

Platform-mediated work in Myanmar

15th August 2018



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ABOUT LIRNEASIA

Countries that we engage with -the emerging Asia Pacific



A think tank, working on all things digital

- Our mission:
 - *“Catalyzing policy change through research to improve people’s lives in the emerging Asia Pacific by facilitating their use of hard and soft infrastructures through the use of knowledge, information and technology.”*

Tech as a driver of change in jobs

- A job : A collection of task, of different type
- Some task highly routinized and rule based
 - will be automated: e.g. a lot of software testing
- Some studies predict that jobs that are less automatable
 - creative
 - high cognitive skills
- But most studies done for America/developed countries
- LIRNEasia is looking into replicating these (Frey & Osborne (2013) and McKinsey Global Institute (2017)) methodologies for India and 1 country, depending on data availability

How is the nature of work changing?

- OECD/developed countries: the nature of work IS changing.
- Globalization and technology has something to do with that change
 - High paying jobs becoming even higher paying
 - Low paying jobs: will not go away, but will be even low paying service jobs
 - Middle pay jobs: susceptible to change, disintermediation by technology

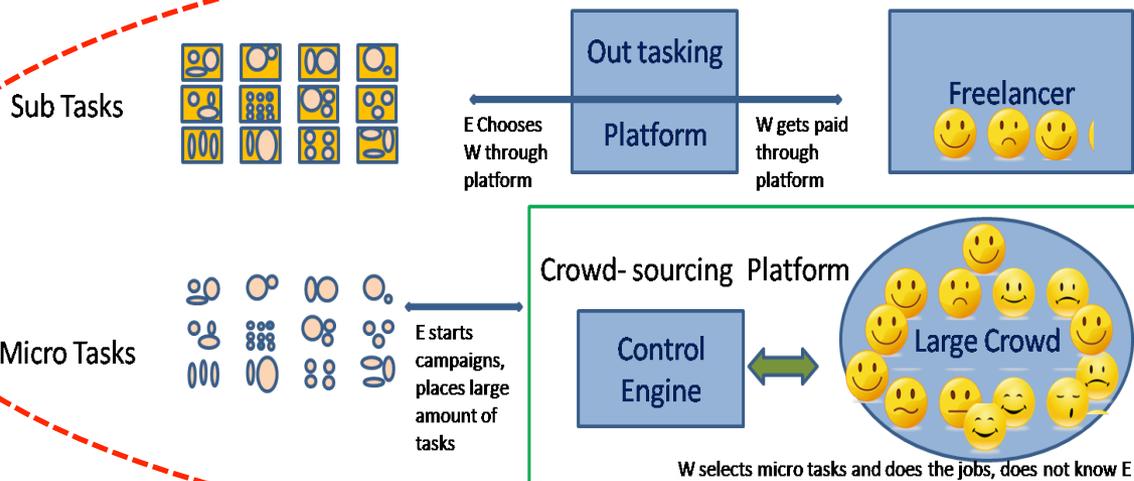
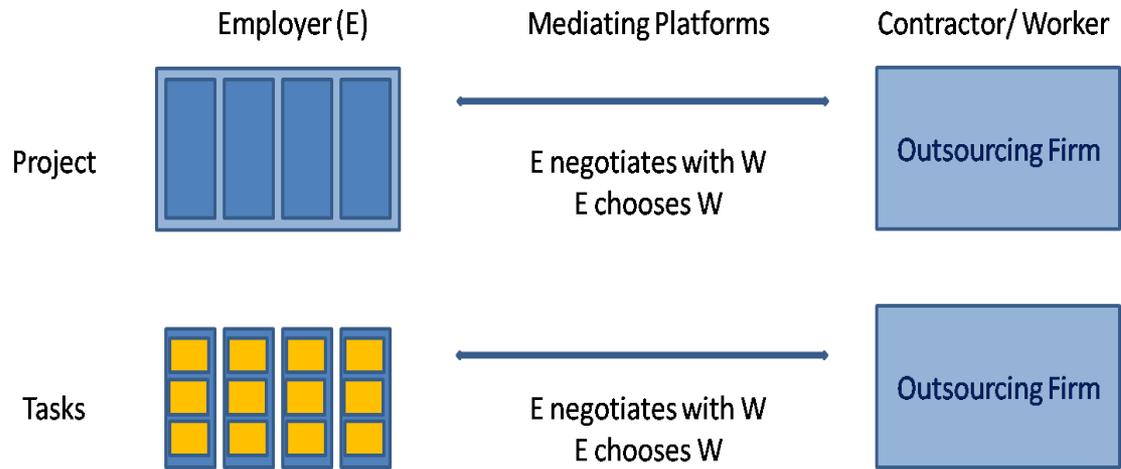
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We are already seeing this impact (and have been seeing it)

- Outsourcing: the first wave of firm to firm outsourcing
 - India, Bangladesh, Philippines
 - Low value add → high value add
 - outbound call centers, data processing → research & development
- Then: peer to peer work mediated by a platform
 - “platforms” that enable buyers and sellers to meet
 - Size of the job varies

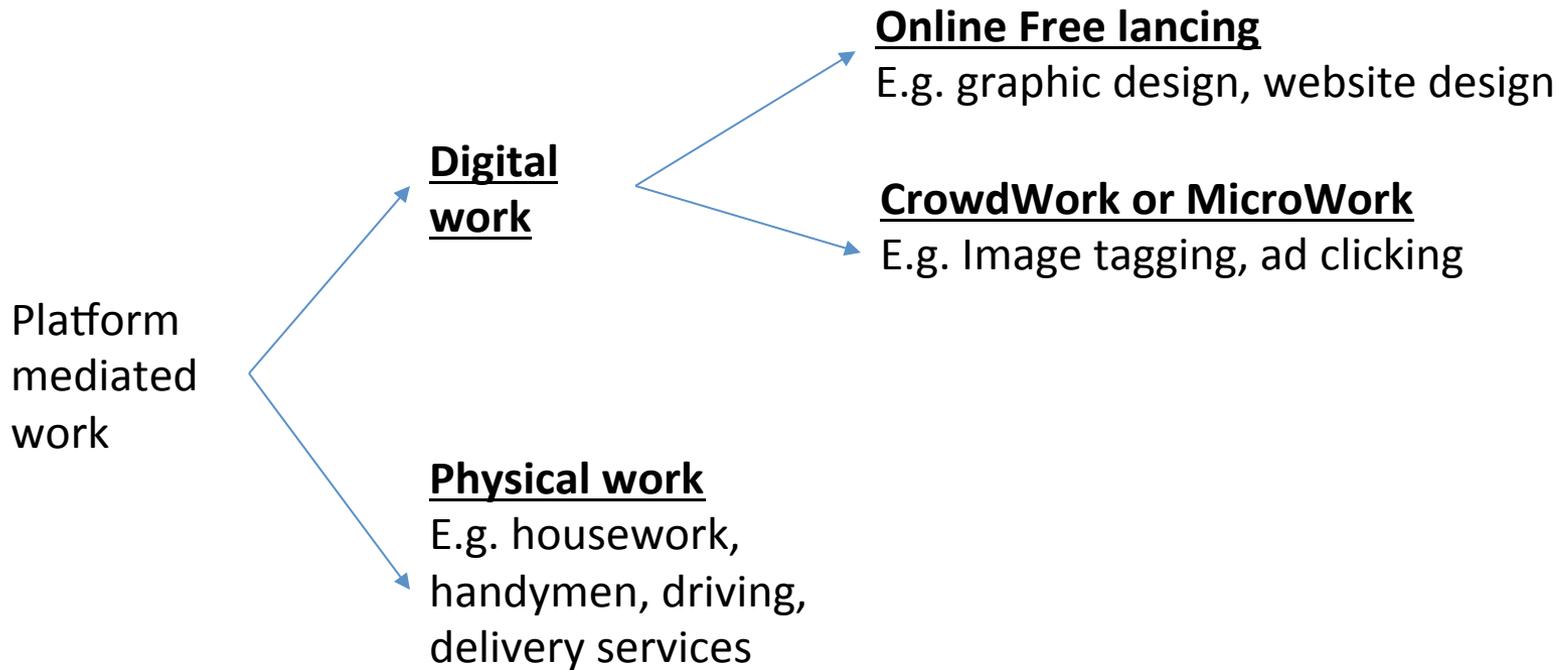
Digital Platform jobs includes online free lancing, crowd-work/microwork



- Guru
- Peopleperhour
- Freelancer
- Fiverr
- Upwork
- AMT
- Frapp
- Hansa Cheetah
- MSSDS
- DigitizeIndia.gov.in

Platform work: Terminology and characteristics

- Platform: software/app/website where buyers and sellers meet
 - Platform keeps % of worker's earnings
- “Gig work”: workers do a finite task for any buyer; deal with many buyers
 - No guarantee of employment or repeated employment
- Traditional digital and physical work platforms: Amazon Mechanical Turk, FreeLancer.com, Odesk, Fivvr.com
- But non traditional platforms in Asia
 - Linked-In in India; Facebook in Myanmar
- But NOT just digital work (i.e. work that doesn't depend on buyer-seller physically being in the same location)
 - Ad clicking, Data entry, graphic design, website design, content writing, social media marketing, video creation
- Physical work: location specific, buyer and seller have physical proximity but ICT platform brings them together, the actual work not ICT based
 - E.g. Transport (Grab, Uber, Ola, lyft), house workers, handymen (e.g. www.nokri.com), etc



Compared to the global north, differences and similarities in the global South (developing countries)

- North: Gig work is an informalization of formal workers
 - Software engineers who lost their full time jobs, now working on gigs on Amazon Mechanical Turk
 - Previous job had benefits (pension, health care), but gig work doesn't
 - Previous work was full time, gig work could be full time or part time
 - Gig work “precarious”, less desirable
- In India, Sri Lanka, others
 - Many informal, now with opportunity to become formal
 - Often as a transition: while studying, while in between jobs
 - Online free lancing: Almost always part time, while doing another full time job
 - Physical gig work (e.g. Uber/Grab) sometimes full time
 - For additional income
 - Social safety nets/pensions – didn't exist for many in the first place

Trends, problems, opportunities

- Anyone with a ICT device can be a freelancer, microworker
 - Huge supply for labor, less of demand → lower prices
- Platform transparency
 - Arbitrary rules
 - Power to buyers, not the workers (rankings, account suspensions)
- Non-portability of work across platforms
 - Need to build reputation in each platform
 - Social safety nets/pensions – didn't exist for many in the first place
- Lack of opportunity for collective action by workers

MYANMAR

PLATFORM MEDIATED DIGITAL & PHYSICAL WORK

Objective: To understand the phenomenon of platform-mediated work in Myanmar

From workers/ suppliers and industry leaders point of view

- to identify the nature of digital and physical platform work
- to look into enabling factors
- to understand the barriers / constraints
- to understand the potential – is this a solution to underemployment, unemployment etc?

Part of a multi country study

- Sri Lanka
- India
- Myanmar

We talked to 105 freelancers in Myanmar

- Focus group discussions (FGD), In depth interviews (IDI) and expert interviews
- Who are doing this type of work: age 18-64
- Online freelancers (working on an cloud work platforms and gig work platforms), social media freelancers (getting work on Facebook) and potential online freelancers (already freelancing but not using online platforms/ social media)
- Study attempted to focus on poorer people to understand if this market can be more inclusive than traditional ICT sectors
- Two population centers: Yangon division and Mandalay city
- Talked to females as well as males who are freelancing as a primary source of income or supplementary source of income
- Multiple approaches were adopted: Posting on Facebook and ChateSat and asking current freelancers to bring their fellow freelancers for the interviews

Physical work

Freelancers we talked to work in Grab, Uber, Oway and HelloCab; They were introduced to platforms mostly by marketing campaigns

“In June, a kid from GRAB came and told me about this as a marketing promotion”

IDI 9, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“A friend of mine came along and told me to give UBER a try. He said that this UBER give out bonus rewards too and that I also have well enough English command and that I should give this a try. So, he got me into this, but that also wasn't purely good intention from his part, you know, because UBER gives out 25,000 reward to those who managed to persuade a driver and get him enrolled there”

IDI 10, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Selection of which taxi app to work in was based on the financial attractiveness

“Back then, if you do taxi on your own, there weren’t and aren’t a lot of taxi cab owners to go around. It had gotten quite hard to acquire a taxi owner and even if you did, the revenue doesn’t cover the owner fees and gas expense sometimes. And with GRAB, I hoped it would work better with it, and as it turned out, it did and does work out for us drivers”

IDI9, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Oway was run with youths in employment and it appears to me that their practice is more active, sort of. So, back then I thought like that and chose Oway instead of HelloCab to register”

IDI11, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

We talked to freelancers who were working on multiple taxi apps as well as a single taxi app

“For me, I only have one application running at a time usually. Say, if I got UBER opened in the morning session, I would then be inclined to use Grab in the evening. I got both of these application in this phone”

IDI9, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“My ride is 2006 model and that is eligible for registration at Oway or UBER or HelloCab. But then, even if I had applied to all of these, I cannot open all these apps and drive for all of them at once, can't I! So, I had to choose one app”

IDI14, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“I keep all of them 3 opened! Its first come first served with me. And I'd close the rest 2 apps”

IDI 15, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Some had their own car while others rented the car for a fee. Buying a car was an aspiration of the renters

“It had been 14 years that I started dealing with this owner and he’s almost like a brother to me. And in case of car break down or repair case, we wouldn’t have to make any argument for arrangement. That’s mutual trust, you know”

IDI 9, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Since the day I started this profession, I’ve been driving my own car. I think it’s much of a headache to lease a car from owner and having to pay the owner’s fees. I wouldn’t drive taxi if I were to have to do it like that”

IDI 14, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Yeah, I had to deal with the car owner before that. My first one was a ride with CNG fuel. The owner fees was 17,000 per day, which was 5 lakhs per month. And while driving with such conditions, I tried to save about 10 thousands per day as a must, which is excluding all the expense and all”

IDI17, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Registration process of the apps were relatively easy, freelancers were asked to take a simple course on the way to use the App

“With UBER, there were copies of my ID card, driver license and the wheel tax documents of the car that I had to submit to them, also I had to bring along my original copies. And I had to fill my personal details such as contact, marital status and such. And since they offer installment options for a phone, I bought it too. It’s better to use applications with that phone, it’s this phone. But with Grab, they don’t ask that many details; they took our photo for the profile in the phone application the rest is nothing special. Oh, both of them gave us a course that I had to take during the application process”

IDI11, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Pretty easy, I’d say. They only asked you for driver license and car’s wheel tax. With it, you even get a phone when you’ve gone through with the process”

IDI16, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Earnings after joining the taxi apps remained the same or increased compared to non-app (offline) taxi driving

“Well, that’s quite a substantial difference. That’s about 50% increase to tell the truth. Back then there was extra gas expense and now we don’t have to use extra gas in search for customers. But that’s for me, you know. Different individuals have different driving and earning practice”

IDI10, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Comparing with driving offline, I’d say that I became to earn more with Grab. I mean, back then, we were roaming around in search of customers and that wasn’t cool, especially with rising gas prices. But now with Grab, you know, the income cover the expense and we can make a living with it now”

IDI14, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Taxi apps made it easy for taxi drivers to find riders

“Well, by working with them, I suppose the practice of my taxi driving got more sophisticated and it’s less worrisome, you know. You don’t have to search customers that hard. Sometimes back then, I had to go to that Aung Minglar Highway Terminal without passenger so as to get customers there. And the next time, I had to repeat the process, that was a lot of hard work and sacrifice, you know “

IDI10, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Everyone is safe to take a Grab ride. And back then, we had to check every standing pedestrian on the road so as not to lose customers among them. And now with this platform, I don’t have to do that, I don’t even have to roll down my side window. I need only to call the customer to inform them that I’ve arrived for pick up. And they can also see my car license plate number once I have accepted an order too. I love this job very much”

IDI14, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

The riders who used taxi apps were mostly educated youth and females

“Most of Grab customers are the capable sort of people. And most of the girls take Grab rides too, because of security and safety reasons. Platforms rides are much safer than offline taxis”

IDI14, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“But with Grab, mostly those of well-doing standard hire taxi via platforms. These are the people who are able to use this application. Most of them are youths. Maybe the elders might not yet be aware of it or such”

IDI13, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Taxi drivers are often polite to the customers to get higher ratings

“I do serve them good because of the rating, though I wouldn’t know about other drivers. My car is always in topnotch condition. Most drivers don’t clean the space underneath the seats”

IDI13, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Yeah, even some passengers cannot be requested to cancel the order. They told us to cancel it ourselves. But then, we have this problem with the cancellation rate too!!! If cancellation rates are high we cannot get any reward bonuses. With over 10% cancellation rate, we won’t be subjective for their bonus rewards”

IDI16, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Reward systems in the taxi apps motivates the drivers to work harder

“Currently UBER rewards 16,000 for 10 trips and 28,000 if you could do 20 trips. With Grab, you get 50,000 for 40 trips and 110,000 for 80 trips”

IDI10, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“I’m not sure about others but with Grab, I get a lot of money from it. About this 5 or 6 months ago, I even earned 10 lakhs from bonus reward only within a month on average! Because, back then, they gave 4,000 as bonus reward for a single trip and we make at least 60 trips per week. So, that was 240,000 a week from bonus only”

IDI17, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Language and low digital literacy is a barrier to the wider use of taxi apps

“I had to pick up the passenger from AGD bank at the airport but they give me his contact number and I called him, not knowing that the customer is a foreigner. But I weren’t able to speak English... it’s okay to assign that someone who can speak (in English) but if the driver cannot... What to do?”

IDI11, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Honestly, this using a phone isn’t easy; you cannot use it with some basic English knowledge of A-B-C. And this location input, has to be done accurately with names and all and I would have to understand them, you know”

IDI9, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“If the passenger is not familiar with how the application works, they’re harder to deal with. Maybe that’s the same thing that you’re asking because it’s not usual to have some issues among the driver and the passenger because of the impreciseness of their GPS mapping system”

IDI18, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Digital work

Profile of an average freelancer

FAMILY

Most respondents lived with their parents.

AGE

Most freelancers fall into the age bracket of 21-25 years.

LOCATION

Yangon and Mandalay,
Not willing to migrate.

FREELANCERS

EDUCATION

From diverse backgrounds: marketing, web design, accounting, engineering, political science, theology, English, geology and medicine.

SEC

Most freelancers were from SECD.

ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS

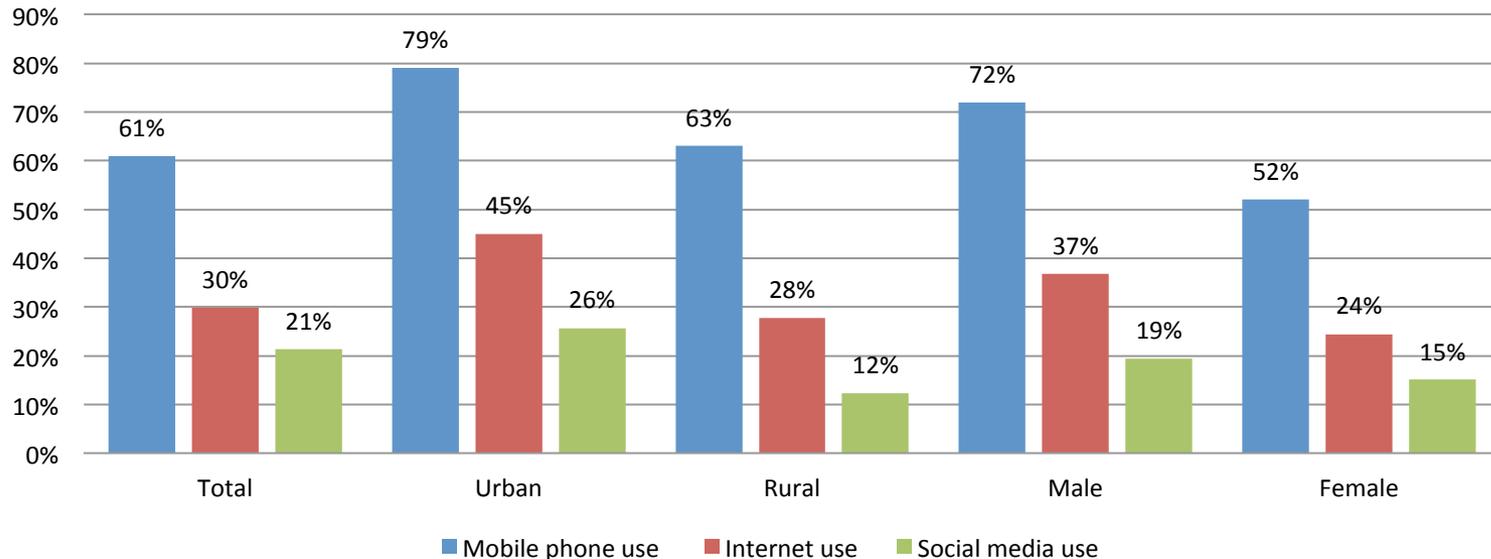
Web design/development and graphic design.

Most online freelancers we talked to worked on local platforms, but there were some freelancers who worked on global platforms too

Platforms available to use with both local language and English	Platforms dedicated for Myanmar people but accessible only in English	Global platforms
<p>www.chatesat.com grabjobs.co/Myanmar www.jobs.com.mm (No Longer available)</p>	<p>MMFreelancer.com MMFreelanceHub.com jobseeker.com.mm</p>	<p>www.freelancer.com www.upwork.com www.craigslist.org www.fiverr.com www.translatorscafe.com join.appen.com/jobsearch/ (Appen) blink.la storyhunter.com(by invitation)</p>

Internet and social media use in Myanmar

Mobile phone use, Internet use and Social media use in Myanmar (2016)



Base: 7,500 households

LIRNEasia nationally representative survey in Myanmar, 2016

Some people in Myanmar think Facebook is Internet

“Only about 40 % of the people might be able to use websites, People who think Facebook is Internet may not be able to use”

R14, Male, Platform freelancer, Yangon

“It’s because of the digital literacy. When telephone operators came in and launched here.. we leapfrogged. So people see Facebook when we talk about Internet. They can’t use other services except Facebook. It is happening in most of the villages and rural areas...They don’t know how to use new applications”

IDI7, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

Facebook plays a big role in online freelancing in Myanmar

“On Facebook, they got like interest groups, right? For example there’ll be like career finder groups and such and that’s very convenient with me. I can even search and contact a group of particular service providers”

R26, Male, Social media freelancer, Yangon

“The main medium is Facebook. If social media doesn’t exist anymore, then I think I won’t get clients anymore. So the main point is I have to be connected on social media”

R73, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

“I think more than 50 percent of my work come from social media”

IDI 8, Transgender, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

“I’d deal with translation groups. And sometimes when I got a lot of time in my hands, I’d type ‘translation job Myanmar’ in Facebook search box and there would be postings that I didn’t see. I’ve also got projects that way”

R30, Female, Social media freelancer, Yangon

Freelance Jobs Hire/Work Myanmar

Closed Group

About

Discussion

Items for Sale

Your Items

Members

Photos

Events

Search this group

Shortcuts

ဟုတ်တယ် Vs မဟုတ်... 20+

MIDO 20+

Safe Online Space (ငြိမ်း... 20+

Myanmar Travel Talk 12

Camera Accessories... 20+

Start a business in ... 20+

Part-Time Job Myanmar

Scholarship & work ... 20+

OGYs (Online Garag... 20+

MIDO Office Bulletin 1

Yangon Connection 20+

See more

DON'T WISH FOR IT WORK FOR IT

Joined

Notifications

Share

More

Sell Something

Start Discussion

Live Video

More

What are you selling?

TOP POSTS



Maung Maung Than

October 17

မြန်မာပြည်အခြေစိုက် စက်မှုကုမ္ပဏီအတွက် IOS မိုဘိုင်း developerများ ရှာနေပါသည်။ လစာ ညှိနှိုင်းပါမည်။ အချိန်ပြည့် ထမ်းဆောင်ရပါမည်။ စိတ်ဝင်စားသူ ကျနော့်ထံ ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။ အတွေ့အကြုံ အနည်းဆုံး တနှစ်ရှိရပါမည်။ ငွေပေးစရာမလိုပါ။ Singaporeမှ အလုပ်ရှင်နှင့် အင်တာဗျူးရှိပါသည်။ အသေးစိတ် အောက်တွင် ဆက်ဖတ်ပါ။

email : maungmaungthan8@gmail.com

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1



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+ Enter name or email address...

MEMBERS

432 Members



SUGGESTED MEMBERS

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Friends



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Add Member



Myat Kyaw

Add Member



Htoo Tay Zar

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DESCRIPTION

This is a place where freelancers with various kinds of expertis... See More

GROUP TYPE

Buy and Sell

FOR SALE

Find More Buy and Sell Groups



Part time jobs Yangon

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- Photos
- Posts
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- Follow
- Share
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Chat Now



Part time jobs Yangon shared Cho Win's post.

November 18 at 1:06am · 🌐

Post by: Cho Win

Part time teacher

Sat Sun အချိန်ပိုင်းဆရာ/ဆရာမ တစ်ဦးအမြန်လျှောက်ထားရန်
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 သင့်တင့်သောလစာညှိနှိုင်းပေးပါမည်
 စိတ်ဝင်စားပါကph no 09975601799 သို့အမြန်ဆုံးဆက်သွယ်စေလိုပါသည်



Cho Win ▶ Part time jobs Yangon

November 16 at 8:25pm · 🌐

Admin တင်ခွင့်ပြုပါ
 Sat Sun အချိန်ပိုင်းဆရာ/ဆရာမ တစ်ဦးအမြန်လျှောက်ထားရန်
 Eng 4 skills ပိုင်နိုင်စွာသင်ကြားနိုင်ရမည်
 သင်ကြားရေးအတွေ့အကြုံ ရှိသူဖြစ်ရမည်
 မြောက်ဥ...

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Part time jobs Yangon shared Kyawswar Myintmo's post.

November 18 at 1:04am · 🌐

Post by : kyawswar myintmo

Part time delivery ကျားတစ်ဦး

လုပ်ငန်းတည်နေရာအရ မြောက်ဒဂုံအတွင်းနေထိုင်သူ ပိုမိုသင့်လျော်ပါသည်...

See More

Community See All

👤 Invite your friends to like this Page

👍 2,723 people like this

📡 2,770 people follow this

👤 Khaing Pwint likes this

👤 Visit the group for this Page, Part-Time Jobs Yangon.

About See All

💬 Typically replies within a day
Chat Now

🏠 Community

People Also Like



Myanmar Sakura Part...
Business Service

👍 Like



Jobs for students
Recruiter

👍 Like



Job In Myanmar
Company

👍 Like

English (US) · မြန်မာဘာသာ · မြန်မာဘာသာ ·
ภาษาไทย · Español



Name: Maw Maw

Age: 23 years

Location: Mandalay

Occupation: Social media freelancer, Graffiti artist

Employees: None

Years of Service: 5 years

- Self taught artist
- 75% of the work comes through social media
- 5 clients per month
- Earns an average of MMK 500,000 per month from working online (USD 362)
- Some months he earns MMK 3,000,000 (USD 2,173)



“After I got those interviews in social media and gained some kind of recognition my relatives began to change their tone to dear nephew or son and started uploading selfies with me. Now the fruit is ripe, you know, they want a piece of it”



Name: Phyu

Age: 24 years

Location: Mandalay

Occupation: Social media freelancer,
Professional blogger, Medical intern

Employees: None

Years of Service: 4 years

- Self taught travel blogger
- 100% of the work comes through social media
- Earns an average of MMK 500,000 per month from working online (USD 362)



“I had to attend 7 years in the medical collage and when I was a third year student, I started to move to this writing profession. I write as a freelancer. I work as a content creator. I got some money from that which is enough for my personal use and I’m proud for that. If I don’t work as a medical doctor in the future, I have the passion to work as a professional writer”

Driving factors to start working online were lack of good jobs and difficulty to get a government job

“Because of the education system here, people do not know what they want to do. So, it is not strange that they cannot find suitable jobs”

R21, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“There are so many full-time jobs out there but salaries are like; they cannot even cover transportation fees”

R13, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“There are way fewer job opportunities in MDL than in YGN”

R47, Male, Online freelancer, Mandalay

“I came from a rural origin and I would talk about this comparing with my community. Some would even have to give like Kyat 10 or more lakhs (bribe) to get the job of a primary class teacher. And most of us are farmers and that amount of money is just too much. Some would bribe and wouldn't be able to get the job too!”

R62, Female, Online freelancer, Mandalay

Online freelancing is seen as a solution to this situation

“I used to work full-time, just quit about 2 months ago because full-time jobs are so stressful”

R1, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“I’m so tired of ordinary jobs in Myanmar. That’s why I decided to go freelance. I will never ever go back to the 9-to-5 company staff life no matter how much salary they offer”

R3, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“For freelance, I can’t get a consistent salary but I can work comfortably and compared to full time, I think I can earn more”

R19, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Online freelancers gained awareness on online freelancing through Facebook or friends/ acquaintances

“It’s my friends. I saw my friends filling up forms on ChateSat and I also filled it up”

R7, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“I also looked at Facebook ‘job seeker’ groups and that’s where I found ChateSat”

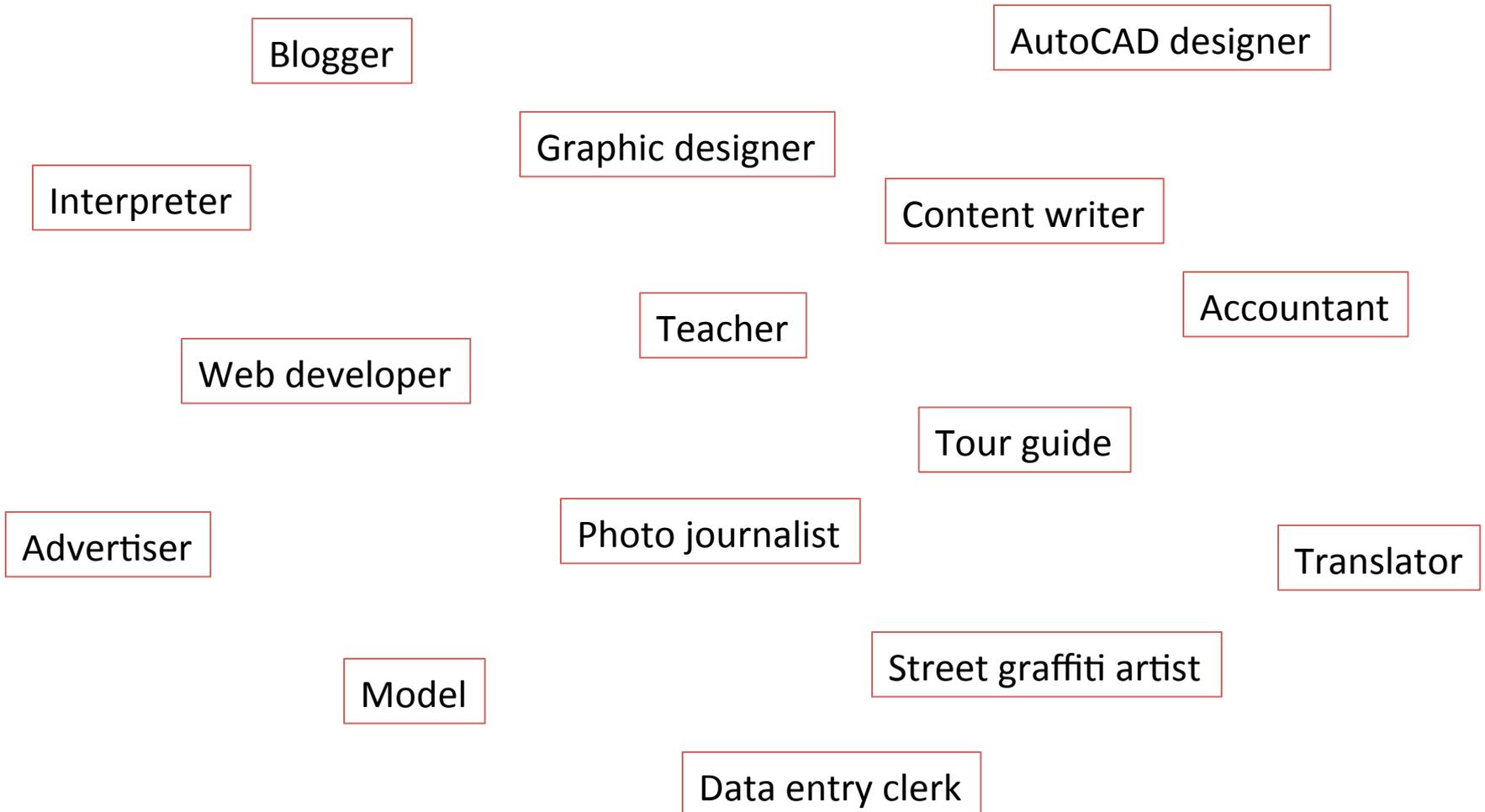
R 23, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“For ChateSat, I saw a sponsored post on Facebook and that’s where I got connected with that platform”

R 20, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Advantages/ Benefits

Freelancers can always do something that matches their interest and ability



Many people do work away from formal training

“I’m interested in freelancing because I can conduct my freelancing activities in light of my areas of expertise and I can also develop myself effectively. After I complete my medical degree, I’m going to study IT technology. I don’t want to become a doctor I want to work in IT and science related works”

R57, Male, Online freelancer, Mandalay

“I’m a doctor and I was graduated in I think 2002. I’m doing translation and interpretation now”

IDI3, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“The main reason why I blog is because it’s my hobby. Since I started to get some income from this writing job and I gradually moved to this profession as medical doctor is not my passion”

IDI7, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

Often online freelancing income can be higher than full-time traditional work

“Three years ago before I got that one lakh salary (Income as a medical intern) when I was still at university, I had an income ranging from 1 or 2 lakhs to 5 or 6 lakhs from my online work”

ID17, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

“Three lakhs from my full time job and 2.5 Lakhs from freelancing. Sometimes 3 Lakhs from freelancing if friends ask me to help”

R68, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

“ At least 18 lakhs to most about 25-30 lakhs”

R18, Male, Social media freelancer, Yangon

A range of income seen..

Type of work	Examples of type of work	Average earnings per month	Platforms used
Professional services	Architecture design	USD 109-291 (MMK 145,924-389,576)	ChateSat Facebook
	AutoCAD design		
	Accounting		
	Travel and tourism		
Professional services	Teacher	USD 182-437 (MMK 243,652-585,033)	
	Model	USD 218-364 (MMK 291,847-487,305)	
Clerical and data entry	Data entry	USD 36-218 (MMK 48,195-291,847)	ChateSat
Creative and multimedia	Graphic design	USD 633 (MMK 847,428)	ChateSat freelancer.com designhill.com Facebook
	Photo journalism	USD 360 per 12 photos (MMK 481,950)	
	Street graffiti art	USD 218-2,185 (MMK 291,847-2,925,170)	
Sales and marketing support	Advertising	USD 14-218 (MMK 18,742-291,847)	Facebook
Software development and technology	Web development	USD 29-582 (MMK 38,823-779,152)	ChateSat freelancer.com upwork.com
Writing and translation	Translation	USD 14-218 (MMK 18,742-291,847)	ChateSet Facebook
	Content writing		
	Interpreter	USD 479-2,185 (MMK 641,261-2,925,170)	
	Writer/blogger	USD 509-582 (MMK 681,423-779,152)	

Other than income online freelancing has other advantages like developing their soft skills

“Yes, especially time management. And also client relationship. It also helped me personally. Now if a person talks to me, I can guess what kind of person he is and what he wants to say. Because of the experiences I got as a freelancer, my communication skills has improved”

R7, Female ,Online freelancer, Yangon

“My communication skills has improved and I got more network. Also my social skills has improved”

R19, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Control over time, amount of work, and location is seen as main attractions for this type of work

“I don’t have to go and sit at the office for 9-to-5 regardless of I have work to do or not”

R1, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“ICT helps a lot in finding jobs. Previously, we had to go out and look for jobs but now you can just search on the Internet”

R20, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“You can earn what your quality of work deserves if you go freelance. If you work for an agency, you give the same quality of work, but they will benefit more from your work and you cannot complain because they pay you a constant salary”

R3, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Flexibility in online work helps disabled and woman to earn

“Like in the old days, I didn’t realize that I’m suffering from this kind of personality disorder (respondent kept on changing full time jobs). What I thought in the past was that what I feel is justified or right”

IDI2, Male, Social media freelancer, Yangon

“I came from a broken family and so, normally, I live with my grandmother. I like to accompany her. Because sometimes, I need to travel and she’d be home alone and that’s the thing I’m troubled with right now. I chose freelancing to stay at home with my grandmother”

IDI1, Female, Social media freelancer, Yangon



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn2R4CJJQE0&feature=youtu.be>



Name: Mi Soe

Age: 28 years

Location: Yangon

Occupation: Social media freelancer,
translator/interpreter

Employees: none

Years of Service: 3 years

- Degree in English literature
- Work comes through social media and networks
- Earns MMK 300,000- 400,000 (USD 217-289)



“After I delivered my baby, I got depressed ..there’s this mommy group on Facebook and we chat often, consulting and comforting each other. And when I talked to them about my problems and how I felt and they suggested that I work at home”

Barriers

Getting the first job in online platforms were difficult

“I first tried to register at foreign sites. It was the Freelancer.com. It was VERY hard!”

R17, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“As I was studying language, I’m keen on translation and I searched for the projects online and couldn’t find what I wanted. And then I found ChateSat and I just registered there, casually just in case”

R 48, Female, Online freelancer, Mandalay

“Getting the first job was a little bit difficult. I was interviewed for a web development project posted on ChateSat but did not get the job”

R1, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“The first one I got from ChateSat I can say was a little bit hard as I was interviewed like three times which unnecessarily took my time”

R3, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Doing the job was also difficult

“For my first job, they provided me a sample so that I will know the concept. They also gave me the points they wanted me to include and I had to write it. I Googled and read all articles about the subject so that I will have an idea on what kind of facts should be in the ads. I have never written that kind of content. I mean content for ads. That’s why I had to read a lot and learn about the product. I faced that kind of difficulty”

R 19, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“My first job in ChateSat was translation job of a HR project. I thought it was easy. But when I actually did it, it’s not all that easy. I even had to postpone the deadline and submitted one day later. It was a lot of effort for me. What I mean is that doing freelance is more tiresome than fulltime job because as long as that project is there, it’s in your head”

R17, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

Even when the job can be done online, physical presence is sometimes required in Myanmar

“I usually go meet clients in person and explain to help them find out what they want”

R5, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“Whenever we post a project, there are around 10 people who apply. I choose some people and conduct an interview with them”

E11, Male, Buyer on ChateSat, Yangon

“Some freelancers don’t have a good profile. They don’t post their photos as well. ChateSat should set it as a minimum requirement to upload a profile. There might be some beginners who don’t have any working experiences. But we also see some freelancers who don’t write a thing about their background on their profile although they say they are freelancers. For us, we hesitate to offer jobs to that kind of people. I want to know their profile”

E11, Male, Buyer on ChateSat, Yangon

Society does not accept online freelancing as “real work”

“In here people mostly think that only 9-to-5 jobs are work, and as if staying home is being unemployed. But we even get better income than they earn. Elders think that you have to work 9-to-5 to qualify as a professional”

R65, Male, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

“Some people understand but some people think freelancers are jobless. I just let them be, I am tired of explaining that to stupid people”

R5, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“My aunts think that I am not working because I don’t go to work every day. I set up my office in my own room with two big monitor screens and then they thought that I am watching movies all the time. So it’s hard to explain them”

IDI8, Transgender, Social media freelancer, Yangon

Gender and location biases of employees seen in the real world can be seen online freelancing work too

“But for tiring jobs, then the employer will prefer male”

R21, Female, Online freelancer, Yangon

“It was like they were searching for interpreter and they wanted like a female interpreter specifically”

R26, Male, Social media freelancer, Yangon

“In fact, Yangon has more opportunities when it comes to modeling work. Since there are more opportunities, models from Yangon have more working experiences than us”

R73, Female, Social media freelancer, Mandalay

Issues with payment methods

“It’s easy to open a foreign currency account in KBZ. Once, you’ve paid USD100 deposit, they’ll open an account straight away. But for the CB, you have to show that you are expecting payment from a client”

IDI2, Male, Social media freelancer, Yangon

“Agent is only for Skrill. But that agent got to be trustworthy too. I’ve been hearing all kinds of stuff and I’m worried what if all my payments would just disappear”

R17, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“The reason is that we don’t have a good banking system. The bank transfer rate are so expensive. It’s one of the reasons. if it’s like USD50, I will only get USD20 and I’m paying USD30 for one transaction or a transfer”

IDI 8, Transgender, Social media freelancer, Yangon

Payment method is one of the main deciding factors of the platform to work in

“I got to know about Freelancer.com but did not do anything because we (Myanmar) cannot access its payment systems. I was inspired by design skills of foreign graphic designers I found online but we cannot work on that kind of platforms because we have payment problems. When I found ChateSat, I was so happy to see that kind of platform which is run by a Myanmar business”

R3, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

“ChateSat transfer payment through MPU (Myanmar Payment Union) card when I deliver my final product. I found most of the platforms use PayPal for payment which we cannot use in our country. So, the payment system is the biggest barrier, I really hope this problem to be solved soon”

R6, Male, Online freelancer, Yangon

Most commonly used payment method in Myanmar is cash, followed by bank transfer

	Platform freelancer	Social media freelancer	Offline freelancer
In cash	27	14	3
Bank Transfer to Saving Account / ATM / Mobile Banking	28	9	1
Mobile Money (Wave Money by Telenor)	1	0	0
Cheque	3	1	
Money Transfer Services (Western Union, MoneyGram)	3		
PayPal / Visa Card / Master Card	3		
Foreign Currency Account	2		
US Bank Account (A privileged account opened by a respondent who used to worked for an INGO)	1		
Using a friend/relative's account/card	2		
Hundi Payment	1		



Name: Soe Moe

Age: 30 years

Location: Yangon

Occupation: Current freelancer, Professional videographer/ photo journalist

Employees: two

Years of Service: 4 years

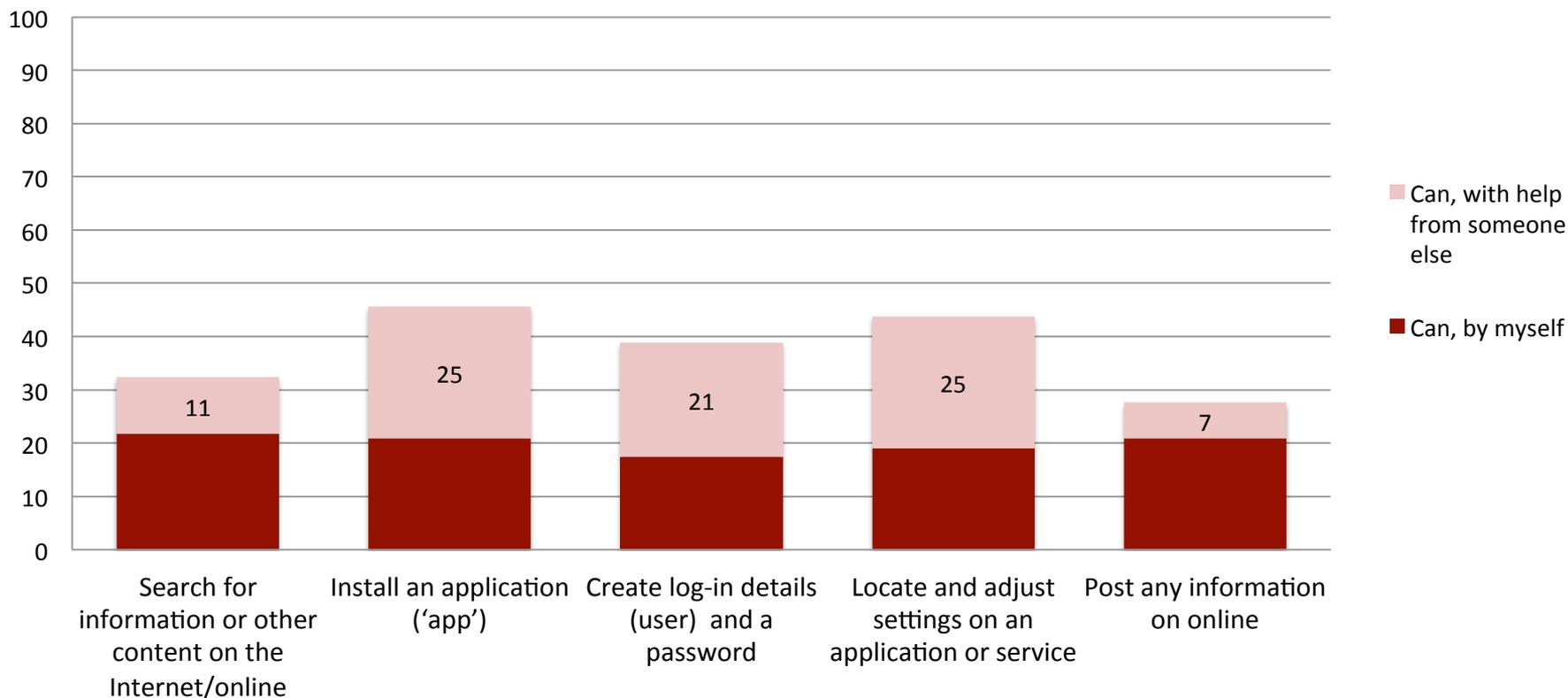
- Self taught videographer
- Work comes through work platforms, social media and networks

“During that time it was really difficult to get payment from a foreign country. I’ve done a few projects but it was very difficult. I have to use my brother’s account who lives in Singapore. And I’d have to contact him whether he had received this amount of money from the client”



Myanmar has low digital skills

Digital skills (% of mobile handset owners who can perform tasks by themselves or with help)



Q: Can you please tell me, which of the following activities you have ever done on your mobile or on the Internet/online, and for each one, whether you have done it by your self, or with someone else's help.

Base: Mobile handset owners

LIRNEasia nationally representative survey in Myanmar, 2016

Low digital skills challenge online freelancers

- Some don't know how to change the language (First landing page is in English)
- Unicode used on the site but not by everyone
- Workers lack of mastery of English requires interviews

It is not comfortable to use platforms. There are so many steps to use it

R 30, Female, Social media freelancer, Yangon

Expressing themselves in English is difficult for some online freelancers

“Freelancers can write short description of their experiences. Recently, I called for a photographer. His English is not good. He only wrote a short sentence. But I chose him because the price he bid was cheap”

E11, Male, Buyer on ChateSat, Yangon

Income earned working online is constantly under pressure due to increased supply of labor

“In that platform, I mainly see the channel about translators and interpreters. I go check the details of “translators wanted” and it’s “USD5 per page” and I was like “surprised” and I just logged off. Yes, may be like USD7 is still acceptable, but 5?! It’s very low”

IDI1, Female, Social media freelancer, Yangon

“So, my income would be around USD2,000 per month. Sometimes may be double if I work more. But I can’t work less than 10 days a month. But the thing is that I still have concerns. Because whether you get your assignment, like you get this income or not. But you know what happen to me? My limit is around USD1,500 or USD2,000. If I get like USD2,000, then I have a tendency not to accept any job offers”

IDI8, Transgender, Social media freelancer, Yangon



Name: Lae Win

Age: 36 years

Location: Yangon

Occupation: Social media freelancer,
translator/interpreter

Employees: none

Years of Service: 5 years

- Work comes through social media/
platforms and networks
- Earns USD 2,000



“But I can’t work less than 10 days a month.
But the thing is that I still have concerns.
Because whether you get your assignment, like
you get this income or not”

Poor broadband quality has affected the delivery of online freelancing jobs

“I think that the barrier of working online is Internet connection. There are possibilities for us to work online not only translation. We can give other services like voice over similar to people in India are working. They will sit there as call center workers and then they will just only direct people or assist people, like elderly people who need help without physically going there. This is what we can also do”

IDI8, Transgender, Social media freelancer, Yangon

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations

Challenge faced by worker	Possible solution	Actor				
		Gvt.	Platform	Digital workers	Civil Society	Other*
Low upload speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet packages with guaranteed upload speed 					✓
Myanmar people can't receive money for the work done through global platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanism to smooth the inward remittance mechanism 	✓	✓			✓
Lack of job security and income stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance schemes for digital workers to contribute Education programs on investing/securing income 	✓		✓		
Low social acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness programs 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Internet service providers/ payment platforms/ insurance organizations