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## Leveraging youths' experience across Myanmar's education



From left: Aung Myint Thein, Thiha Nyunt, and Hnin Ei Ei Khaing, who are the three co-founders of MyanLearn in 2017. Khine Kyaw/Nation

**Driven by the burning desire to tackle disorganised information of Myanmar's fragmented private education market, three young people who graduated from Singapore have created MyanLearn, an innovative class search platform which aims to make learning accessible and convenient.**

In an interview with The Nation, Thiha Nyunt, chief executive of MyanLearn, said the firm aims to achieve 100,000 registered users by the end of this year, and to grow two or three times next year. Last year, he founded the firm together with other two co-founders -- chief technology officer Aung Myint Thein and chief operating officer Hnin Ei Ei Khaing.

"With our current user numbers and healthy growth every month, we are confident that we can achieve it," he said.

In 2017, he came up with the idea to establish MyanLearn, as finding appropriate classes in Yangon was a tiresome task at that time. The co-founders had personal experience of such difficulty, and one of them had to give up learning Mandarin as he was not able to find a suitable class.

"In this day and age of modern technology, finding the right place for education should not be that difficult. MyanLearn app was born to this end," he said.

In late 2017, the three co-founders brainstormed and fine-tuned their idea to establish the firm. They started working on the prototype in early 2018, and later commenced onboarding the early adopter schools to the platform while simultaneously developing the application. They launched the app for Android in October 2018 and for iOS two months later.

Students between 15 to 30 years of age are target users of MyanLearn, but anyone looking for a class can easily use the application to find information about different classes. Available in both Android and iOS, nearly 6,000 students are using the application to search classes on a monthly basis, and the number of users grows each month, he said.

Though other tech companies and startups are trying to improve Myanmar's education system in their own ways, Thiha Nyunt does not see them as competitors. Instead, he considers they are complimentary to each other.

The executive believes in the co-founders' personal education experience which sets MyanLearn apart from other companies.

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"All of our co-founders had varying education experiences in Myanmar and graduated from Singapore. So, we have seen goods and bads of both systems, and are eager to improve Myanmar's education by leveraging our experiences," he said.

According to Thiha Nyunt, the firm is always open to potential investors, as the co-founders are currently bootstrapping with their savings.

Aung Myint Thein said the firm received many positive and constructive feedbacks, as the co-founders' efforts have been well-appreciated across Myanmar since the first day of operations.

"It is really encouraging to see that users are getting values from our product. More than 150,000 followers on our Facebook page stay updated with MyanLearn and read the articles regularly," he said.

"We still have a long way to go but it is always good to hear positive responses from our users."

Aung Myint Thein said the firm has a very lean structure with team members who always try to maximise their efficiency. Currently, the firm has 10 employees with the majority of them from technical and marketing teams.

"Our expansion plan will always be tied to how we can achieve our growth plan, how we implement our product road map, and how we can bring the best value to our users," he said.

Hnin Ei Ei Khaing considers getting the right team members and embarking them on MyanLearn's mission as a key challenge they have encountered.

"When we get feedbacks from our users and partners about how MyanLearn helps them, our team members start to see the value of their work and they feel their efforts being much appreciated," she said.

"Some of our early joiners left in a few months, but it is heartwarming to hear that they usually refer MyanLearn to their friends even though they left us. As our product offerings grow, we will need new members in our team who are as passionate about education as we are."

The executive pledges to address the challenge by making the product better so that the firm ensures arousing the interest of talented personnel.

She lauded the government's move to allow 100 per cent foreign investment in the education sector, assuming this would bring affordability and variety of subjects to the students whom otherwise might go abroad to attend the courses.

On the success stories, the executive said, "To us, the greatest success is helping students from rural areas find classes easily and thereby encourage them to study in big cities."

"They are no longer hindered by information scarcity, as they come to know exactly how much it will cost and how long it will take. We hear many heartwarming stories which keep us going and keep pushing our limit to get our product better and better," she said.