wide · 15 places · 18 months

Paid core Circle days · Continuum project funding of up to £6,000

Read this first

This pack tells you how to apply to the Cugoano Changemaker Programme. It includes the selection criteria, the application questions, what to expect on the programme, and what support is available if you need help applying.

The full story of the programme, including its purpose, its name, the three pillars (Lens, Circles, Continuum), the five domains and the kind of leadership we are trying to develop, lives on the website at www.sjp.org.uk/cugoano-changemakers. We recommend reading that page before you complete the application.

What Cugoano Changemakers recognises

Cugoano Changemakers is an 18-month programme recognising ethical leadership already being practised in real conditions. It is for young adults aged 18 to 30 who organise, challenge injustice, build trust, take responsibility, contribute to communities and act where choices have consequences.

Ordinary examples, local responsibilities, caring roles, family realities and community contributions count. You can answer in plain language, use notes, or respond by audio or video.

If selected, you begin the 18-month programme as a Cugoano Changemaker. Recognition as a Cugoano Changemaker Fellow comes later, after you complete the programme and meet the Cugoano Fellowship Standard through evidence, reflection, responsible action and contribution to others.

Cugoano Changemaker

A young adult aged 18 to 30 selected to begin the 18-month supported programme of coaching, mentoring, project work, systems learning and reflection.

Cugoano Changemaker Fellow

A participant who completes the programme and meets the Cugoano Fellowship Standard through evidence, reflection, responsible action and contribution to others.

At Cugoano, "Fellow" does not mean someone who arrived with status, privilege or academic recognition. It means someone who completed the 18-month programme and met the Fellowship Standard through evidence, reflection, responsible action and contribution to others. Fellowship recognition is earned through what a young adult does in the world, not what they score on a page.

Who this is for

Cugoano Changemakers could be for you if you are aged 18 to 30 and any of the following feel familiar.

- You support others through difficulty or care for people in your family or community.
- You are trying to improve something at work, in your neighbourhood, in education or in a group you belong to.

- You organise or help hold together a community, faith space, creative project, club, campaign or informal group.
- You speak up about something unfair, even when doing so carries social, emotional or practical risk.
- You mediate tensions, build trust or help people keep going.
- You do not call yourself a leader or changemaker, but people rely on you or are influenced by what you do.

You can apply even if

- You do not call yourself a leader or changemaker.
- Your responsibilities are mostly informal or invisible.
- You are not sure whether your experience counts.
- You have caring responsibilities, work shifts or have insecure work.
- You have access needs or would like help with the application.
- You have never applied for anything like this before.
- You would prefer to answer by audio or video.

You do not need to be invited or nominated by anyone. You can apply directly.

What we are looking for

We are looking for real examples of responsibility, care, learning, context and commitment. These six criteria guide our selection. They look for these qualities already in practice. The 18-month programme then develops them further through coaching, mentoring, systems learning, project work and reflection.

1. Close to Real Situations

Proximity to real stakes.

We look for people close to real decisions, pressures, relationships or consequences. You may not have formal authority, but responsibility is genuinely within reach.

For example: *caring for a family member during illness; managing a rota or conflict at work; holding a local project together; speaking up about something affecting people around you.*

2. Ethical Judgement and Care

Ethical and relational accountability.

We look for people who notice who is affected, who carries cost, who carries risk, and what care or fairness requires.

For example: *considering who might be excluded by a decision; listening to people most affected before acting; changing a plan because someone else would carry too much risk; choosing fairness over popularity.*

3. Learning and Growth

Learning posture and honest reflection.

We look for people who can be challenged, revise their thinking, learn from what did not go well and name something they got wrong or missed.

For example: *changing your approach after feedback; realising your first instinct was incomplete; repairing a relationship after handling something badly; trying again with more care or understanding.*

4. Awareness of the Bigger Picture

Systems curiosity without technical language.

We look for people who notice power, resources, rules, relationships, constraints, who gets listened to and who may be left out.

For example: *noticing how transport, money or time affects who can take part; seeing that some people carry more risk when speaking publicly; understanding how housing, work patterns or care responsibilities shape choices.*

5. Hope with Realism

Grounded imagination.

We look for people who can imagine different ways forward while staying realistic about barriers, constraints and consequences. You do not need to arrive with a finished project plan: you will be supported to develop a Continuum project during the programme.

For example: *trying a small practical change rather than promising a huge solution; thinking about what resources, relationships or trust are needed; staying hopeful without ignoring what makes change difficult.*

6. Commitment to Changemaker Community

Meaningful programme engagement.

We look for people who can participate seriously, contribute to peer learning over 18 months, stay in dialogue across difference and show seriousness without needing to perform it.

For example: *staying involved in a project, group or responsibility over time; learning with people who communicate differently; receiving challenge and staying respectful; knowing what support would help you participate well.*

How to apply

You can respond in the way that helps you explain your experience clearly. You can answer in writing, by audio or by video. You can use notes or read from a script. If you need help with the process, support is available.

The application is designed to understand how you think, learn, relate and respond to difficulty. You can answer in plain language.

Shared introduction for Questions 1 to 5

Before you begin Questions 1 to 5, read this. You can use the same situation across Questions 1 to 5 if that helps you answer clearly.

Think about a part of your life or a situation you are close to where people, pressures, relationships, care, conflict or decisions genuinely matter. This could be something in work, family, community, volunteering, organising, creative practice, faith, education, care or another part of life. This could be an ongoing situation rather than a single event.

You do not need to share a formal leadership experience or a highly personal or sensitive experience to answer these questions well. Ordinary situations and everyday responsibilities with real pressures, relationships or consequences are equally valuable.

Examples could include: *supporting others through difficulty; managing a conflict in a workplace, family, group or community; trying to improve something in your neighbourhood; caring for others while balancing other responsibilities; speaking up about something difficult or unfair.*

The application questions

Question 1: Tell us about this situation.

What is happening, and how are you connected to it? Your connection might be as a family member, neighbour, worker, organiser or community member.

Tests: *Close to Real Situations* · **Limit:** *200 words or 2 minutes audio/video*

Question 2: Why does this situation matter to you?

What keeps you committed to it, even when progress is slow or difficult? You do not need to share a personal or difficult story. A practical or relational reason is equally valid.

Tests: Ethical and relational accountability, sustained commitment and grounded motivation · **Limit:** 200 words or 2 minutes

Question 3: What makes this situation difficult in practice?

This could include time, money, trust, pressure, rules, confidence, relationships, uncertainty, competing needs, who gets listened to, or who has influence over decisions.

Tests: Awareness of the Bigger Picture · **Limit:** 200 words or 2 minutes

Question 4: Who is affected by what happens in this situation?

Who has influence over what happens? Who may not be included or heard? You might include people in your family, your workplace, your community or a group you are part of.

Tests: Ethical Judgement and Care, and awareness of wider dynamics · **Limit:** 200 words or 2 minutes

Question 5: What is one thing you have tried, or would like to try, to improve or change this situation?

What might get in the way?

Tests: Hope with Realism · **Limit:** 200 words or 2 minutes

Question 6: Tell us about a time you got something wrong, changed your mind, or realised you had missed something important.

What changed in your thinking or action? This could be something small or practical, like changing how you approached a conversation, or revising a plan after things did not go as expected. It does not need to be a personal or emotional example.

Tests: Learning and Growth · **Limit:** 200 words or 2 minutes

Question 7: What do you hope this programme will help you become better at doing, rather than just understanding?

This could be something modest and specific, like getting better at listening, staying with a difficult conversation, or understanding something that has felt too complicated to name.

Tests: Readiness to practise and grow · **Limit:** 150 words or 1.5 minutes

Question 8: If you complete the programme, what do you hope might become more possible for you afterwards?

What might become more possible for the people or communities around you? Small and local changes matter as much as larger ones. For instance, being able to hold a difficult conversation more calmly, or understanding why something keeps going wrong in a group you are part of.

Tests: Grounded imagination and community contribution · **Limit:** 150 words or 1.5 minutes

Question 9: Learning with others.

This programme involves learning alongside people who may have different experiences, opinions, backgrounds or ways of communicating. What helps you learn well with others? What do you sometimes find difficult in group learning or shared spaces? If you have not done much group learning recently, think about a time you worked or spent time with people who were different from you in some way.

Tests: *Commitment to Changemaker Community* · **Limit:** 150 words or 1.5 minutes

Question 10: Access and support

What support, access needs or practical arrangements would help you participate fully? This may include caring responsibilities, financial pressures, technology access, language needs, disability or health-related support, work schedules or other practical circumstances.

We ask this so we can plan support, not to assess your commitment. This answer is not scored and does not affect your assessment.

Limit: 150 words or 1.5 minutes

Question 11: A note about support

Did anyone help you with this application? For example, a trusted adult, a support worker, a scribe, someone who helped with translation, or someone who helped you talk through your ideas before writing.

This is fine and does not affect your application. We ask so we understand how people are using the support available and can improve it. Please answer yes or no. If yes, you are welcome to say briefly what kind of help you had.

What a Circle day involves

Circle days are the core in-person learning days of the Cugoano Changemaker Programme. They are not residential. Each Circle day brings the cohort of 15 together for a structured day of learning, peer reflection, systems thinking, ethical practice and project work.

Each core Circle day involves 7 hours of structured Circle participation and an additional 1 hour of related artefact development, for which the participation payment is calculated.

Circle days will be held in different locations around the UK over the 18 months. Some locations will be in London, some elsewhere. The full schedule of Circle dates and locations will be shared with shortlisted applicants before final interviews, so you can plan around existing commitments before accepting a place.

Between Circle days, you will also take part in coaching sessions, triad meetings with two other Changemakers, mentoring conversations and project work. These happen by phone, video call or in person, depending on what works.

Attendance and participation

Changemakers are expected to attend at least 75 percent of Circle one-day events. Confirmed Circle dates will be shared with shortlisted applicants before the final interview stage, so you can plan around existing commitments before accepting a place.

If you have caring responsibilities, work patterns, health needs or access needs, we will discuss what participation adjustments may help you take part. This is a real commitment, and it has a genuine support route.

Payment, project funding, travel and accommodation

Participation payment

To recognise participants' contribution, Cugoano Changemakers receive a participation payment for each core Circle day. The daily participation payment is calculated at the applicable National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage hourly rate for 8 hours. This covers 7 hours of Circle participation and 1 additional hour for developing the related programme artefact.

Travel time, coaching sessions, triad meetings, mentoring conversations and informal preparation between sessions are not paid. We use the term "participation payment" rather than "stipend" because the payment is tied to specific Circle days, not paid as a regular monthly sum.

Continuum project funding

Participants may apply for up to £6,000 of Continuum project funding during the programme. This funding is for approved project development and delivery costs, not personal payment. Continuum project applications are developed during the programme with mentoring support. You do not need to arrive at the application stage with a project in mind.

Travel and accommodation

Travel costs to attend core programme events are planned to be reimbursed. The claims process and any limits will be confirmed before participants begin the programme.

Where Circle days require an overnight stay, accommodation will be arranged and paid for by the programme. This applies particularly to Circle days held outside your home region. You will not be expected to fund accommodation yourself.

We do not currently have a separate fund for caring costs. If caring responsibilities affect your ability to participate, please tell us in the access section so we can discuss what adjustments may be possible.

Before you apply

If you have questions about the programme before applying, you are welcome to attend an "Is this for me?" information session. These will be held online so anyone in the UK can join. Details will be published alongside the application form.

You can also contact the access lead, Marwah El-Murad, directly at depdirector.changemakers@sjp.org.uk.

Access, participation and support

We want to make this programme genuinely accessible. Access information is collected separately from suitability scoring and will not affect whether you are selected.

Confirmed for launch	Available by discussion	To be confirmed before participants begin
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Written responses accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation adjustments for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Payment and travel claims process

Confirmed for launch	Available by discussion	To be confirmed before participants begin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application support session or support call • Help understanding the form • Access information kept separate from scoring • Audio responses accepted • Video responses accepted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caring responsibilities • Disability, neurodivergence or health adjustments • Adjusted deadlines • Plain-language support • Participation adjustments for shift work or insecure work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation arrangements for overnight Circle days • Specialist access support, subject to budget and availability

Safeguarding and confidentiality

Ordinary examples count and you do not need to disclose trauma or sensitive personal information. If you choose to share something that suggests you or someone else is currently at risk of harm, we may need to act to keep people safe. We will treat all information with care and only share it with those who need to know for safeguarding purposes.

If you are selected, we will ask separately whether you want to be publicly named as a Cugoano Changemaker. If you later complete the programme and become a Cugoano Changemaker Fellow, we will ask again before any public recognition. You can choose to remain private at either stage for safety, family, work, migration, faith, activism or personal reasons.

The safeguarding lead is Samantha Davis. You can contact her at director.changemakers@sjp.org.uk. This application route is not an emergency service. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

What the programme includes

<p>Participation payment</p> <p>Recognition of contribution through paid core Circle days. Daily payment at the applicable National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage rate for 8 hours.</p>	<p>18 months</p> <p>Circles, Lens (ethical storytelling) and Continuum, including funded project development with up to £6,000 per participant, with mentoring and accountability.</p>	<p>15 participants</p> <p>A cohort of 15 young adults from across the UK learning together over 18 months.</p>	<p>Travel and accommodation</p> <p>Travel to core programme events reimbursed. Accommodation provided for overnight Circle days. Claims process confirmed before programme start.</p>
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The Cugoano Commitment

Some names decorate. This one asks something of us.

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano spoke with courage in a world that depended on silence. His legacy is not a backdrop to this programme. It is a living question: what are we willing to face honestly, what will we refuse to look away from, and what responsibility are we prepared to carry?

This programme exists for young adults who are ready to practise that kind of leadership. Demanding and hopeful. Not leadership as image or applause, but leadership as moral seriousness, care and real action.

To carry Cugoano's name is to be called into something serious: to speak when silence protects the status quo, to listen when others are carrying the cost, and to act in ways that people can trust.

The full story of Cugoano's life and legacy is on the website at www.sjp.org.uk/cugoano-changemakers.

Open to all. Committed to what matters.

*Cugoano Changemakers · St James's Piccadilly · www.sjp.org.uk/cugoano-changemakers
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