



Lending Platform Prodigy Finance Hosted First-Ever Pitch Challenge to Encourage New Business Ideas And Start-Ups

MBA students from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management awarded \$16,000 to launch their business idea

Monday, 16 April, 2018 – New York, NY – Prodigy Finance, a global lending platform that provides postgraduate loans to international students, is pleased to congratulate Conor Smith, Sophie Merali and Jordi Gonzalez from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management (MIT Sloan) as the winners of the inaugural Prodigy Finance Pitch Challenge. The competition, which took place on Friday, 13 April in New York City, brought together the final 8 teams (from over 50 original applicants) of MBA students from the country's top business schools, including Fuqua School of Business, Harvard Business School, Kenan-Flagler Business School and The Wharton School to present their business ideas in front of a panel of experienced business and educational leaders for a chance to win up to \$4,000 per team member. Plus, an additional opportunity to pitch for \$4,000 in seed money to launch or grow their venture.

In the spirit of Prodigy Finance's social mission to make education available to everyone, regardless of their economic or geographical status, competing teams were instructed to develop business proposals that tackled the challenge of "enabling access to economic opportunity." Ideas were judged on five unique criteria: analysis of the problem, integrated viewpoint, recommended implementation, solution integration, and presentation. MIT Sloan's winning idea was a mobile platform, called [NEH THIT](#) (meaning New Day), that connects workers in rural areas of Myanmar with employment opportunities in the country's cities.

"We're absolutely thrilled to have been selected as the winners of this year's Pitch Challenge and look forward to receiving this funding to continue to grow NEH THIT," said Conor Smith, Co-Founder of the mobile app and 2018 MBA Candidate at MIT Sloan. "Just like Prodigy Finance, we want to ingrain a sense of innovation within everything we do, while staying true to our mission to make the digital economy open to all, not just the wealthy."

Prodigy Finance was born in 2007 when the founders recognized the challenges faced by international postgraduate students trying to finance their business school degrees. The company's CEO and co-founder, Cameron Stevens, experienced this first hand with his MBA at INSEAD. He believed that attending a top university is a life-changing opportunity that should be available to all, regardless of financial ability. Since then, Prodigy Finance has helped over 10,300 students from 127 countries, borrow over \$505 million to obtain their dreams of a postgraduate degree. From the onset, the company has focused on social impact, which is why it started this competition to encourage new business ideas that will enable access to economic opportunity, just as Prodigy Finance has done.

"We heard so many great business pitches today and look forward to seeing how these students pursue their ideas with new funding," said Joel Frisch, Head of Americas at Prodigy Finance. "We love solving big problems and who better to help us in our mission to unlock the world's potential than the brilliant minds we support."

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About Prodigy Finance:

Prodigy Finance is revolutionising international student finance. In the last ten years, we've funded more than US\$505 million in loans, to over 10,300 students, from 127 countries, around the world. Our innovative borderless credit model gives students the chance to attend the world's top universities. Our community of investors receive a financial and social return; while our student borrowers are empowered to change their futures