

Singapore Edtech Startup Cialfo Raises Pre-Series A Funding - Targets China & India Expansion



[Cialfo](#), a Singapore-based education technology (edtech) startup that successfully places over ninety percent of its students in Top 50 U.S. and Top 30 U.K. universities has raised an undisclosed amount in pre-Series A funding. The investment was led by Singapore-based Govin Capital, who partnered and encouraged Mr Koh Boon Hwee Former Chairman of Singtel, DBS Bank and Singapore Airlines to co-invest in Cialfo. A number of angels with significant experience in scaling high-growth businesses also participated. Funding will be used for product development, recruitment and expansion into high-priority growth markets China, India, and Southeast Asia.

Cialfo was co-founded in 2012 by *Rohan Pasari* and *Stanley Chia* in Singapore to make tertiary education more accessible to students. It does this by streamlining the U.S. and U.K. university application process with a unique combination of an online platform, together with expert mentoring. With its Pre-Series A funding, Cialfo is now looking to expand its Asia footprint through software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform offering to education institutions and private college counselors. Its solutions are available across web and mobile (iOS, Android).

Rohan Pasari, Co-founder and CEO of Cialfo, said: “Cialfo has seen remarkable growth the last four years; we now look to accelerate through strategic partnerships beyond Singapore and Southeast Asia. Cialfo now works with some of the leading private college counsellors and high schools across Singapore, China, Vietnam, and India. We will now reach more students, tapping into the multi-billion dollar a year opportunity of helping Asian students find their ideal university.”

The annual market for Asian students enrolling into U.S. and U.K. universities is pegged at US\$4 billion. That goes up to US\$80 billion per year for global students enrolling into universities. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), around 627,306 Asian students studied in the U.S. in 2014-15. Of these, 304,040 originated from China and 132,888 from India. The British Council estimates 493,570 international students are in U.K., as of 2013-14, of which 92,915 (18.8 per cent) and 21,000 (4.3 per cent) are from

China and India respectively. Forty million students enter university every year; this is expected to double by 2025.

Anand Govindaluri, Founder and CEO of Govin Capital & Board Director, Cialfo, said: "Working with thousands of students in Singapore, and across Asia, Cialfo's understanding of the pain points faced by educational institutes, consultancies, and students has enabled it to build innovative platforms and tools that are seeing rapid uptake within the education ecosystem. We observe an increasing trend in the number of Singaporeans and students in Asia for overseas ivy-league universities. We are delighted to partner with veteran investor Mr Koh Boon Hwee to make Cialfo a world-class local brand in EdTech. I also thank The Funded Here, Singapore for introducing Cialfo to us"

Koh Boon Hwee said: "Cialfo's vision to democratize university admissions is admirable. Every student deserves the best education they can get; it remains the single most important decision for a young person today. Cialfo is trying to use technology to help them secure that opportunity."

Ninety-seven per cent of Cialfo's students were admitted into the top 50 U.S. universities and 54 per cent into the top 10; 91 per cent of Cialfo's students got into the top 30 U.K. universities and 48 per cent into the top 5. Cialfo's acceptance rates in 2016 have increased by 27 per cent compared to 2015, and 59 per cent compared to 2014. In Singapore, 100 per cent of its students now get places at their universities of choice.

Rayden Yongxiang Chia, a Nanyang Polytechnic student popularly known as Mr MIT Singapore, was accepted into Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), New York University (NYU), and Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) for the 2016 intake, thanks to Cialfo.

Rayden said: "Cialfo helped me understand that I needed to express myself clearly. They helped me strategise my college application to answer every single question with new aspects of myself. This really helped admissions counsellors diversify the different perspectives of looking at me and I think that really made a difference."

Founded in Singapore in 2012, Cialfo's university admissions innovative SaaS platform for education consultancies and high schools is making it possible for every student to get the best university education. Cialfo is on a mission to make university applications simple, efficient, and accessible to every student. It offers its platform, available on web and mobile app, to partners in Singapore, India, China, and Southeast Asia to streamline their university admission process and enhance their online-to-offline strategy. Meanwhile, Cialfo also offers its own consulting services to help students successfully gain admission into their best-fit university in Singapore only. Whether it's assistance around university essays or admissions interviews, Cialfo's team of consultants assist at every step of the way. The company's experienced mentors and advisors have graduated from leading institutions such as Harvard, U.Penn, Stanford, Northwestern, LSE, UVA, NTU and more