

# Insight!



www.mprlexp.com

MPRL E&P Newsletter

25<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## Myanmar Thingyan New Year Greetings

### Myanmar Era 1384

For the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has kept many of us from celebrating the Myanmar Thingyan New Year. We all have had our fair share of difficult times but remember, there's always a silver lining. We have made stronger bonds between family members, friends, and colleagues while finding a sense of comfort and joy.

As we begin a new Myanmar Era 1384 during the month of April, I'd like to extend my warmest wishes and take this opportunity to say thank you, and may this New Year bring an abundance of peace, happiness, and good health to you and your loved ones. Happy Thingyan to you all!

The hard work we do together will always matter. We matter. You matter. As a Group of Companies, we continue to serve our mission at the highest level despite the current day challenges. The diligence of our collective and collaborative efforts shows in our achievements in surpassing multiple COVID-19 waves with resilience and team effort. I am extremely proud of each and every employee's perseverance through these trying times, performing to the best of their abilities as they collectively strive to normalize the abnormalities.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have supported COVID-19 relief efforts both internally and externally reaching out to those in need of medical supplies, and we will continue to do so. We have optimized our internal operations and made commendable progress in resuming operations in Mann Field including our CSR initiatives in many different communities we serve.

As we embark on the New Year ahead, we walk in step with our social responsibility as good corporate citizens that we are. Recently, we have resumed our Mobile Clinic Program in Mann Field, which had to be temporarily closed down due to the pandemic. There is nothing more fulfilling for me than seeing numerous patients from within our Mann Field communities, young and old, receiving free healthcare and health education services at our Clinic. What else can be a better way to start off the New Year right than making good merits while helping the underserved communities during a health crisis?

We have set new Corporate Goals for the upcoming year that are aligned with the technical, financial, and sustainability objectives of the company. The business outlook remains volatile but we will stay committed to delivering our services to each and every one of our stakeholders. Our long-term goal of providing reliable, sufficient and affordable energy for our communities has been our primary purpose, and it was never more relevant and important than now.

Last but not least, we have had to make some difficult but necessary changes in our operations for the sake of our long-term business continuity. However, they have in fact helped us make progress and emerge stronger. We will use our resources effectively as well as efficiently, and continue making meaningful strategic decisions while adhering to our vision and goals.

We are in this together, and together, we will grow stronger. I look forward to a brighter year ahead, a year that will be fuelled by perseverance, patience and as always, resilience. ■

**U Moe Myint**  
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer  
MPRL E&P Group of Companies



## Executive Spotlight

### Tee Keong Pneh, Chief Financial Officer

The past two years have been nothing short of challenging, as the world grappled with the spread of the COVID-19 virus in early 2020. Lives were lost, businesses were affected while governments across the world tried to contain the spread of the coronavirus with varied success. Unfortunately, one common phenomenon was that many small to medium-sized businesses could not survive and have had to shut permanently.



Myanmar was not spared from the pandemic either though the cases only started to rise in the second half of 2020. While countries like Myanmar which experienced the peak of the pandemic only months later compared to the other countries and could have learned and adopted appropriate economic policies or measures in supporting their economies; the realities are that each country has its own constraints, more likely than not a mere lack of funds to deploy. In most economies, the small, medium enterprises (SME) represent a significant majority of all businesses, some as high as 90% of all businesses, as in the case in Southeast Asia. SMEs are also the largest employer in these economies. While the definition of SMEs differs from one country to another even within the ASEAN region, for simplicity and relevance to this article, a SME typically generates revenues in the range of US\$ 10 to 20 million and employs 50 to 100 staff.



## More Stories

## Executive Spotlight

Feature 4 ➤

## Keeping up with Healthcare Delivery : Reviving Mobile Clinic

News 6 ➤

## Making the Case for Green Schoolyards in Mann Field Communities

Feature 8 ➤

## Delivering Civil Works in an Oil Field

Employee Spotlight 15 ➤

## Myint &amp; Associates Co., Ltd. (M&amp;A) Recognizes Two Best Employees

In the Group 18 ➤

## When Sunflowers Face Eastward

Photoessay 23 ➤

## Insight!

Insight! is owned by MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. The title Insight! in English, its associated logos and the contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of MPRL E&P Pte Ltd.

## Editor

Hnin Wynt Zaw  
hnin.w.zaw@mprlexp.com

## Assistant Editors

Thal Sandy Tun  
thal.s.tun@mprlexp.com

Moe Thu Zar Soe  
moe.tz.soe@mprlexp.com

Pyae Pyae Phyo  
pyae.p.phyo@mprlexp.com

## Layout Design

Win Htun Aung, Design Team  
win.t.aung@mprlexp.com

MPRL E&P Pte Ltd.  
CSR & Communications Department

623 Pyay Road, Kamayut Township  
11041 Yangon, Union of Myanmar  
Tel : (95-1) 230 7733  
Fax : (95-1) 230 7744  
Facebook : www.facebook.com/mprlexp  
Email : mprlstaff@mprlexp.com  
Website : www.mprlexp.com



## From the Desk of the Editor

Dear Readers,

Here we meet again and Happy Myanmar New Year to you all! How time flies and how I miss celebrating Thingyan Water Festival with friends, family, and loved ones, I am sure many of you share the same sentiments.

As we all know, Thingyan is the most celebrated holiday on the national calendar where everybody, from all backgrounds, young and old, rich and poor come together to usher in a new year. It is also a time for us to reflect and learn from the past year and plan for the future. We have experienced some unfortunate lows and the future may seem a little uncertain but we have each other to tackle all the difficulties together. As we ring in the new year, let us remember the good times and find true joy in little things in life. Most of all, let's take a minute to applaud ourselves for our achievements, big and small, personal and professional.

We have experienced a series of challenges and setbacks, witnessing unrest in our communities, and on the international stage. You may not truly realize it but these obstacles and adversities have strengthened us and tested our perseverance and resilience. I am proud to say that as a Group of Companies, we have worked

together to creatively solve issues as a team and turn impossibilities into possibilities.

In this issue, you will find many stories of our employees making a difference, a positive impact on MPRL E&P and its communities. The reopening of our Mobile Clinic Program in Mann Field after a long pause is an inspiring achievement for all of us. It is heartwarming to see many local patients pouring in to receive proper health care and most of all, the compassion shown for those in need. Personally, I would like to congratulate the CSR Team for their continuous efforts and initiatives in the workplace by doing everything they can to protect the community and the environment.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all our contributors for writing inspirational and informational articles, without which there wouldn't have been any newsletter.

May this year's "Thingyan Moe" shower you with joy and happiness and may this Myanmar New Year bring you good health, peace, and prosperity! ■

Cheers,

Hnin W. Zaw

## Events

## Annual Celebration of Kahtain Donation Ceremony from MPRL E&amp;P Group of Companies at Moe Goke Monastery





## Your Opinion : What is your Understanding of a Sustainable Business Model in an Organization?



**Yu Yu Htwe**

Executive Secretary  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer

A sustainable business model creates, delivers, and captures values that meet the requirements of all its stakeholders as well as the needs of its consumers without depleting the natural, economic, and social capital it relies on. Furthermore, for businesses to positively impact the environment and society they operate in, time, attention, and money need to be dedicated for this very purpose.

Sustainability matters now more than ever for many organizations. It improves the quality of our lives, protects our ecosystem, and preserves natural resources for future generations. Just as important are the trust and loyalty it builds throughout the organization's supply chain, be it with its suppliers, consumers, employees, or investors who are increasingly adopting the same strategic principle.

The advantages of adopting a sustainable business model are aplenty. Sustainable business practices can improve operational efficiencies. Studies have also shown that organizations that adopt sustainable business practices are more likely to attract new investors as well as retain employees, which in turn reduces hiring and training costs. With better use and conservation of resources, an organization can successfully sustain and thrive for many years to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic caught us off-guard and presented us with many unprecedented challenges. It has triggered a wave of issues from physical and mental to financial and relationships. Many of us have lost our loved ones and/or family members. The pandemic is not over yet and we expect many new variants which could further delay the return of normal life and behavior. Just like many businesses, we also had to find new ways to cope and stay afloat. Sustainable living has become a new way of lifestyle for most of us.

Being a responsible business, MPRL E&P Group of Companies ensured that our workforce had all the necessary tools and equipment to work remotely when work-from-home was first implemented. Many internal changes happened, for instance, we were given options for rotational office attendance and more online meetings were conducted to make sure business operations were still running smoothly. In terms of health safety at work, protective masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers were provided along with different avenues for our workforce to stay engaged through digital platforms. Moreover, I am so grateful to MPRL E&P Group of Companies for providing us with needed medical supplies like oxygen concentrators, cylinders, and necessary medication which were all procured in a timely manner during the outbreak. We all are fully vaccinated under the supervision of our company and we feel much better now to be out in public. I am very grateful for the way our business organization balances the need for business continuity and supports employees' diverse needs responsibly and sustainably during this pandemic era.

Stay safe and stay healthy everyone! ■



**Zaw Lin Aung**

Field Business Support Officer  
Field Operations Department

Nowadays, human society and business are interdependent, and making a profit alone is no longer enough for business owners. When making business decisions and creating corporate values, sustainable businesses also consider a wide array of social, economic, and environmental impacts of their operations. Nevertheless, it is evident that a sustainable business strategy is different for each organization but the end goal is the same - to have a minimal negative impact on the community, environment, or society as a whole.

To further elaborate, older business models put focus on just making money and generating revenues without really calculating business impacts on the surrounding. Only until recently, many organizations have begun implementing sustainable business practices that also generate "value for everyone involved without being a drain on the resources that help create it", quoted by Business.com. These "newer" businesses have more concrete objectives and more defined mission and vision statements that align with the organization's sustainable business strategy.

Sustainability at MPRL E&P is of great importance and our CSR & Communications Department has continuously served as a community leader in driving social and environmental change in the areas we operate, whether in education, healthcare, or the environment even when governmental action is absent. I am proud that our company implements sustainable business principles in four key areas: People, Health & Safety, Environment, and Community. We have received recognition for our achievements from both public and private organizations.

Lastly, many organizations have gone through sudden internal shifts due to the COVID-19 pandemic requiring businesses to come up with operational changes including employee safety. For all of us, it was a tough situation in the beginning, especially during the first few waves but we stayed resilient and strong as we collectively managed to control the spread by seriously following the health protocols and getting vaccinated. The pandemic also changed our way of thinking as individuals and our roles and responsibilities at home and work play an important way in having a life-long sustainable journey. We are now getting used to the new normal as we learn to adapt to new sustainable business practices at work. In this new world, it is important that we as "modern" organizations, must act as responsible business investors and work together with key stakeholders in integrating sustainability into our business strategies. New world, new mindset! ■

### Events

## Ninth Edition of Sar Yay Tan Mae Donation from Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. at Ma Soe Yein Shwe Kyin Tike Thit Monastery





From Cover Page

In this article, I found it worthwhile to examine how SMEs should consider paying more attention to what I think is the most important aspect of running a business – cash management, particularly during a crisis. I don’t profess to have all the solutions for all businesses and neither am I saying there is a one-size-fits-all solution or framework – because each business is different and the environment in which one operates in is markedly different as well, however, I hope this article paves the way for business owners and entrepreneurs alike to start thinking critically and identifying key risk factors in their businesses at the onset of a crisis.

The framework below is not specific to the O&G sector as I am cognizant that not all readers are from the same industry. As I have mentioned above, each industry is dynamic in its own way, and focusing solely on the O&G sector undermines the complexities of distinct characteristics other industries possess. My intent is to stretch your imagination and cherry-pick what is relevant and can be implemented in your own business if you haven’t already done so.

To Operate or Not?

The first order of business during a crisis or pandemic is whether it makes economic sense to continue to operate. The key consideration is whether the net revenue exceeds the variable cost. If you can, you should always continue to operate your business, ceteris paribus. The fixed cost is a different consideration as these are costs you would have to incur regardless of whether you continue to operate your business.

The gross profit (net revenue less variable cost) one generates may not be sustainable, as, during a crisis or pandemic, certain cost items would inevitably increase, be it in increased logistics cost to deliver your raw material, or simply the unexpected scarcity of your raw material which would then inflate the cost of procurement. If your business sells a service or product that is price elastic where you are providing a commoditized product or service, then your ability to pass on the increased cost by raising prices is limited. However, if your product or service is greatly differentiated and you operate in a monopolistic environment, then you can raise prices without seeing a reduction in demand. In this case, your business is likely to thrive in a crisis.

Another important factor is to re-examine how one accounts for its variable cost. In this instance, it is worth deviating from the accounting principles and looking at your cost items in a practical manner. Let us look at an illustration below the economics of producing a product:

Revenue	\$100
Cost of Goods Sold	\$110
Gross Profit/(Loss)	(\$10)

From the illustration above, logic should prevail and that the business is better off not operating. However, one should look into the details of the Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) and determine if the components that make up the COGS are all cash items. An example below illustrates a pertinent point:

Revenue	\$100
Cost of Goods Sold:	
Raw Material	50
Direct Labor Cost	30
Utilities	10
Machinery Depreciation	20
Total COGS (Excluding Depreciation)	90
Gross Profit (Excluding Depreciation)	10

Further breakdown suggests that there is a non-cash item in depreciation worth \$20. This is purely an accounting principle that measures the depreciation of your machinery to manufacture a product over a specific time. However, in a crisis, what matters is your cash profit. If the depreciation is excluded, you would have generated a cash profit of \$10 (gross basis) that you otherwise would have ignored had you relied purely on accounting profit.

Likewise, there are other semi-variable costs that are usually classified as the COGS and one needs to be able to quantify the actual variable cash expenses involved in order to determine the true cash economics of continuing to manufacture a product or provide a service.

Worth noting is that in a crisis, one cannot rely on historical trends to determine the future cost. As mentioned earlier, certain cost component is likely to increase during a crisis, hence, one needs to consider the present cost of acquiring your resources as opposed to relying on historical information to get the best estimates.

Fixed Cost

In the example above, we zoomed in on the variable cost, however, a significant portion of your cost could likely be fixed in nature. They are termed as ‘fixed’ regardless of whether one’s business operates or not. Hence, fixed cost is never a consideration when determining whether a business should continue to operate.

The next decision-making process is to examine your business holistically and determine the actual net cash profit or loss (considering only cash expenses as illustrated above) if one were to continue operating. Examples of your fixed cost are rental, operating leases, head office personnel salaries, bank loan obligations, etc. If you determine that you will still suffer a net cash loss by continuing to operate, then you need to take a critical look at your fixed cost structure.

The difficulty in managing a business in a crisis is the uncertainty of its duration. Hence, on a conservative note, one has to plan for the crisis to persist longer than what logic indicates. Similar to how we analyze our variable costs, a similar discipline is needed to comb through one’s fixed costs and determine how best to manage them. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of planning in advance and keeping tabs on the major fixed cost as the ability of the business to survive hinges on its ability to pay its ongoing cost.

(I) Bank Loans

One common obligation that most businesses have is bank loans. While a small fraction of businesses

has no debt, others either have too much or too little debt. The ideal debt capital structure depends on the cash-generating capability of each business and is a topic for another day. A bank loan is a major consideration as there are loan agreements governing the obligation of the borrower. In almost all loan agreements, collaterals are a major consideration for the banks and the borrower’s failure to meet debt obligations would invite unnecessary repercussions that could affect the company’s ability to operate. As you would have seen in most countries around the world, banks have placed a moratorium on principal repayments during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, while most businesses have also taken the initiative to restructure their loans, for instance, deferring or re-negotiating loan tenures and interest rates, one you should definitely explore.

Rental is another key consideration. Most businesses operate on lands or buildings that are owned by external parties. The risk of eviction is real and the cost of relocating your business can be substantial, though one can argue that a landlord is unlikely to find a replacement tenant during a crisis and would, therefore, agree to defer rental collection. In most negotiations, the key is to find a win-win solution for both parties. There are possible outcomes to consider:

- A) Pay a small portion now, defer the rest (as a sweetener, with an interest to the landlord)
- B) Downsize your operations and give up the excess space you no longer require, especially if there are indications to suggest you are heading towards a long crisis. However, you may have to find another tenant to take up the excess space, which I don’t think will be a problem as there will be other companies looking for a smaller footprint to relocate to.
- C) Turn a crisis into an advantage for those with large enough cash holdings – prepay rental in advance in exchange for a substantial discount, especially if there are indications that the crisis is short-term in nature, or if you know the landlord is in need of cash!

(II) Staff Cost

There are two types of labor costs, direct and indirect. If a business decides to discontinue operations, the direct labor cost will be eliminated as they are primarily staff related to the actual production activities.

The decision on indirect labor, however, is not as straightforward. There are numerous examples to emulate. Companies across the world have moved to work from home arrangements, while others have either furloughed or laid off their staff permanently. Unfortunately, there is no exact formula on which you can rely. There are other intangible considerations such as reputational risks, business interruptions, cost of re-hiring and re-training, and simply the availability of these staff when times are better. These considerations also apply to your direct labor.

There are several options to choose from in managing your indirect labor:

- a) Salary reduction across the board and/or a combination of salary deferment.
- b) Rotational arrangement to reduce staff headcount at any given time. One compromise I feel is a win-win is to structure the salary payment based on the hourly wage rate,



but at a higher rate per hour than what they were being paid previously. Not only will this reduce the aggregate monthly salaries, as a staff is working less, but it also sends a 'feel good' message to the staff that they are being compensated at a higher rate for the hours they work. This arrangement gives the staff flexibility if they choose to, to find other part-time supplementary jobs for the days they are not working.

- c) Permanent reduction of staff headcount. This is usually the last resort as there are negative implications such as reputational risks, severance cost to bear which is not ideal at a time of cash conservation mode, cost to re-hire and train at a later time. On a positive note, this provides an avenue for the companies to re-look and right-size their staff headcount vis-à-vis each of their productivity. In most cases, companies tend to over-hire when the business environment is positive without emphasizing staff productivity. In times of crisis and where jobs are scarce, the ability of employees to wear several hats should not be overlooked.

Whatever your decision may be, worth looking at whether your actions comply with the labor law in your jurisdiction.

### Balance Sheet

As a recap, I have touched upon the decision-making process on whether to continue to operate during a crisis for the short-to-medium term and how one can right-size its fixed cost to preserve cash.

However, the analysis will not be complete without looking at your Balance Sheet, mainly your receivables, payables, and fixed assets.

### (I) Cash Conversion

As one undertakes to preserve cash in a crisis, one needs to look at his cash conversion cycle. This essentially measures how fast one can convert an inventory into sales as well as the time is taken to collect the sales proceeds.

Cash Conversion Cycle = Days Inventory Outstanding (DIO) + Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) – Days Payables Outstanding (DPO).

If DIO = 100 days, DSO=60 days, DPO = 0 days, it means that from the time one has to pay for raw material/inventory, the business will then need to wait 160 days before the inventory can be sold and cash collected from the customer and meanwhile, you would have to pay for the inventory upon arrival. This is important as this information is not captured in the Profit & Loss Statement. In the 160 days, you are waiting to collect your sales proceeds, you have other costs (both variable and fixed) that you need to pay. Hence, you need to determine if the business has sufficient incoming proceeds from previous sales to pay for your expenses that are due. Matching cash in-flow and out-flow are important during times of uncertainty.

In normal times, financial institutions provide Letters of Credit to support businesses that rely on imported material, however, these options may be limited during a crisis. It is critical to be able to find short-term liquidity to keep its sales uninterrupted.

The one element in the cash conversion cycle is the payables. If one can stretch or delay the payables, who are often one's suppliers, landlords, or utility providers, the cash conversion cycle reduces and cash will be made available sooner for more important payments.

Similar to the tactics I have highlighted in negotiating rental payments, one can adopt a similar strategy with your suppliers, such as extending payment terms, requesting a discount if one prepaids or pays on time. This essentially increases your profit margins which in turn, translates into higher cash, *ceteris paribus*.

The second element is the inventory holding period. In a crisis mode, one should focus on keeping the inventory holding period as short as possible, or unless one can increase DPO beyond DIO. Sitting on high inventory ties up cash that could have been used for other purposes. However, as I mentioned earlier, this consideration doesn't apply to all companies. In a crisis mode, inventory may not be abundantly available and one may need to keep a certain safety inventory level to overcome any shortage of or interruption in availability. As witnessed in the pandemic, supply chains were greatly disrupted, be it due to a shortage of staff or the inability of certain businesses along the supply chain to function normally. One exception to this is the generally long lead time in acquiring inventories, which may be a reflection of the business model and is not easy to adjust, such as high value or specialized products. In this situation, one needs to determine the ideal balance of inventory holding without necessarily tying up cash. More importantly is to re-look at diversifying suppliers beyond the domestic front, even if it comes at the expense of higher procurement cost, foreign exchange risks in exchange for certainty in inventory availability.

### (II) Fixed Assets

Most businesses naturally begin to acquire fixed assets during good economic times. These assets could be critical to the business such as fleets of trucks for transportation, land, and building to house operations, or in another extreme, properties that are unrelated to one's business. In times of crisis, one needs to assess a sale and leaseback option, which will avail more cash from the sale proceeds, at the expense of leasing them back at a higher cost. While it is understandable that no one wants to run a business at a higher operating cost, the silver lining is that the business will have tax savings, attributable to the lower profit. One needs to then ascertain if the cash proceeds from the sale are substantial enough to support its survival long enough to navigate through the crisis. Fixed assets that are not directly related to the business should be disposed of as a priority through this is predicated on the availability of buyers.

In addition, businesses that require constant re-investment or capital expenditure will need to take a backseat, unless the return from investment can be relatively quick, in weeks and not months.

### Exploring other Sources of Funding

Grants – Certain countries have made available grants to support businesses. However, in the absence of any grants, it should not be a deterrent to speak to the appropriate authorities who may be able to avail of financial assistance. This may require a bigger voice, for instance, the chamber of commerce, the association representing your business to put forth a proposal. If grants are not possible, consider exploring low-interest loans from other government agencies.

Investment groups – A viable business should always be of interest to investors regardless of the economic environment. There are private investment groups (be it mezzanine or private equity funds) with readily available capital to invest so long as you can demonstrate good business fundamentals. One has to be prepared to accept a lower valuation than you normally would receive, during a crisis.

Merger/Partial sale – A less talked about option is a potential merger with or partial sale to a larger, friendly competitor. A merger makes sense as it builds economies of scale overnight. By combining two businesses, one can tap into new markets that one wouldn't have been able to penetrate on its own; leading to cost savings as one can now lower its procurement cost because of bulk purchase discounts; as well as by eliminating cost redundancies. More importantly, this option gives one a lifeline!

### Other Non-funding Options

(I) Vertical Integration - Another option if one abhors the idea of tying up with another competitor is to look at the whole supply chain and identify which supplier you can merge with, acquire or sell that will guarantee you continued availability of raw material at a low price; or if you are a supplier, which customer you can merge with that guarantees you a market for your products and or services. As crises are bound to disrupt the supply chain, this is one way to secure a continuous flow of goods from the manufacturer to the end-user. This alternative does not require cash to consummate as one can consider a transaction involving a share swap.

(II) Strategic alliances or joint ventures - It has been well documented that mergers or acquisitions (M&A) on a large scale rarely meet the intended return on investments, due in part to complications in execution and deviation from the original shared vision. M&As also take time to consummate, however, an easier, reversible, and less costly approach is through a strategic alliance or joint venture. These options create a partnership through which two companies can cooperate and benefit alongside each other. Monetary considerations can be introduced, if so choose, but the underlying rationale is to bring mutual benefits to both parties, where neither party can generate on a standalone basis.

### Insurance

Another protection for any crisis is an insurance policy that covers the loss of business income. For the most part, existing insurance policies may not include COVID-19 related losses, but I suspect that more of such insurance coverage may be created. For those who are fortunate to have this coverage, your loss of income can be partially recovered. On the other hand, if your business does not have any coverage, do consider one for the future. A business insurance policy does not only protect you from a potential loss of income during a crisis, it can also protect you from your customers filing for liquidated damages, in the event a crisis prohibits you from delivering your products or rendering your services to them.

### Business Model

Every crisis opens up new opportunities. One needs to be prepared for a prolonged crisis. These challenging times should compel one to re-examine the business model and whether a pivot is required. The pandemic has affected many service businesses which require personal interaction such as education, retail, and entertainment and there is no escaping the adoption of technology one way or another as a way of doing business. Technology shouldn't be limited to enhancing sales, it should also be utilized to reduce one's cost structure.

In summary, a competent and successful entrepreneur needs to have a bird's eye view on macro developments but in addition, understand how macro events and at worse, crises can and will affect the most critical aspects of his/her business, and to have progressive (rather than reactionary) countermeasures to deal with them. I hope this article has given you some ideas that you can add to your arsenal of solutions. ■



# Keeping up with Healthcare Delivery: Reviving Mobile Clinic

Thal Sandy Tun

During the month of February 2022, MPRL E&P revived its Mobile Clinic Program in Mann Field after witnessing many hardships in the community as a result of the pandemic. The up and running Mobile Clinic is now providing primary healthcare services and health education services for those who had been stripped of access to proper healthcare amid the pandemic and socio-economic crisis due to the rise in general living expenditures and/or being stuck at home as a result of coronavirus closures.

The revived Mobile Clinic comes equipped with a locally recruited medical doctor, health assistant, volunteers, a socially distanced waiting area for patients, glass dividers with small hand openings for patient registration and preliminary physical screening as well as plastic partitions between the entrance and exit. It rotationally runs in four villages and each regular clinic session lasts for three hours on average. The services are free of charge for seniors, women, and children. The Mobile Clinic, in addition to supporting the medically underserved as intended originally, can assist in keeping an eye on at-risk groups in light of the coronavirus pandemic in its third year.



MPRL E&P temporarily suspended the Mobile Clinic Program for twenty-two consecutive months for safety concerns for both staff and patients. It has been shut down since 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic.

The Mobile Clinic Program was first introduced in September 2018 to meet the needs of the medically underserved civilians consisting primarily of women, children and the elderly in Mann Field. The CSR and Communications Department, which leads the initiative, conducts regular assessments with patients and volunteers to ensure satisfaction and effectiveness of the services. The most recent assessment revealed the former patients' strong desire to have the Mobile Clinic reopened in line with the pandemic prevention measures since they are facing challenges in seeking proper healthcare services. ■





## UN Global Compact Introduces Early Adopter Program for New CoP Policy

Thal Sandy Tun

On the cusp of officially rolling out a new Communication on Progress or CoP policy in 2023, the UN Global Compact organized webinars during January 2022 to offer its participants the opportunity to submit their CoP due in 2022 as early adopters of the new CoP policy on a voluntary basis.

The UN Global Compact, a global corporate sustainability initiative initiated by the UN Secretary-General, designates the Ten Principles which define a company's value system and approach to doing business. Since 2004, the Communication on Progress or CoP serves as a key mechanism enabling participating companies in the UN Global Compact to publicly disclose their efforts to incorporate the Ten Principles into their day-to-day operations; it functions as the main accountability platform of the UN Global Compact, allowing business actors to prove their commitment to the Ten Principles through regular submissions.

Currently, approximately 110 Myanmar companies and organizations are members of the UN Global Compact and submit their CoP routinely. Globally, more than 14,000 organizations from over 160 countries have joined the UN Global Compact in their commitment to making the world a better place for everyone.

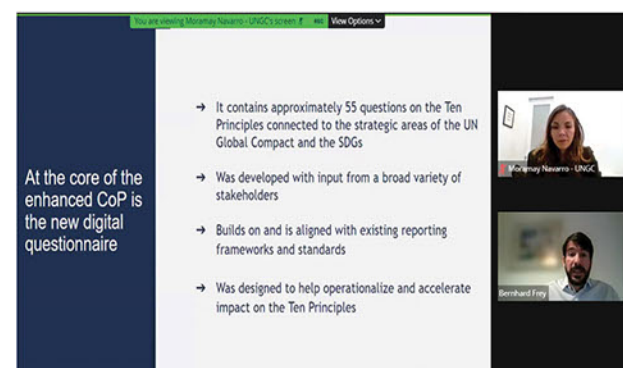
MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department, which is tasked with preparing and submitting a CoP annually to the UN Global Compact since its membership in early 2016, observed the webinar



on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The one-hour event provided detailed information about the Early Adopter Program and key features of the new CoP as well as fielding the questions from the audience.

Against the backdrop of the evolving corporate sustainability reporting landscape globally over the last ten years, a review on the current elements of CoP finds that it does not reflect this evolving landscape; it seems bereft of full integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and nor does it account for measuring progress year on year.

These findings translate into a new CoP policy with two key features — an annual statement by the Chief Executive Officer and a standardized mandatory questionnaire structured around five topics, governance, human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption. In addition, through an enhanced digital interface, the UN Global Compact will set a universal submission period of CoP on an



annual basis, between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> May of a calendar year, for all participating companies, and establish an open sustainability database, which intends to fulfill stakeholder demands for easily accessible, comparable and relevant sustainability figures.

On the whole, a company that has already used established global sustainability reporting standards such as Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to identify their material topics and formulate a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for disclosure should have no issue in answering the questionnaire and providing relevant data when the new CoP policy becomes effective as of 2023. In this regard, the UN Global Compact's new CoP policy is a welcomed step aiming to improve the platform in essence and form and create value for its participants through its further alignment to the sustainability reporting cycle and approach taken by scores of companies around the world while easing complex rules around membership status and submission of the CoP. ■

## MPRL E&P Introduces Doh Mann Myay Newsletter

Pyae Pyae Phyoe

On the journey of business sustainability, it is really important to communicate the performances on sustainable development transparently and effectively. MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department published Doh Mann Myay Newsletter as a vital communications tool to present the internal and external stakeholders about the company's social investment activities and CSR success stories in Mann Field and surrounding communities.

Before publishing Doh Mann Myay Newsletter, the CSR & Communications Department informed the updates of CSR activities and efforts in Mann Field Communities via monthly CSR Bulletins from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. In this Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022, we improved the monthly bulletin by changing it into a more presentable and informative newsletter. The publication is aimed to provide a platform for the primary stakeholders to understand and recognize the company's social management activities and systemic implementation of CSR activities in Mann Field Communities.

Doh Mann Myay, the localized newsletter, showcases the quarterly updated information of social investment initiatives: Community Livelihoods Development, Community Infrastructure Development, Community Capacity Building, Stakeholder Engagement, Community Healthcare, Educational Partnership, Community-led Waste Management,



Operational Grievance Mechanism, Communicating CSR and Corporate Philanthropy. The newsletter is made available in both print and digital editions and distributed to the primary stakeholders including Magway Regional Government, Minbu District Government Office, Township Administration Office, Village Administration Office, Village Development Committee, community libraries, and school libraries.

The CSR practices must be well communicated to the stakeholders and the communities because not



only does information nurtures corporate image and reputation, but it also improves relationships with the stakeholders which results in better communities. According to the CSR Field Staff's reports, the feedback from the community readers has been positive; they describe how the newsletter is informative and easily accessible and that they enjoy finding out about the company's social investment efforts through the publication.

Doh Mann Myay Newsletter is only nine months old with fourth issue on its way. We are excited about our updated newsletter because it creates a strong internal line of communication between Mann Field Communities and MPRL E&P. We look forward to many more publications in the near future! ■





# Making the Case for Green Schoolyards in Mann Field Communities

Wit Hmone Tin Latt

school grounds, whether in smaller communities or public institutions. It's clear to me that we need to put more effort into developing this vision. To make this happen, support is needed from like-minded organizations, local and public institutions, and community leaders. A good example would be to incorporate outdoor teaching in schools and use the green spaces as a way to rejuvenate students' minds. Who doesn't love fresh air and natural light?

As an innovative community leader, MPRL E&P strives to provide any support to the communities where we work. In Mann Field, our CSR Team has begun the initiative of having an outdoor learning program to promote a healthy lifestyle and environmental awareness. We are driven and dedicated by this vision for outdoor learning because we believe it plays an important role in the overall development of children. They need outdoor play and the touch of nature, but we are not giving them this opportunity and not to mention, they learn faster through experience and social play instead of sitting at the desk reading a textbook. In Mann Field, we conduct community outdoor learning programs in "schoolyards" that include flower gardens, playground equipment with recycled materials, nature play areas, raised bed vegetable gardens, trees, and more. We feel that we are also contributing to environmental sustainability.

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing distance between human societies and nature due to technological advances, modern urbanization, and infrastructure, and yet these trends have had negative impacts on ecosystems and society's relationship to nature. Most of us casually talk about this large concern regarding the effects of economic demand and population growth on our community and the environment around us. One of the ways to tackle this ongoing problem is by fostering outdoor learning initiatives at schools, also known as the "Green Schoolyard Movement" which is gaining momentum around the globe. This popularity is the result of many benefits that these "new" schoolyards bring out, from developing a sense of curiosity, adventure, and healthy lifestyle among the children and youth of all ages, while improving the local ecosystems and environmental sustainability.

Many studies have shown that contact with nature can enhance creativity, bolster positive mood, lower stress, improve mental acuity, well-being, and productivity. It also cultivates social connectedness and promotes physical activity. Further, not only are outdoor play yards an important part of children's enjoyment of childhood and mental growth, but they also build healthy communities and vibrant school environments. One recent study shows a correlation between improved cognitive development in children with outdoor green spaces, particularly with greenness at schools.

Green schoolyards are getting increasingly popular around the world and it is never too late to invest in



Our CSR Team and community leaders at Mann Field will be taking part in the global Outdoor Classroom Day movement to celebrate the Outdoor Classroom Day on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022. This is a day where teachers are encouraged to take their classes outside – to teach the students the developing skills for life by showing them a better understanding of the environment while enhancing engagement through learning and fostering physical and mental health.



Furthermore, in Mann Field, to help children reach their full learning potential, we will be offering regular outdoor learning opportunities. Every week, teachers will teach one lesson outdoors, in a green space. The community leaders and teachers will focus on environmental awareness building and discuss ways to create and sustain green spaces at schools and in the community. After all, nature offers a vibrant playground of possibilities with all the resources and facilities needed. How fun is it to get your hair messy and have dirt stains all over your clothes? And who will say no to academics with fun activities! ■



# Pursuing Meaningful Corporate Goals amid the Pandemic

Myo Paing



Although humans are one of the most intelligent species on earth, we are relying more on collective knowledge than on the individual to achieve most of the things we take for granted. It is not wrong to say that most of us do not know how a computer works or how this very application like Microsoft Word operates. Little do we realize the sweat and blood of many software engineers and computer scientists who spend a very long time coming up with innovations to make our lives easier. And it is evident that any innovation is a group effort of different individuals from various teams who work together towards a common goal.

In a business environment, it is common to set short, medium, and long-term goals and track the progress, achievements, and failures with stringent frameworks. At MPRL E&P, the short-term corporate goals for the fiscal year are set by the executive leadership, in line with its long-term vision, considering the current industry trends and internal business situations. Goal-setting exercises usually kick off with corporate goals being cascaded into the departmental levels and then to the individual levels. Departments are encouraged to discuss intensely with their respective teams and to develop departmental goals while promoting individual ownership. The individual and/or departmental goals might not necessarily reflect the corporate goals, for instance, Department A would want to improve office efficiency but Department B would rather prioritize ways to earn more revenues for the organization. However, the cumulative efforts of all participants must go in the same direction where the organization as a whole would like to be at the end of the fiscal year. These departmental goals are, thus, finalized through interactive discussions among the heads of departments (HoDs) where feedback and suggestions of the peers are shared to ensure the efficacy and effectiveness of high-level corporate goals for the fiscal year.

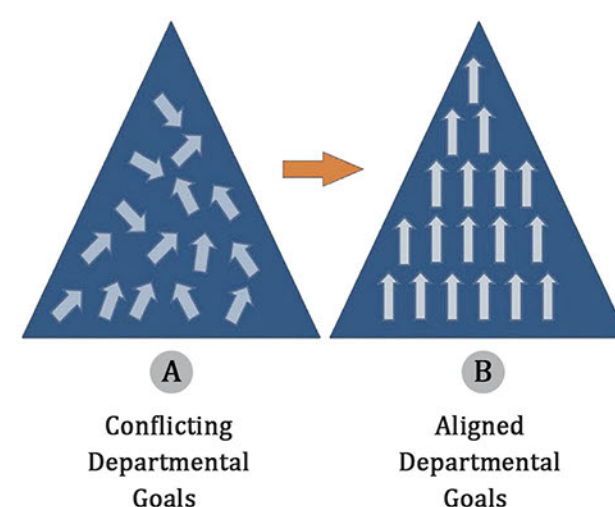
Upon approval of the executive leadership on these departmental goals, the monitoring and evaluation activities begin with weekly and quarterly progress updates to take the pulse. Sometimes, we meet and exceed the targets but there are times when the time runs out before we reach the goals, especially during this pandemic. Bi-annual customary look-back sessions with HoDs are also organized to reflect the achievements and challenges and to

promote positive collaboration and joint problem-solving between departments. During these workshops, HoDs are actively seeking and responding constructively to the issues and challenges to transform lessons learned into robust work plans for upcoming periods.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has forced companies to run and manage their enterprises in newfound ways where business owners and employees are learning to navigate the new normal. Prioritization has become more important during this unstable time as businesses tend to shift their focus towards long-term business continuity over short-term targets. Further, many new operational changes are now being adapted. At MPRL E&P, virtual meetings and remote working arrangements are now in practice, which at times require more coordination and cooperation. However, to get things done, we collectively have to work together to surpass any challenges and to ensure business continuity.

Our goal-setting exercises are vital. They are conducted to make sure every employee understands exactly how their day-to-day performance affects the overall organizational goals and business strategy. Moreover, our monitoring and evaluating processes are executed in a way to ensure every staff member stays engaged and on track in pursuing these goals. With the prevailing pandemic situations, these goal-setting and monitoring processes are no exception, we continue to conduct these sessions via video-conferencing tools to keep up with our efforts and focus on pursuing our goals.

During this period of unprecedented times, it is more important than ever for any business to operate efficiently and effectively to continue with its operations and to stick to our corporate mission



and vision. In pursuing performance excellence and continuous improvement, we need to strategically ensure each individual is fully engaged and tirelessly contributing above and beyond the call of duty throughout the journey towards our common destination. In doing so, all their efforts must also be aligned when translating goals into actions; they are tracked and measured to assure that the end results meet the set goals and objectives. I am proud to say that our goal-setting and monitoring processes are serving their purposes in reaching our corporate goals while adapting to the new normal business environment. ■

“In pursuing performance excellence and continuous improvement, we need to strategically ensure each individual is fully engaged and tirelessly contributing above and beyond the call of duty throughout the journey towards our common destination.”





## Conducting First Biannual CSR Progress Update and Review Meeting with Key Stakeholders

Pyae Pyae Phyoe



As more sustainability programs are developed, more involvement with key stakeholders becomes evident. Whether implementing a small-scale initiative or a more comprehensive program across the organization, engaging different groups to help identify opportunities and develop solutions is vital to our long-term corporate goals.

One of the most efficient ways to engage with stakeholders is by having a two-way communication channel. MPRL E&P works closely with the stakeholders to understand their views and concerns on various issues. We also report and disclose how we came up with the resolution and how we went about working as a team to acknowledge and tackle their concerns and suggestions.



Most importantly, we ensure to integrate feedback where appropriate because we like to work together with our key stakeholders towards implementing a fruitful meeting or initiative.

Before the end of 2021, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department conducted CSR Progress Update and Review Meeting with the host communities around Mann Field.

The first Biannual CSR Progress Update and Review Meeting between MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department and Mann Field Communities was organized at Auk Kyaung Village on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and the meeting received total attendees

of 34 community members including Village Administrators, Village Development Committees, and Community Volunteers from 14 Mann Field Communities.

In the meeting, the representatives from the CSR & Communications Department presented and discussed the performance progress of CSR initiatives that were implemented during the first biannual period (April to September) of the Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022.

MPRL E&P always recognizes the importance of successful stakeholder engagement because we believe in creating impactful change that further reinforces sustainability programs and organizational capabilities. ■



## Enhancing Flow of Agricultural Knowledge among Mann Field Communities

Pyae Pyae Phyoe



MPRL E&P plays an integral part in community development initiatives by implementing a sustainable livelihoods approach. It has been our company's longstanding goal to foster positive community development initiatives in the areas where we operate.

Most locals in Mann Field, an oil field located approximately 580 kilometers north of Yangon, make their living from farming. These agricultural workers make up a substantial portion of the local population and MPRL E&P recognizes their hard work, motivation, and hunger for improving their standard of living through limited resources and knowledge. One important way of fulfilling the needs of these farmers is through promoting sustainable agricultural knowledge and increasing access to resources.

Throughout the third quarter of the Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications

Department conducted knowledge sharing sessions and reflection workshops to help further agricultural knowledge among the local farmers. Those initiatives were jointly accomplished by MPRL E&P and the Department of Agriculture (DoA - Minbu) in November 2021.

With the collaboration of the DoA (Minbu), we organized four knowledge sharing sessions on good agricultural practices of sunflower and chickpea cultivation. The two-day sessions at Mann Kyoe and Auk Kyaung Villages received a total of 98 attendees and shared knowledge of good agricultural practices, pest control, soil preparation, and harvesting methods while cultivating sunflower and chickpea. These effective knowledge sharing sessions were delivered by the Field Extension Staff from the DoA (Minbu) and the necessary preparation was arranged by our CSR Field Staff making sure MoH's health guidelines were being followed.



The strategic partnership between MPRL E&P and the DoA (Minbu) was a success and to further our efforts, we conducted a reflection workshop on GAP sesame cultivation at a monastery in Lay Eain Tan Village on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The workshop reflected on the GAP sesame cultivation that was implemented at the beginning of the Fiscal Year. A total of 16 farmers took part in the workshop by reviewing their strengths and weaknesses based on cultivation and production results and discussing the way-forward plans. The group discussion was wrapped up with the requests to provide seed moisture meter tools and pesticide training for future implementation.

Helping small farmers in developing countries needs more global attention since a huge portion of the economy is made up of agricultural workers. MPRL E&P is pleased to play a key role in combating local poverty through sustainable initiatives in the communities where we serve. ■





## Achieving Community Infrastructure Development Initiatives for FY 2021 – 2022

Pyae Pyae Phyo

MPRL E&P's holistic approach to sustainable development lies at the heart of the CSR & Communications Department's community development program which aims to raise the living standards of Mann Field Communities through strategic investments in infrastructure. This development program plays an instrumental role in creating better lifestyles for the low-income communities with the most pressing needs because it improves the living conditions of communities by creating a sustainable, inclusive, and self-sufficient environment.

Our community investment initiatives have been going strong and steady for the past eight years and only recently, these projects have been put under the resilience budget plan during the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, after recovering from this hiatus and passing several Coronavirus waves with resilience and diligence, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department began carrying out the planned initiatives. During this Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022, we successfully completed both school and village infrastructure development initiatives:

- i. Provision of 16 sets of desks and benches for Basic Education High School in Mei Bayt Kone Village on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021
- ii. Construction of school gate and sliding door for Basic Education Middle School in Mann Kyoe Village on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021
- iii. Provision of two cabinets (6 x 3 ft), two glass cupboards (4 x 4 ft), and two bookshelves (4 x 3 ft) for Basic Education Middle School in Kyar Kan Village on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021



**Fig: Kyar Kan School Renovation and Labroom Furniture Provision to Mei Bayt Kone School**

- iv. Construction of concrete road (50 x 10 ft) and drainage (15 x 8 ft) for Nan U Village on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021
- v. Provision of four chairs, four tables (8 x 4 ft), two tables (4 x 2 ft), two shelves (6 x 3 ft), two cabinets (6 x 3 ft), eight benches (1 x 1.5 ft) and sixteen benches (4 x 1 ft) for laboratory rooms at Basic Education High School in Mei Bayt Kone Village on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021
- vi. Renovation of the building (50 x 20 ft) for Basic Education Middle School in Kyar Kan on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- vii. Provision of library room ceiling and renovation of the main building corridor and floor for Basic Education Middle School in Lay Eain Tan Village on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022

- viii. Construction of school gate for Basic Education Primary School in Chin Taung Village on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- ix. Provision of two cabinets (6 x 3 ft), one book shelf (3 x 4 ft) and two bag shelves (4 x 7 ft) for KG Classroom at Basic Education Middle School in Auk Kyaung Village on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

These infrastructure and community development projects have to go through the initial phases of site assessments and surveys and they are conducted with the help and support from Mann Field's Special Project Team. The needs assessment is discussed by all parties before any project development commences thus serving as the basis for determining which project should be prioritized. ■



**Fig: Lay Eain Tan School Renovation**



**Fig: Nan U Village Road Construction**

## Providing Hands-on Trainings of Making Organic Fertilizers and Pesticides for Sustainable Farming Practices

Pyae Pyae Phyo



As the global population is growing significantly, so is the global demand for food. Feeding a growing population, especially in developing countries is different; it has to be more creative, sustainable, and holistic due to limited resources and capabilities. Most local farmers and community leaders work together with private and public sectors to tackle this growing demand by finding ways to improve local-based food production methods including crop nutrition and pest control management.

MPRL E&P, as a responsible investor in Mann Field, encourages local communities to practice sustainable farming – a system that is an alternative to industrial agriculture. It is important because it provides a sustainable solution to the problems caused by the way most of our food is grown today, in terms of social, economic, and environmental impacts.

With the aim of developing sustainable agricultural practices in Mann Field Communities, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department came up with hands-on trainings on how to make organic, easy-to-use fertilizer and pesticide.

Under the agricultural development initiatives, the CSR & Communications Department held three sessions of practical training on making Fish Amino Acid and two sessions on making natural pesticide. Both sessions were interesting because they provided useful information with tips and tricks.

Fish Amino Acid is a liquid made from either small-sized fish or fish waste and is a great fertilizer for soil, plants, and microorganisms because it



contains an abundant amount of nutrients and various types of amino acid. Rich in nitrogen, Fish Amino Acid helps enhance the growth of crops during the vegetative period.

In regards to making natural pesticide, easily-accessible products like ginger, chili, tobacco, water, alcohol, and EM liquid are used and they are also locally available, and affordable for horticulture farmers.

As of 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Fish Amino Acid trainings were conducted at Mann Kyoe, Kywe Cha, and Let Pan Ta Pin Villages with a total of 47 attendees. Natural pesticide trainings were organized at Mann Kyoe and Auk Kyaung Villages with a total of 44 attendees. Those sessions were practically demonstrated by in-house trainer U Win Ko, Community Liaison from MPRL E&P's CSR Field Team.

With the supervision of the CSR Field Team, Horticultural Farmer Committee is currently selling liquid bottles of natural fertilizer and pesticide. These products are available for purchase at MMK 2,000 per liter bottle.

The end-user farmers are so grateful for the new skills, knowledge, and hands-on experience they received through these trainings and we have been receiving nothing but positive feedback about these organic products. ■





### A Brief Trip Down Memory Lane (Thingyan Festival)

Unforgettable memories are special moments that tell our story. Here, you will see a collection of photos from our Myanmar New Year Thingyan Water Festival throughout the years. Unique and fun moments like these are refreshing, they travel through our minds and transport us into memorable experiences of a lifetime. Observed in mid-April, MPRL E&P Group of Companies holds many merit-making activities including praying at pagodas, bathing rituals for Lord Buddha and donating food to the monks. We would also set up stages on Inya Road and Pyay Road where all employees, friends, and families of MPRL E&P are invited to splash water on others while Thingyan traditional food and drinks are served. As we wash away all the bad luck of the previous year, hope this "Ngwe Oo" or start of Summer brings you a brighter future with good luck, health, and happiness! Happy Thingyan to you all ! ■



All Roads Start Here



**NEVER STOP EXPLORING!**



# It's always Darkest before the Dawn

**Thal Sandy Tun**

*It was a year as tough as tough can be. Many of us experience it in our own ways, learning valuable lessons of overcoming a difficult period and thriving in a variety of manners.*

Daw Mya Thandar Aung, a Joint Ventures (JV) Business Assistant working in MPRL E&P's Exploration and Joint Ventures Department starting from October 2017, talks about the way the pandemic and the country's 2021 new realities affected her life and career, and how she perseveres with determination and hope.

Born and raised in Yangon, Mya Thandar Aung grew up with two siblings in a household cared for by her father, a retired high school principal, and her mother, an excellent homemaker. She matriculated in 2007 and earned a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from West Yangon University in 2011.

Afterward, Mya Thandar Aung started her career as an Administrative Assistant at MPRL E&P in 2014 before she became an MBA candidate. Finding not having enough time and energy required to complete her MBA thesis while trying her best to fulfill her responsibilities in the Executive Management Office, after being transferred to the Executive Management Office in 2016, she took a break from her job in 2017.

"At that moment I decided to leave my job for a while as I found it difficult to balance my MBA studies and responsibilities at work," she recalls. Fair enough, she successfully graduated from Malaysia's HELP University in April 2017 with an MBA degree, during which she learned a great deal about a broad spectrum of business-related subjects while gaining insights about Malaysian businesses through lectures, group discussions, and assignments.

Then she made a comeback to MPRL E&P as a JV Business Assistant, this time in the Exploration and Joint Ventures Department, tasked with assessing the petroleum potentials of the company's assets and maximizing business benefits from exploring and developing joint assets.

Mya Thandar Aung says, "I first joined a different business organization but the job was not my type and I was a misfit with the organization's work culture. So I kept looking and found a second job opportunity with MPRL E&P. I decided to apply for the JV Business Assistant position although I was a little bit worried about working in a different department. I thought it was a challenge worth trying."

Rightfully, on top of her career background in administration and business support, she makes every effort to make sense of the terms and conditions in Joint Operating Agreements (JOAs) and petroleum contracts like Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), with the support of her supervisor, manager, and legal consultants. She even pursued a diploma in Business Law for a better understanding of the ABCs of business agreements and contracts practiced in Myanmar.

Not too soon she finds the industry itself interesting and full of opportunities to learn and grow in terms of careers. "The majority of investments in



**Mya Thandar Aung**  
JV Business Assistant

the country's oil and gas industry are associated with foreign investors, but MPRL E&P, unlike other domestic energy companies, focuses on the upstream segment of the industry. By working in the Exploration and Joint Ventures Department, I learn a lot about the industry for my career development," Mya Thandar Aung explains.

She adds that there are formal training opportunities and mentorship programs to help with employees' career development, and senior expatriates at the company will patiently and elaborately explain things whenever curious junior Myanmar employees ask questions.

Further, Mya Thandar Aung sees the company trains its employees to hold a strict standard of behavior and a specific format system such as business writing. The JV Business Assistant also notes, "MPRL E&P as a Myanmar-led company, practices Myanmar culture, which includes wearing a traditional style uniform, paying respect to elders, and supporting each other."

She believes that the company perks such as transport, uniforms, and free lunches should not be overlooked, they are in fact great retention magnets: "It was a nightmare to think about commuting to work by using public transport these days because of the pandemic. Thanks to the company's transport arrangement, we could avoid all the risks."

Since leaving her science degree behind, Mya Thandar Aung took one business course after another, starting with a certificate course in Advanced Business Studies from the Yangon Institute of Economics and ending with an MBA, proving how she is determined to deepen her knowledge in business and prepare for a future senior role at the company or owning and running a business at some point in the future.

What makes an excellent departmental assistant who plays a foundational role in any workplace? The JV Business Assistant answers organizing, and handling the project correspondence is one of the important skills for her role. She further explains it involves systematically keeping documents such as joint agreements, meeting minutes, letters, memos, reports, and financial records related to the Joint Ventures in a safe and easily accessible location. Additionally, attention to detail, communications, coordination, and time management skills are necessary.

While many office-based employees in Myanmar and elsewhere are forced to work from the cocoons of their homes amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the JV Business Assistant finds the experience creates a temporary gap in the relationship between a supervisor and supervisee. As a departmental assistant, there are some tasks she cannot complete in her home such as printing, binding, and delivering reports to government offices as well as arranging travel requests. In addition, planned and unplanned electricity cuts and internet blackouts can disrupt the workflow. "So I would like to say I personally prefer a 100% working in office scheme," adds Mya Thandar Aung.

As the country started grappling with new political and health realities in 2021, Mya Thandar Aung was among the employees who had their employment contracts temporarily suspended. At that moment, she felt confused about both the company and her immediate future. She was 'lost'.

She talked to her manager and managed to get a better understanding of why the company was implementing an organizational change and how critical it was. The talk helped tackle rumors and uncertainties about the company and also, shed light on strategic business reasons surrounding the decision to put on the ice some employment contracts under the prevailing circumstances. During the recess, Mya Thandar Aung would read the monthly Corner Office Notes and at some point Insight! Newsletter to stay focused and connected with the company. She soon found herself going back to work alongside other colleagues.

These days, she takes great care of her physical and mental health by walking with her father on weekends and participating in online meditation classes regularly to help gain fitness and regain her lung health affected by severe coughing while suffering from COVID-19. While many of us do not know when the pandemic will be completely wiped out or how things will turn around, Mya Thandar Aung is determined to work hard to become a more competent and steadfast team player in her department.

With her positive spirit, she looks forward to better days ahead with fewer worries and more happiness for everyone: "It was a hard year but I was grateful for all the love and care from my family and special people. I have understood the importance of practicing joy in small little things, nurturing, and sharing love amidst the suffering. Here is my word of encouragement to everyone in the same struggle: Never give up your hope!" ■





**Zin Min Aung**  
Engineer

## Delivering Civil Works in an Oil Field

**Thal Sandy Tun**

*The following is an interview with U Zin Min Aung, an engineer by trade, on his work and life around oil fields.*

### Could you please introduce yourself first?

I am an experienced Civil Engineer working in Mann Field with professional knowledge in the design and maintenance of oil field infrastructures. This year, I will be achieving my professional milestone as I will be celebrating my 20 years at MPRL E&P.

I started my career as a daily-wage worker in 2002 and became a Field Technician a year later. During the course of the years, I was promoted to Assistant Engineer and Engineer while working in the field operations. So far there have been no accidents sustained under my supervision and I am proud of it.

### How many civil engineers are there in Mann Field?

There are two Civil Engineers in Mann Field, me and Saw Ne Lin Tun who is my senior colleague. I learned a lot under his guidance as I gained hands-on experience in planning, designing, executing, and managing the civil works required in the oil field. We work together as a Special Project team responsible for creating infrastructures for both field operations and community development as part of the CSR Program.

### What do you do as a Civil Engineer in Mann Field?

As an in-house Civil Engineer, I take part in designing, estimating costs, and supervising the construction of both new facilities and renovation projects at the Base Camp and well sites in order to reduce the environmental impacts of operations in Mann Field. One of the most exciting parts of my job is the consulting, surveying, drawing up, and calculating costs for constructing community and school infrastructure projects in fourteen villages under the CSR Program. I am responsible for monitoring these projects closely to ensure health and safety procedures are observed including quality control

and the final outcome. I work together with various teams like HSE, CSR, Field Operations, and Field Management to fulfill my responsibilities effectively.

### What is your opinion on the CSR initiatives in Mann Field?

Having CSR initiatives in Mann Field is important and beneficial for all of us. Even amid the pandemic, the Operational Grievance Mechanism (OGM) managed by the CSR and Communications Department continues to strengthen the relationship between the company and the communities. For instance, there was a time when we were instantly informed by the communities in Mann Field of oil pipeline leakages in and out of the farmland, and led by the CSR and Communications Department, we were able to respond quickly to protect and remedy the affected areas from the damage. We were also able to prevent undue loss of oil.

### Why did you choose to work in an oil field?

I come from a family where both of my parents were oil field employees. All of us have moved around the country, living and working in the country's well-known oil fields: Myanaung, Shwe Pyi Thar, Chauk, Pyi Taung Tan, and Thargyitaung. I was born in Shwe Pyi Thar oil field, and since the age of seven, I have lived in Mann Field where my parents were transferred to. I am proud of my career path because I enjoy working in oil fields and I feel that I am contributing to the country's economy in a way. Not to mention oil and gas are important natural resources of the country.

### Where did you attend your university?

After completing high school in Minbu, I first went to the University of Magway where I studied Economics. Then I continued studying Civil Engineering at the Government Technical Institute in Yenangaung as I became more interested in the subject.

### How is your experience of working from home amid the pandemic?

Thousands of people are forced to work remotely as soon as the pandemic kicked in. Despite many

unfortunate circumstances and due to the nature of my job, I could not work from home as I am required to carry out supervising my crew, checking quality assurance, and monitoring safety requirements through physical presence at the site. That said, I am very careful about staying safe by following COVID-19 infection prevention protocols. I am now inoculated twice alongside my colleagues.

Having gone through three waves of the pandemic, I have learned a lot about taking care of my own physical and mental health and supporting one another at the time of crisis. We will be better prepared in the face of future waves of the virus. It is also important that we regularly listen to the pandemic-related announcements and instructions from the Ministry of Health so that we stay informed and are prepared to manage the challenges ahead.

### What have been your recent priorities at work?

My priorities have always been minimizing the environmental impacts of the field operations and designing construction projects with sustainability in mind. Ensuring a consistent, cost-effective, and safe approach to civil works is vital and I make sure all the guidelines related to health and safety including COVID-19 are closely followed.

### How do you like to spend your free time?

When I have days off, I would spend time with my family. Sometimes I would travel with my friends and brothers. It is a great way to relax and rejuvenate.

### Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

I am very happy and proud of my job at MPRL E&P. I wish to continue working for the company as I want to be part of an organization that fosters a professional growth mindset and thriving work culture. If there is an opportunity, I would like to work on offshore projects in the near future. ■



# Ten Years Ago, Already!

*By a manager of that time; any opinion or appreciation expressed in this paper is solely the opinion and appreciation of the author, and may not necessarily reflect MPRL E&P's line of business.*

Ten years ago on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, MPRL E&P shared its press release to have discovered gas-bearing sands in its Pyi Thar-1 exploration well in the shallow waters west of Ngwe Saung.

"When there is a will, there is a way", how many times have we heard this saying from the CEO? And how aptly it applies to present times.

We never heard it as often as during the eight hectic months from the day in August 2011 when the CEO walked into our offices with these words: "I have a drilling rig from February to March for you, where do we drill?" to the day of March 2012 when opening a bottle to celebrate the gas discovery.

## The cork of the bottle of the Pyi Thar-1 discovery celebration

The technical, procurement, finance, administration, and contract teams had six months to plan, design, call for bids, negotiate, get approvals, procure, mobilize, transport, implement, monitor, report, demobilize and compensate for people, services, equipment and materials for offshore drilling operations that usually takes at least two years to plan and execute, from inception to end.



That is the story of a family-owned company, a very rare breed in this petroleum world outside of the U.S.A., which decided to take a calculated risk of drilling a well in an undrilled sedimentary basin, where nobody, apart from few in the company, thought a gas discovery was possible. That is the story of a man, who pioneeringly opened a new petroleum basin on his sole risk and with his own money to find new gas for Myanmar, and who will have to wait for a full generation to reap any benefit from his risked investment.

## The geological landscape

"Oil is first found in the mind", says our trade, the mind of geologists, that is. Our job as geologists is to reconstruct old landscapes to see if oil and gas can be found in ancient meanders of rivers or coral reefs, for the benefit of the investors. Then, if the prospect is promising enough to offset the risk and cost, drill to test for the presence of oil or gas to determine if our theories are correct.

The history of the landscapes of these waters in the Bay of Bengal results from the collision of the India continental plate against the Myanmar continental platelets juggling against the mighty continental Sunda plate. This latter plate covers the Shan Plateau, and beyond the country's border,

much of the continental South East Asia from Thailand to Vietnam and Malaysia.

Everywhere we see mountains, we can see a collision between continental plates and platelets, all drifting on the magma some 20 to 60 km beneath our feet.

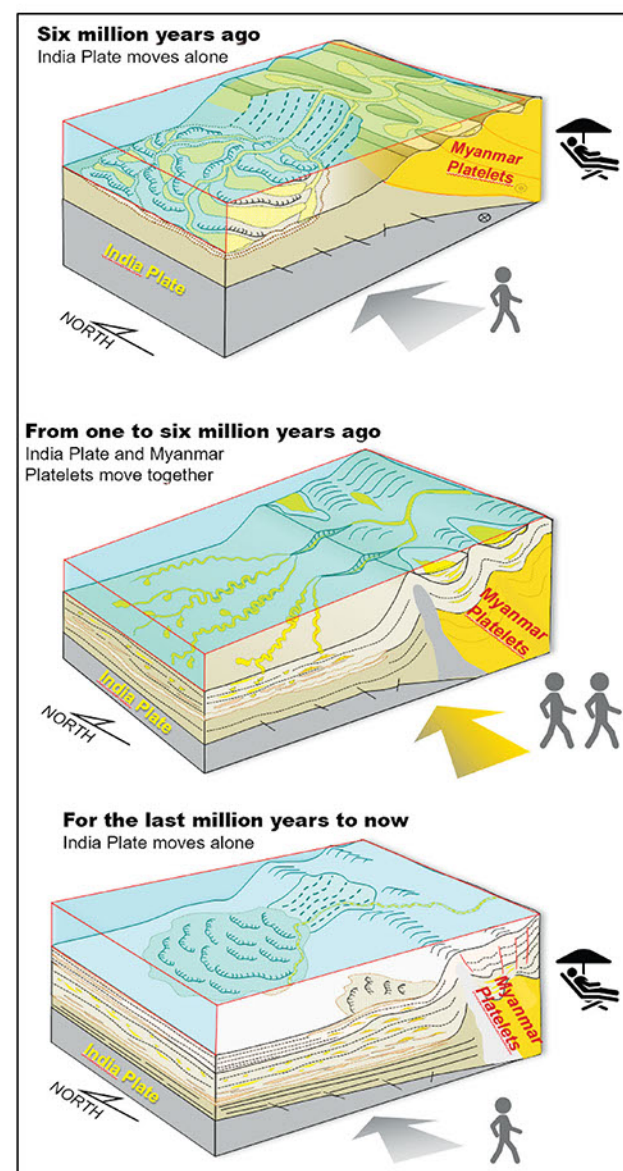
This collision between the India Plates and Myanmar Platelets is not a face-to-face collision of people descending a bus colliding with passengers climbing into it, but rather a shoulder-to-shoulder encounter between two drunken friends that is lasting for more than 15 million years now.

Twice during this encounter, firstly some five to six million years ago, and secondly presently as we read this snippet, these two friends parted from each other, resulting in a mess of gigantic slumps of sediments, 5-10 times thicker than the Vantage Tower, pulled out from high slopes of the Myanmar Platelets and slumped to the deep waters overlying the India plate moving northwards faster than the Myanmar Platelets.

But for most of the time, these two friends peacefully walked along together at the same speed. Meanwhile, the course of one of the arms of the Ayeyarwady River flowed westwards, about where the Patheingyi to Chaung Thar road wriggles its way to the beaches of Ngwe Saung. This ancient Ayeyarwady River carried sands along with courses that continued undersea. What all of this means, is that the environment was right for sands to be deposited, which set the stage for later gas accumulations.

*The ancient landscapes under the shallow waters by Ngwe Saung and Chaung Thar; from top to bottom:*

- Some six million years ago, the India Plate was moving faster northwards than the Myanmar Platelets; India Plate's fast pace caused gigantic slumps of sea bottom continental slope into deep waters



- India Plate and Myanmar Platelets were welded together between one and five million years, allowing for an arm of the Ayeyarwady River to pour sands across the plates in the deep waters of the southern Bay of Bengal

- The most recent and still lasting landscape dates from the last million years: the India continental plate moves again northwards faster than the sluggish Myanmar continental platelets and causes again from time to time huge slumps of the slope to collapse into deep waters



MPRL E&P acquired and interpreted two-dimensional and three-dimensional seismic in 2009 and 2010 to be able to image at least part of the above story. The geoscientists mapped interesting features that were tell-tales of sands containing gas. The older of us will remember the CEO peeping over the shoulders of the chief geophysicist of the time, and telling: "That is what I want to drill." Funny enough, that was not the preferred location of the exploration manager of the time, but he had no say, as it was not his money, but the CEO's.

Worth mentioning at this point is that less than one in five exploration wells results in discovery with a line of sight of being commercial. Such a large exposure – an offshore well typically costs between US\$30-90 million – is usually mitigated by forming partnerships with other oil companies to share the risk and the reward. In our case, a dozen interested parties visited our data and interpretation. They all pulled out as most pundits proffered that the area is devoid of petroleum because no rivers were in sight to bring the necessary sands to hold oil or natural gas. This left the CEO totally on his own, yet he persisted and insisted on drilling the exploration well at his sole risk.

### The drilling preparations

To fulfill the work obligations of the area of interest, MPRL E&P needed to drill two wells but managed to negotiate that the second well could be a sidetrack, another hole branching away from the main hole to reach another meander, possibly more promising. And this is how Pyi Thar-1 was designed.

A well needs to be designed from the bottom up, using a series of three to four holes, each one progressively smaller and inside the previous hole, and each one secured by steel pipe before the next smaller hole section is drilled. This process of drilling, installing steel pipe, and then drilling the next smaller hole section is continued until the target is reached.

Another essential element of drilling a well is the circulation of mud in the hole, used for cooling the drilling bit while plastering the walls of the hole to somewhat prevent collapse, and bringing back to the surface the chips of rock-cut by the drilling bit.

We also need to "see" the rocks we drill through. Sending a geologist downhole is not an option in these dark, wet, and hot narrow places. Therefore, we use electric tools to perform measurements that tell us the type of rock, such as sands or shales, and the type of fluids within the rock (water, gas, or oil) which exists in the pores between the grains of sands. This measurement of the properties of the rock and its fluid is called "logging".

All these operations are conducted on the drilling unit, by engineers and technicians who need to be accommodated and fed. Other engineers ensure all these operations are also conducted not only efficiently, but safely. Offshore supply vessels ensure that the rig can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by constantly providing the equipment, materials, fuel, freshwater, fresh food, for some 120 people working in two shifts day and night.

All the above needs to be contracted from a choice of specialist companies of which we need to choose the best for the cheapest price, very much like in a wet market, but with a lot more procedures and red tape.

CEO had the knack to identify an opportunity for a win-win deal, whereby the "Doosung" semi-submersible drilling platform (affectionately called a

"semi-sub") was idle for two months, spick and span from maintenance and inspection in Singapore and ready to sail back, however too early for the short Summer of Russian drilling operations. All we had to do is to timely gather the right people, the correct materials, the most performing equipment, and the most efficient services for the budgeted money in hand. A relatively small team of some ten geologists, engineers, logisticians, accountants, led by the energetic Samir as our drilling engineering consultant, called for bids (we nicely name this process "invitation to tender"), and evaluated technically and commercially more than 50 offers, and end up signing about two dozen of contracts in less than four months. By mid-February 2012, we were finally ready, with the sea bottom surveyed to safely anchor the semi-sub and start the drilling operations.

### The drilling operations

After a 12-day voyage pulled by two tugboats that doubled up as supply vessels transporting all the equipment that could not find a space onboard the drilling unit, the Doosung semi-sub was anchored and started drilling operations on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012 in 690 ft of water (about three times the height of the Vantage Tower).



*The Doosung semi-sub, with a height above water roughly equal to Vantage Tower*

The drilling program was tightly designed, whereby we needed a stringent procedure to allow for a sidetrack well less than 100 m away from the original path. We reached in only 10 days, instead of the planned 17 days, the total depth of the main hole at some 4,600 ft below the drilling floor (a length roughly equal to two-thirds of the width of the Inya Lake from one dyke to the other). We had drilled more sands than we expected, but with little gas.

The sidetrack, the branching hole from the main well, was quickly drilled in seven more days and fulfilled the promise shown by the seismic signal, with plenty of sands again, but this time with more than 20 ft of gas. The sidetracked well reached its intended bottom at more than 5,600 ft (about the length of the eastern dikes of the Inya Lake) as planned. Having duly injected the drilling mud in sands encountered along the way – although not required by law or according to contracts, nonetheless undertaken with a sense of responsibility – to minimize

*The trajectory of the Pyi Thar-1 discovery through a window in the three-dimensional seismic image acquired by MPRL E&P*

pollution of the environment. After securing the well with the appropriate cement plugs for permanent abandonment, the Doosung left the Pyi Thar-1 location in barely more than three weeks, instead of the projected seven weeks, having fulfilled all of its objectives with not a single glitch.

### The impact of the Pyi Thar-1 discovery

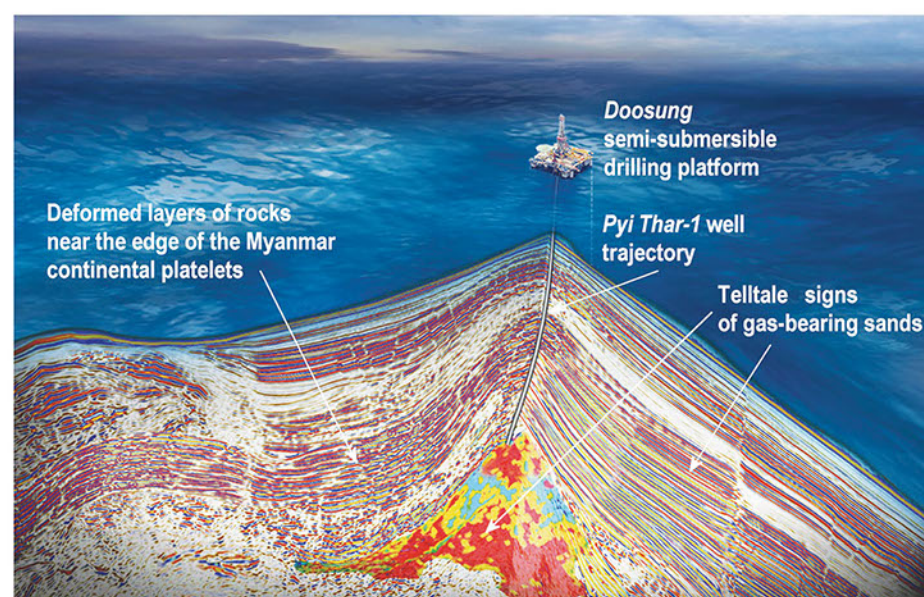
Pyi Thar-1 was the first well having found gas-bearing sandstones of what turned out to be a new petroleum basin: the West Ayeyarwady Basin.

These sands were quickly suspected as not coming from the faraway Ganges-Brahmaputra system that feeds the Shwe gas field, which was the common belief at the time. The major oil companies, which came to court MPRL E&P for a share of a new gas pie, brought the funds and technology which proved MPRL E&P's geologic theory to be correct. The regional ancient landscape became clear as new three-dimensional seismic revealed images of a vastly complex network of channels descending in deep waters from the beaches of Chaung Thar and Ngwe Saung, through the breaches opened by an ancient collapse of the slope to abysses to deep waters. In simple terms, this means that the theory developed by MPRL E&P, which was condemned by other companies at the time, was proven to be correct and was the primary reason for the Pyi Thar-1 discovery.

Had MPRL E&P not made this historical discovery, as of today there would be little future for significant offshore Myanmar gas.

MPRL E&P, led by pugnacity and vision, opened a new petroleum province in Myanmar. And the least which can be said is that greed for quick bucks is not part of the engines of this family company. While more gas has been subsequently found in deep waters downstream of the ancient Ayeyarwady submarine rivers, in amounts large enough to justify the first-ever development in ASEAN of gas reserves in ultra-deep waters, it will take a couple of dozen years for the US\$ 24 million invested in that landmark well to begin to come back in the pockets of this pioneering family company.

"Aim for the stars" is another one of the CEO's favorite sayings. In that regard, may the skies be clear and the aim is steady for him and all of us? MPRL E&P has heard so many times: "They will not be able to do it", and time and time again, MPRL E&P found a way to succeed against the odds. This journey has made us humble, yet determined and confident to take risks. May MPRL E&P continue to work on discovering more of these ancient landscapes full of gas for the benefit of Myanmar and may the geological fun go on. ■







# Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. (M&A) Recognizes Two Best Employees

Thal Sandy Tun

In this issue of Insight!, we would like to share with you an inspiring collection of stories of our two employees from our sister company, Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. (M&A). These two awardees faced some challenges which have positively impacted their professional growth and mindset as they had to make quick intuitive decisions that proved their leadership skills. While we overcome this pandemic together, it is important that we recognize our star performers in hopes that their stories empower and inspire us during this difficult time.

Congratulations to M&A's Best Employee Awardees, U Soe Moe Thu and U Si Thu Kyaw! We thank you for taking the initiative in the workplace by going the extra mile to help others and we acknowledge your efforts and your sense of self-drive and personal motivation!



**U Soe Moe Thu**  
Camp Boss

I joined Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 as a Camp Boss and my responsibilities included providing catering and housekeeping services to international clients onboard ships entering the Myanmar waters. Currently, I am working on Diamond Offshore Drilling, Inc.'s Ocean Monarch Rig off the coast of Rakhine. I was awarded the Best Employee Award because I went above and beyond for my catering team by resolving a problem brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Let me share my story.

Firstly, when the Ocean Monarch Rig was docked at the KEPPEL Shipyard in Singapore for maintenance work before departing for Myanmar, the kitchen and canteen on the ship were not ready for use by client employees, requiring them to collect food and consume it on the wharf. I saw how it was troublesome for our client employees as they had to walk up and down the temporary ladders at a

12-story rig height using steep stairways for their daily catering needs. To resolve this inconvenience, I expedited the cleaning process and arranged the kitchen and storage room along with the canteen, and started serving client employees right away. I felt so much at ease after this!

Secondly, after the rig was ready and towed towards the offshore Myanmar waters, it had to make a U-turn halfway before reaching Myanmar due to the COVID-19 outbreak resulting in anchoring at Malaysia's Johor Bahru for approximately four months. The outbreak was getting worse, thus creating a whole new level of stress and anxiety for all of us as we had to undergo cleaning and disinfection protocols regarding crew change and cargo containers arriving from Malaysia. While this was all happening, many manpower crew and staff flew back to Myanmar on a relief flight. However, my catering team and I decided to stay back and continue our duties, believing in ourselves that we could surpass any challenges together.

Normally, we work on a 4-week-on 4-week-off basis on offshore platforms. However, under such extraordinary circumstances, we had worked more than four months and it became noticeable



that the longer-than-normal stay on the offshore platform started to take a toll on us both physically and mentally. To raise one another's spirits and to keep ourselves cheerful, we would exchange comforting words and crack jokes. We also found solace in our religious practices by paying homage and praying every day. To keep ourselves healthy and fit, we would take walks together after work and do some exercises.

The best help for us has to be the encouragement we received from our Head Office's Management Team which played a crucial role in keeping our spirits up thus making it easier for all of us to work for a long period out in the sea. For instance, through video conferencing calls, our Management Team would listen to our needs and share their motivational words to ensure that we feel supported and remain strong to successfully overcome these unfortunate circumstances. Their words gently reminded us of why we were on the platform in the first place and to stay focused on our goals. Our client company, Diamond Offshore Drilling, Inc., also recognized our hard work and



efforts and how we wholeheartedly fulfilled what was expected of us. Over the period of 272 days, the number of days it took for the rig to arrive in Myanmar, we were relieved to find out that it was accident-free and fully intact. I believe that this is another reason why the Award was granted to me, because of my leadership and management skills.

Here, I would like to share what I had learned from this experience: Staying committed to one's duties and team in a challenging offshore workplace is far-reaching, even more so, speaking good things about your teammates and thanking them in front of other people completes half your mission.

In closing, I wish to thank everyone from my team, especially, my colleagues with whom I worked together for the Diamond Catering Project. Their support and team effort had enabled me to win this Award. Special thanks go to M&A's Management Team for their trust and encouragement. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank our CEO and his family for taking care of the employees. Like a Myanmar proverb "A good tree can lodge ten-thousand birds," we were able to continue our livelihoods safely and conveniently despite the challenges. We would like to send our thanks and loving-kindness to our CEO and family. I wish them good health and happiness!



**U Si Thu Kyaw**  
Senior Accountant

I obtained my Bachelor of Economics in Statistics (BEcon/Stats) from the Yangon Institute of Economics in March 2013, and in the following month, I started working as a Junior Accountant at Myint & Associates Co., Ltd. (M&A) for which I was extremely



# Reaping Handsome Profits from Sustainable Horticulture Practices

Pyae Pyae Phy

*The saying "You reap what you sow!" conveys that future consequences are inevitably shaped by present actions. If a man sows well, he will reap well.*

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Myanmar is an agricultural country, and the agriculture sector is the backbone of its economy. The agriculture sector contributes to 37.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), accounts for 25 to 30 percent of total export earnings, and employs 70 percent of the labor force. One of the major economic objectives of the country is "Development of agriculture as a base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well." The livelihood activities in the central Dry Zone of Myanmar, where MPRL E&P business locates, are dominated by agricultural activities.

MPRL E&P, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the inclusive growth at the area where the business operates, undertakes focused interventions in agricultural management and also initiates sustainable agriculture practices at 14 surrounding villages in Mann Field.

During these years since July 2019, MPRL E&P's CSR Program has empowered horticulture farmers with sustainable farming practices by organizing horticulture training, delivering hands-on trainings on making natural fertilizer (Fish Amino Acid) and making natural pesticide, providing seeds and plastic mulch through Horticulture Farmer Committee, and facilitating for agricultural experts' technical assistance as needed.

In this Fiscal Year 2021-2022, 18 farmers from Mann Kyoe, Kyar Kan, and Kywe Cha Villages were growing 7.25 acres of tomato with new cultivation techniques they had learned from horticulture training. Among them, tomato growers from Mann Kyoe Village revealed how much they had benefited from adopting sustainable horticulture practices at their lands as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Let's hear how much they fetched in this harvest year!

## Success Stories from Mann Field

### Success Story (1)



**Daw Win Khaing**  
Mann Kyoe Village

"This is my very first time sowing tomatoes using sustainable horticulture practices initiated by MPRL E&P's CSR Program. Last year, I couldn't sow using horticulture training techniques and so ended up trying only traditional methods, as I couldn't afford any huge investment costs. But this year, I could grow 0.35 acres of tomato farm because the CSR Program provided necessary tomato seeds and plastic mulch to horticulture farmers like us. I have invested a total cost of MMK 750,000 and harvested 4,500 visse as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Nearly

two-thirds of the land has been harvested and until now I have gained a sale amount of MMK 8,000,000. My tomatoes are large in size and pretty in color. I am very happy with the return on investment and I would like to thank MPRL E&P for providing such knowledge and resources. I would like to kindly request this kind of support for the upcoming year as well."

### Success Story (2)



**U Aung Myint San**  
Mann Kyoe Village

"It has been over two years that I have been growing tomatoes using modern training methods introduced and supported by MPRL E&P's CSR Program. Currently, I am growing tomatoes on 0.55 acres of land. Although I want to grow more vegetables, I don't have enough space to sow. The advantages of sowing tomatoes using modern techniques include awesome crop yield, more harvesting time, and longer plant life. I am earning about MMK 7,000,000 with a total yield of 3,800 visse from my farm. Last year, the sale amount was MMK 3,200,000, and the gross profit was MMK 2,400,000. There are some crops left in the field and harvesting is still in progress. I want to thank MPRL E&P's CSR Program for its continuous support of our agricultural needs. Because of MPRL E&P, farmers who couldn't cultivate before can now make earnings using modern agricultural techniques. In the coming years, please continue supporting us as we look forward to implementing new practices that promote sustainable agriculture and food security. Thank you again."

### Success Story (3)



**Daw Mar Mar Aye**  
Mann Kyoe Village

"I have 0.45 acres of farmland and I am currently growing tomatoes on this land. The systematic cultivation method provided by the MPRL E&P's CSR Program has a higher cost than the traditional one, however, it has a lesser frequency of irrigation and cheaper wedding cost. Furthermore, not many pesticides are needed due to the low disease incidence and good resistance. These days, my tomato farm is getting a sale amount of about MMK 6,300,000 with a yield amount of 3,700 visse and harvesting is still in progress. This year, total

investment cost is about MMK 570,000. But last year, a sale amount was only MMK 1,899,700 with total investment cost of MMK 300,000. This year, 10 more farmers have participated in sowing tomatoes with MPRL E&P's modern methods after seeing our previous farming progress. I am pleased to see our neighbors sharing good agricultural practices. This is because of MPRL E&P's great support! I wish MPRL E&P would continue to support farmers who cannot afford to cultivate with new plantation methods."

### Success Story (4)



**U Tun Hla Aung**  
Mann Kyoe Village

"Just like my peers, I have been cultivating tomatoes using the horticulture training method since 2019. I attended all agricultural trainings and knowledge sharing sessions conducted by MPRL E&P's CSR Program and apply that newly acquired knowledge when I work on my farm. My tomato farm is 0.45 acres wide and I have plans to expand it. I am getting a sale amount of MMK 5,000,000 with a yield amount of 3,300 visse and harvesting is still in progress. This year, I invested a total amount of MMK 850,000 in this farmland while last year was it was about MMK 800,000. Furthermore, I noticed that our community farmers prefer to use Fish Amino Acid, the fertilizer that we learned to produce on our own. It is useful for us as it helps produce better quality and healthy crops. Besides, it is more affordable than other chemical fertilizers and is much safer to use. Because of MPRL E&P's benevolence and training sessions, most of us are now cultivating more and at the same time, our livelihoods are getting better. Special thanks to the Company and its generous support to our farming community!"

How pleasing it is to find out about each and every farmer's acknowledgment of the agricultural development initiatives conducted by MPRL E&P's CSR Program and their success stories! We believe everything that happens is a result of things that we have done in the past. We reap what we sow. ■





# Healthy Animals, Happy Communities!

Promoting Animal Husbandry and Healthcare Knowledge  
in Mann Field Communities

Pyae Pyae Phyoe



While agriculture is the main strength of Myanmar's economy, livestock farming is also a key contributor. In other words, after agriculture, livestock farming, one of the oldest economic activities of man, is the second most important sector in the country's agriculture-based economy. It plays a significant role in rural livelihoods, especially since farmers raise farm animals for both food and labor purposes. It is one of the pillars of a sustainable food system and a major contributor to poverty reduction, food security, and agricultural development of the country.

Animal husbandry deals with day-to-day care, breeding, and raising of livestock like cows, buffaloes, horses, pigs, goats, and sheep that are useful for humans and important for the livelihoods of the farmers. To maintain sustainable development of livelihoods, farmers are responsible for the care and management of livestock, including the protection of animals against diseases. Just like any human health issue, prevention is better than cure.

Most communities around Mann Field make a living from agricultural and livestock production. MPRL E&P is committed to improving the lives of the communities around Mann Field where we operate, and also helping these communities achieve their self-reliance. Therefore, MPRL E&P's CSR & Communications Department strives to increase opportunities for the sustainable development of the communities through strategic investments.

## Launching Livestock Development Initiative

The CSR & Communications Department has conducted engagement meetings with the community stakeholders to identify their needs and create solutions for shared values. Through regular stakeholder engagement and needs assessment meetings, community investment initiatives are developed, one example being the "Launching Livestock Development Initiative".

We have implemented this important initiative by collaborating with the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD – Minbu). This strategic partnership between the company and the government agency has enhanced livestock sector development in 14 surrounding villages around Mann Field.



covered a total of 238 community farmers and helped them improve livestock raising and caring practices for long-term farming development. The training programs enhanced livestock breeders' knowledge of animal selection, weight calculation, healthcare, artificial insemination, medication, nutrition, vaccination food security, and food safety. Not to mention, preventing diseases in farm animals can positively impact the economy and can secure a safe and nutritious food supply. It is not wrong to say "Prevention is better than cure!"

## Promoting Animal Husbandry and Healthcare Knowledge

MPRL E&P has promoted knowledge sharing and practices on animal husbandry and healthcare in Mann Field Communities by conducting subject-matter-related sessions: seven-day session on basic knowledge sharing in March 2020, three-day training on basic knowledge in December 2020, and three-day training on advanced knowledge in December 2021. The sessions



needs for their livestock's nutrition and vaccination. The Team would also organize meetings for treatment instruction, collecting farm animal lists, distributing vaccines to cure Newcastle disease in poultry and Blackleg disease in cattle, and lastly, delivering Napier grass provided by LBVD (Minbu) for animal nutrition. It is obvious that facilitation is important in every sector to build a better future in the community.

## Facilitating for Nutrition and Vaccination

It is also important that farm animals have good nutrition and suitable vaccination and to ensure this, MPRL E&P's CSR Field Team focused on delivering necessary resources and support between the community and LBVD (Minbu) as the main facilitator. The CSR Field Team would contact the LBVD (Minbu) officers in person or over the phone to discuss community



## Monitoring Progress Update

To ensure continuous improvements, we would track progress and conduct review or evaluation meetings with beneficiary stakeholders. As of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, a total number of 3,202 poultry and 1,500 cattle have received vaccination under the collaborative support of the company and the LBVD (Minbu). Besides, Napier grass cultivation, which has been implemented as the pilot program for animal food security in the community, has been recorded with positive feedback and good results from farm owners.

## Keeping Animals Healthy to Keep Communities Happy



Animal health is just as important as human health, especially in rural communities where livestock farming plays a key role in the local economy and sustainable livelihoods of the community. Animal diseases must be prevented as they have a huge impact on securing a safe, nutritious, and sufficient food supply. We must further invest in tools like vaccination and nutrition so that we can continually improve animal husbandry and livestock farming.

Considering the above all, it can see that MPRL E&P would make every effort to improve good husbandry practices in Mann Field Communities with the sustainable livelihoods goals. Keeping animals healthy keeps communities vibrant and happy! ■





## Supporting a New Group of Community Youths for Vocational Training

Thal Sandy Tun



In December 2021, MPRL E&P's CSR Program launched a scholarship program for a new group of seven youths in Mann Field. The scholarship enables the community youths to acquire quality and relevant technical and vocational skills training at No. (5) Industrial Training Center (Magway), which was set to reopen after a month-long closure amidst the pandemic and limited distance learning alternatives.

The scholarship selection process is based on a set of criteria openly announced in the communities. Out of 23 applications, seven were chosen as recipients of this scholarship program which covers their one-time enrollment fees, monthly stipends, and general expenses to study the 11-month courses in Automobile Maintenance and CAD/CAM.

According to the United Nation's statistics, as much as 80% of technical and vocational training activities for youths and working adults across the world have been negatively affected by the coronavirus-induced lockdown and physical distancing protocols, thus resulting in implications and challenges for the post-pandemic economic recovery. In this regard, MPRL E&P's CSR Program intends to support this recovery and mitigate the effects of the pandemic on community youths in Mann Field by continuing the provision of vocational training through its educational partnerships with local and regional resource organizations. It is also important that education and skills training programs are able to respond to the growing number of youths needing vocational skillsets including reskilling and upskilling opportunities for working adults.



There is a total of six Industrial Training Centers, including No. (5) Industrial Training Center (Magway), set up across Myanmar under the Training Centers Supervision Department, Directorate of Industrial Collaboration of the Ministry of Industry, in order to train skilled workers for industrial sector development and to support human resources development. These centers are established with the cooperation of partner organizations from donor countries such as China, India, Korea, and Germany. Up to a total of 13 different courses are offered at the Industrial Training Centers.

Let's find out what these students have to say about the scholarship program, courses they are taking, and future dreams!



**Ye Naung**  
Pauk Kone Village

I am 24 and I have completed the university entrance Matriculation Exam. I am looking forward to learning about the maintenance of automobiles such as cars, trucks, and buses at the Training Center. I chose this subject because I want to work in an auto service center or automobile factory in the near future.

To be able to attend the vocational training course on Automobile Maintenance, I received a scholarship from MPRL E&P's CSR Program, which covers both the school-related fees and my monthly expenses. I heard about this scholarship program from a former student who studied at the same Training Center and through him, I learned about the Training Center's rules and regulations, as well as the preparations for the application and interview process. With his help, I was able to successfully round off the application process and enroll in the program.

During the stay-at-home/lockdown period, I was stuck at home most of the time but now I am ready to start the program. I am excited to learn about automobile maintenance because I find it really useful and interesting and I see myself working in this field in the near future. I want to use my acquired skillset after finishing this program and one day, I would like to set up my own small business.

Many youths in Mann Field are interested in this scholarship offered by MPRL E&P's CSR Program and in my opinion, the scholarship program is an important initiative for youths' access to livelihood opportunities.



**Moe Hayman Tun**  
Mann Kyoe Village

I am 18 and I have studied up to Grade 11. I am studying the CAD-CAM course at No. (5) Industrial Training Center (Magway) due to my interest in working with computers and creating designs. I am hoping to get familiar with computers and learn how to use different software.

As a scholarship recipient, the CSR Program supports me with a monthly stipend, dining and school enrollment fees, uniform, and other general expenses. I understand, through the former

students, that the CSR Program also assists in finding job opportunities for fresh graduates.

After hearing about the availability of scholarships for community youths through the Village Administrator and Community Volunteer, I started looking for information about the Training Center and some basic knowledge related to the course that I want to pursue.

During the outbreaks of the pandemic, I stayed at home and spent my time taking Japanese language classes and basic Computer classes online. I am excited to become proficient in computer software particularly in design and manufacturing processes and I want to become a person who is successful in my future endeavors.

I am grateful for MPRL E&P for this wonderful initiative and the scholarships offered by MPRL E&P's CSR Program are of great assistance for all the youths in the community. That is why it has become very popular among the younger generation who are eager to develop their technical skills and gain access to good job opportunities.



**Ingyin Khaing**  
Mann Kyoe Village

I am 18 and I have completed the Grade 11 curriculum in terms of my formal education. At No. (5) Industrial Training Center (Magway), I am studying the CAD/CAM course. Since I am interested in computers and designing machines, I am hoping to receive technical knowledge and training on using specialized computer technology in the fields of operation and control of machines and processes.

The CSR Program supports me with a monthly stipend, enrollment fees, and other expenses to study at the Training Center. After hearing the news that the CSR Program was offering scholarships for youths to be able to study at No. (5) Industrial Training Center (Magway) from the Village Administrator and secretary, I prepped myself by seeking more information about the Training Center and hitting the books on industry basics, English, and Mathematics.

During the lockdown period due to COVID-19, I helped my mother with household chores. I set aside time to study computer technology. I have a hobby in tailoring and design. I want to be able to acquire specialized knowledge and skills in creating designs using different programs and thereby become someone who can contribute to the development of the industrial sector of Myanmar.



From Page 18



proud and pleased as a fresh graduate. I remember how it was pretty exciting to move from student life to the career world and how there were challenges as well as opportunities and growth awaiting me.

Immediately, I immersed myself in the job in the accounting field, learning the practical application of what I had studied at the university while building the required skills and knowledge and bonding with colleagues. Soon after, I started working on a range of international professional qualifications as I sought to grow my career in accounting. In 2016, I passed LCCI Level 3 which helped me further my accounting skills and knowledge when performing complex tasks at work.

Two years later, I successfully completed a Diploma in Accounting and Business (ACCA Part 1) before advancing towards ACCA Part 2 to enhance my business know-how and knowledge of professional ethics. Meanwhile, I was promoted to Assistant Accountant, Accountant, and Senior Accountant step-by-step throughout my nine years of working at the company. On the 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of M&A, which was celebrated in November 2021, I received one of the Best Employee Awards, which was very much unexpected.

While performing my duties this year, I had to overcome my own share of challenges, not least due to the coronavirus pandemic. During the First Wave and Second Wave of the virus in Myanmar, I had to travel back and forth between banks, tax offices, and government offices as part of my job even though most of the office employees were required to work from home. I was always concerned that I might contract the virus at some point during those visits but the call of duty was too strong for me and I tried my best to closely follow the safety protocols.

Unfortunately, I was hit with the virus when the Third Wave of the pandemic rocked the country in July 2021, which was described as a 'tsunami' with

detection of all four known variants of the virus, and many citizens suffered from a lack of access to medical attention, medicine, and supplementary oxygen. I myself was severely sick with the virus and was constantly worried about both myself and my family, wondering if we could make it through this hardship. Fortunately, I managed to recover from the illness both physically and mentally, and soon enough, I became fit enough to go back to work. I felt lucky and even more so when I heard the news that I was one of the Best Employee Awardees!

The Award means so much to me, it is the highest level of achievement and recognition I have earned throughout my career at M&A and it will always be a memorable milestone for me. As a recipient, I couldn't be prouder and happier because I was recognized for my efforts and hard work for making a significant contribution to the company under prevailing circumstances. I thought of various ways to achieve the best results and efficiency despite the challenges and I was not expecting any sort of acknowledgment or awards per se.

Therefore, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Management Team and colleagues for their support and recognition, which further enables me to bring out the best in myself to work every day. Thank you! ■

From Page 21

Such educational assistance of MPRL E&P's CSR Program attracts the youth of all ages among the communities and I am confident that the program will only grow bigger in the future!



**Khant Thu Tun**  
Lay Eain Tan Village

I am a First Year university student from Lay Eain Tan Village in Mann Field. Automobiles are always a fascinating subject for me and I am eager to gain knowledge and hands-on training

on basic automobile maintenance skills related to engines, gears, and autobody.

The Community Investment Field Coordinator Daw Zin Mar Myint made a monthly visit to the Village Administrator and delivered information related to the training centers, rules and regulations, along with the courses offered. One month into attending personal interview sessions with the Training Center officials, she drilled us on the possible interview questions so that I became well-prepared for the interview. Through the Village Administrator, I found out that the CSR Program would provide financial aid including other sources of support in collaboration with the Training Center for the trainees-to-be.

During the downtime due to the COVID-19 lockdown, I helped my family with household chores. Now I am determined to work hard and do my best to support my family financially in the near future. I would like to thank the CSR Program and MPRL E&P for their assistance in fulfilling all our needs and providing opportunities for vocational training. As youths, we will work hard to be able to contribute to building an industrialized thriving nation. ■

“Important that education and skills training programs are able to respond to the growing number of youths needing vocational skillsets.”

## Events

## Field Visit to Mann Field by Personnel from Chauk-Lanywar Oil Field





# When Sunflowers Face Eastward

Thal Sandy Tun

*The following is a photoessay on the sunflower seed production initiative which is about farming with nature in Mann Field.*

Sunflower is a pollinator-dependent crop, which is extensively cultivated worldwide for oil production. It is an important source of food for human health through the consumption of sunflower oil which is considered a premium quality oil containing Vitamin E and unsaturated fatty acids.

Sunflower seed production is one of the three focused areas of the Farmer Field School mounted by MPRL E&P's CSR Program in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (Minbu) starting from April 2021 to support smallholder farmers in developing quality and climate-resilient seeds.

## Sunflower Farming

Some of the agronomical practices in sunflower cultivation include a selection of well-drained and fertile land with no previous history of growing sunflower, applying balanced and adequate nutrition including irrigation, and having beehives near the field. Many of us find it fun to watch as the plants face the morning sun in the east when the flowers open.

As its anatomy says, the head of the sunflower is not just a single flower but rather an array of flowers within the flower. The outer bright yellow petals known as the ray florets, along with the lovely smell of the nectar warmed by the sun in the east, draw bees into the large brown center disc, which contains dozens of small flowers called disc florets, each of which with the ability to produce seed. It is where pollination, one of the most fascinating processes in the natural world, happens.



## Humans Acting as Pollinators

The 2.5-acre pilot sunflower seed production farm by Community Volunteer U Thein Naing from Kywe Cha Village uses a hybrid seed variety locally developed at a farm in Nay Pyi Taw - Tat Kone, and extension staff from the Department of Agriculture (Minbu) brought a total of 30 farmers from five villages on board an on-farm demonstration on human facilitated pollination in late December 2021. The demonstration on the pilot farm involves touching the pollen from a male flower with a gentle paintbrush and carrying it to the female flowers.

Production of hybrid sunflower seeds requires planting male and female lines in the same fields, usually alternating with four rows of females and two rows of males. In this regard, mediated pollination is essential for transferring pollen from a male plant to a female plant and this movement of pollen allows the plant to reproduce and to exchange genetic information with other plants. Human mediated pollination should be completed within five days and a successful harvest can follow in the next twenty to thirty days.

Upon harvest, seeds from the male rows can be utilized to produce cooking oil while seeds from the female rows will become seeds for the next growing season, clean and dried thoroughly in the sun and applied with fungicides before storing in



line with advice and instructions from the Department of Agriculture (Minbu). Normally, a sunflower completes its life cycle within 80 to 85 days in total.

## Advantages of Sunflower Seeds Produced in the Pilot Farm

Through the open and systematic cultivation of the oilseed sunflower, we can ensure farmers can trust its authenticity, quality, affordability, region suitability, high yield, high oil production, ability to withstand local weather and pests, and more uniformity by looking at plant height and flower size. If the seeds produced are successful, quality tests and certification need to be completed.

For this very first initiative, we anticipate some shortcomings such as lower yield than expected due to weather conditions and farming techniques, which can be eliminated over time through continuous learning and improvements. ■



“As its anatomy says, the head of the sunflower is not just a single flower but rather an array of flowers within the flower.”





# MYANMAR ENERGY MAGNATE

Biography of U Moe Myint

Some will say he was lucky but that is not even close to the truth. It is all a by-product of his struggles and experiences along with perseverance, hard work, and determination that shaped him into who he is now.

Written in prophetic biography style, the book offers U Moe Myint's journey to becoming Myanmar's leading influential businessman in the energy sector. In the first-ever biography of this energy magnate, the author traces his early childhood days to being in the Myanmar National Airways to eventually establishing himself as a risk-taking oil and gas explorer, a fierce optimist who firmly believes in giving back to the community. And last but not least, a simple ordinary man with a passion for sailing who brought Myanmar Sailing into the national and international spotlight.

Inspiring, authentic, and insightful, the Myanmar Energy Magnate tells the revelatory story of U Moe Myint's personal life and career in a vivid, intimate way, in a way no one else could possibly do. A man of humble beginnings who shares traits of a nationalistic "good citizen", the book offers practical guidelines to navigate the many challenges involved in becoming successful in life.

Hard copy in Myanmar language is now available at City Mart stores in Yangon and Mandalay. The English version of the book is in progress and will be available by mid-year, followed by other versions. ■

## Book Launch

Date : 13<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (Sunday)

Place : Yangon Sailing Club  
132 Inya Road, Kamayut Township  
Yangon, Myanmar

