

## Going for the IT Boot Camps in India

*In Europe, IT training options are rare and expensive. This is the reason why Peter Eisert went to India to attend training courses. This still costs money. And the employment agency has reduced his allowance.*



European IT experts travel to India for professional training

Actually, Peter Eisert shouldn't be too worried to get a job, as IT experts like him are sought after. The programmer and software developer from Offenbach in Germany has worked as a free-lancer for a couple of years, before he got the offer to take part in a two-year research project. Two years is quite a long time in the IT business. Technology changes very fast, and one who extensively deals with just one software, is most likely to lose contact to the rest of the world. Now that the project has been finished and his contract expired, Eisert finds himself unemployed. He urgently needs some special training to get a new job.

In the German job market, there is a high demand for experts able to deal with the latest software – at a high level. Courses in Microsoft's MCSE, MCTS, MCITP, Cisco's CCNA, CCNP, CCIE, Oracle's OCA, Linux, Java or Security+ and CEH address experts with years of professional experience. Between three and five weeks of hard one-on-one training are considered necessary to make a person an expert for a particular program. It is hard to find such a type of training in Germany at all. The offers available consist of no more than a couple of training days, and this at prices up to thousands of Euros. "This is far from being effective," says Peter Eisert. Also, the unemployment agency does not offer any financial support. So what can be done?

Peter Eisert has finally found extensive training offers for European IT experts that take place in India. Here, a couple of providers of such trainings can be found. In locations like Bangalore, Delhi, Shimla and Dehradun in the Himalayas or in Goa, more and more Indian enterprises are entering the market of offshore training. Every year, thousands of professionals from Europe and the United States travel to India to get trained by Indian IT experts. Also, experts from countries where training offers are hardly available, make use of offers in India. Even U. S. military experts who are in charge of setting up an IT infrastructure in Afghanistan get their training in India, in order to save costs.

"The idea for this kind of offshore trainings just came by chance," says Rohit Aggarwal, who today runs a number of training centers in Delhi, in the Himalayas and Goa. The entrepreneur had been repeatedly asked by IT experts visiting India as back-packing tourists if there were any inexpensive training courses for foreigners in India. Aggarwal, who already led an IT service company, found this idea more and more charming. "Originally, the trainings were intended as a small additional business. But the demand was enormous."

Extensive trainings are available at monthly rates ranging from 2,500 to 4,000 euros, depending on provider and accommodation. Usually, the costs for course materials and rates, flights, accommodation with three daily meals are included – as well as the exam fee. The courses, when successfully done, lead to a certification; this is what software companies are willing to pay for. Some special courses are so difficult that less than 10 percent of students pass the exam the first time. Therefore, to make sure that the European IT experts take their required certificates home, some training offers in India by default include three trials to pass the exam.

These certificates are also the reason for Peter Eisert to be here. Now he is sitting in Delhi, where the temperature is at 43 degrees Celsius. Over his head, the fan is humming, and the German is visibly tired. From 8:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m. every day, he takes an individual training in order to acquire all the skills needed to master the complicated software. The lessons are held in English. It is not exactly easy to understand since his female trainer speaks English with a hard Indian accent. After a couple of days, however, communication between them is going well. Every morning, a driver collects Eisert and other students, in an air-conditioned car and brings them to the training center. In the evening, they are taken back to the hotel, where they, after dinner, continue learning by reading and acquiring theoretical knowledge. This takes place six days every week, since Saturdays are workdays in India. This leaves little time for sightseeing.

"This is no holiday at all. Indians know why they call this a *boot camp*," says Peter Eisert. In order to make the journey pay itself, he booked three courses. The IT expert is irritated by the fact that he does not receive any financial support from the employment agency. On the contrary—his allowance was even reduced, since he is abroad for more than 21 days, which means that he is no longer entitled to the entire sum. His colleagues from Belgium, who registered for the same courses, get extra financial support from their job agency. In Belgium, authorities pay additional allowances to support professional training – no matter where it takes place.

Nevertheless, Eisert is convinced that the long journey and the additional costs will pay. "In Germany, I'd pay three times as much or even more. However, I think it doesn't hurt if you've been in India before so that you are prepared for the conditions here," says the software developer, who has already taken several trips to India.

"Training in India is no holiday at all," states Andrew Opten from London, who has come here together with his two colleagues Bocar Mbaie and Lucas Wuarunek to take a five weeks' training in Delhi. They also booked three courses. Their employer, a large IT company, finds this an inexpensive way to have their staff well-qualified. "All three of us are in charge of highly sensitive network areas in our company, and we often face problems which we have to fix by means of self-learning processes. This sometimes takes days and is thus very ineffective. Also, our company is changing their software. So we asked our employer for a professional training," tells us Andrew Opten.

In the UK, they found offers, but a four-day course would cost five times as much as the training offered in India. So the decision was clear. Although they have been in the capital of India for three weeks now, they haven't seen much of India. "You are sitting in the computer lab all the day and take one-on-one courses. This is quite hard," says Bocar Mbaie. Together, however, they will take the challenge of the Indian IT boot camp, reassures Lucas Wuarunek. Their company will reward their qualification not only with the free training, but also with a raise in salary. "This, of course, motivates us, too," says Andrew Opten.

Even if the software and the equipment are state-of-the-art and the trainers are well-qualified IT experts in this country, one cannot expect Western standards when taking training in India. The hotel is more like a youth hostel, the rooms are equipped with what is absolutely necessary: bed, table, locker and – air-conditioning system. The hotel has a WLAN connection, which is a bit slow. Some Europeans have their problems with the climate and Indian food. This isn't always easy to cope with.

Peter Eisert is sure these things will not keep him from following his plan: He hopes to pass all the exams. He expects to considerably improve his chances on the German job market. "Maybe, I become a freelancer again. The technological and programming skills I am getting here will place me in an excellent position at home."