



MESME
MATHS CIRCLES

CEO
Recruitment Pack

Welcome from the Chair

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming MESME's founding Chief Executive Officer.

MESME exists to support students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to discover, develop and enjoy mathematical thinking, and to enable their progression into advanced mathematical pathways. We have set the radical target of doubling the number of students undertaking PhDs in the mathematical sciences at UK universities whilst increasing the proportion of disadvantaged students represented in this group.

The current situation in education is stark: students from disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well in school mathematics qualifications, and progress to high-tariff universities at substantially lower rates. Non-disadvantaged students are three times more likely to complete an A Level in Further Mathematics, attain A*s at twice the rate of their disadvantaged peers and are as much as ten times more likely to secure a place on the most competitive undergraduate mathematics courses.

MESME has sought inspiration internationally to find new ways to tackle this problem. We have encountered programmes of maths circles in both Russia and America that bring young people together to be mathematicians. Our mission is to build a version of these circles that will work in the UK, and to run these circles at scale across the country. Our circles feature a coherent, connected curriculum and unique pedagogy that draws from the experiences of their international siblings. There is a focus on deep, sustained mathematical thinking as well as on the rich exchange of ideas between participants and mentors - whose primary role is to act as mathematical interlocutors, supporting students to develop and express mathematical ideas with confidence.

This systematic attempt to develop and implement a national programme of maths circles is novel. The road ahead is fraught with challenges, some known, and some as yet unforeseen. The CEO will bring their vision, energy and insight to navigate these challenges and secure the impact we envisage for young people.

MESME is a young organisation but has already garnered strong support from the mathematics education community. Our key partners include the UKMT, leading universities and the network of specialist maths schools that are opening across the country. Alex Gerko, founder and co-CEO of XTX Markets, provides not only the vision and inspiration for MESME, but also the financial support that ensures our programmes are fully funded.

MESME CEO is a wide-ranging and pivotal role that will suit someone aligned with our vision who can build credibility in the mathematics education community and brings the leadership skills to substantially expand our work. I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,
Dan Abramson (Chair, MESME Advisory Committee)

About MESME

Mathematics Education for Social Mobility and Excellence (MESME) exists to support students from all backgrounds to achieve mathematical excellence, so that they go on to have a greater and richer range of future personal, employment and economic choices.

MESME's target is that by 2035 there will be double the number of PhD students in the mathematical sciences at a UK university. We intend for this increase to include a representative proportion, at the minimum, of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds who went to school in the UK.

Along the way MESME intends to enrich the mathematical experiences of everyone who participates in our programmes, enabling them to enjoy mathematics and identify as a mathematician. We expect to see an increase in the numbers of these students attaining certificates in UKMT challenges, top grades at GCSE and in A Level Further Mathematics, as well as progressing to leading universities to study degrees in the mathematical sciences.

MESME is the creation of Alex Gerko, Founder and co-CEO of XTX Markets. Alex was educated in Moscow through the specialist mathematics programme at School 57. It was the transformative education and opportunities provide by this programme that enabled Alex to progress from a background of economic disadvantage to establishing one of the world's most successful algorithmic trading companies. Our vision is to enable such social mobility for young people in the UK.

MESME's funding is provided by Alex's personal philanthropy. The organisation is currently incubated by the education charity Ark and will be established as an independent charity in 2022.

Our work

In 2021 MESME began piloting Maths Circles across the country for secondary school students. Maths Circles aim to develop students' mathematical thinking and expand their mathematical curiosity. They are out-of-class maths clubs featuring a ratio of at least one mentor for every six students. Students grapple with intriguing questions, discover and explore exciting ideas and learn to think like mathematicians. In the 2021-22 academic year around 2,000 students will participate in this programme. Our goal is to grow this figure rapidly in the coming years.

Working with XTX Markets, we have commissioned research to better understand the maths pipeline from school to university, and what can be done to enhance the pipeline in the years ahead. This research will conclude in mid-2022 and will be key to informing MESME's strategy.



Role Description

We are seeking an inspirational individual to develop the programmes and partnerships which will achieve MESME's goal of doubling the number of PhD students in the mathematical sciences at a UK university by 2035. Key responsibilities will include:

- Developing and implementing MESME's 5-year strategy, informed by the research into the maths pipeline from school to university
- Building the team, partnerships and programmes to achieve this strategy
- Ensuring the successful execution and scale up of Maths Circles and other programmes which are established
- Building relationships with education institutions, policymakers, funders and other third sector organisations in this area to ensure that our work has an impact at the system level
- Ensuring that impact, evaluation and learning is central to MESME's programme design and decision making
- Establishing and overseeing the systems, processes, procedures and policies which enable MESME to operate efficiently and effectively
- Ensuring the organisation fulfils its legal, statutory and regulatory responsibilities.



Person Specification

Part One – Skills and Experience Essential

- Knowledge of the UK mathematics education landscape at secondary, post-16 and higher education levels
- Experience of senior management and/or organisational leadership
- Experience of strategic development and implementation
- Excellent grades at A-level, or equivalent qualifications
- Good honours degree

Highly desirable

- Expertise in mathematics education and pedagogy
- Experience of successfully building partnerships with other organisations to work towards a shared goal
- Experience of starting and scaling an organisation and/or programme

Desirable

- Experience of developing and/or delivering programmes which support access to opportunities for those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds
- Experience of grant making and management
- Experience of managing a substantial budget
- Lived experience of study or work in the mathematical sciences as someone who identifies with an underrepresented group

Part Two – Abilities and Attributes

- Committed to MESME's vision to support students from all backgrounds to achieve mathematical excellence •
Ability to lead and enthuse others
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
- Excellent organisational skills, including a keen attention to detail
- A long term, system level thinker
- Capacity to take initiative and innovate

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; all successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

We are committed to attracting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce, with a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

Terms of Appointment & How to Apply

Contract Full time, permanent. The CEO should expect to spent 1-2 days a week in London.

Salary £75,000 to £85,000 per annum

Pension 11% employer pension contribution

Holiday 27 days annual leave plus bank holidays, rising with each year of service MESME is currently co-located in Ark's offices in west London.

Location

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Katy.Giddens@starfishsearch.com or Rebecca.oconnor@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/mesme-ceo/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet Part One and Part Two of the person specification.

We are committed to attracting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce, with a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date Monday 7th February 2022

Preliminary interviews with Starfish w/c 14th February 2022

Final stage interviews with MESME End of w/c 28th February 2022

