

Curry, tikka or an offshore ICT training? Indian training company aims at western ICT professionals

People in ICT are quite used to outsourcing to foreign countries. But why not taking an ICT course in India? Computable visited an offshore training center in Delhi.

"Can I help you choosing a dish?" asks a young Australian in a T-shirt and jeans. He recognizes the desperate look of people choosing a dish at an Indian fast-food restaurant for the first time. The menu on the wall shows over 60 meals and behind you impatient Indians are queuing. "You like hot curry, tikka, a mixed chivda or a mild dish from the south of the country?"

The Australian turns out to be in Delhi for an ICT training. Right next to the restaurant is located the training centre of Koenig Solutions. This Indian training company provides western ICT professionals with training to prepare for certification of nearly all large vendors such as Cisco, Novell, Red Hat, Microsoft, Oracle, and soon also IBM and Adobe. The company has its own accommodation services, training centers and trainers in order to guarantee quality.

"Savings are the main benefit of offshore training," explains CEO Rohit Aggarwal. Where an average MCSE training would cost about 5000 euro in Europe, in India the cost is about 2000 euro. "And that includes return flight, 14-days of accommodation and all meals," he quickly adds. Batches consist of a maximum of 5 students, but one-on-one training is also possible. And if hot and busy Delhi is not your cup of tea, you can get training in Goa or in quieter places in Northern India. It doesn't happen that often that Dutch ICT professionals visit Koenig solutions. "Getronics and ING used to send five to ten people at a time," Aggarwal explains, "but this slowed down when the companies started cutting back on acquiring new staff." Before the recession, half of the students originated from Europe, but now it is roughly 20%.

Most students come from countries such as Nigeria, Australia and the Gulf states.

The training centre itself doesn't look very modern. It is located in the basement and on the third floor of an old office building along a busy road with a hectic procession of cars and tuktuks. Inside peace and quiet prevails. The small training rooms, often no more than 20 square meters in size, are located along a narrow corridor. Through the windows of the doors you always see a couple of students, working hard on notebooks or desktop PCs.

Philippe Derouard is one of them. The 49 year old Frenchman has been in Delhi for 3 weeks and tomorrow he has his seventh MCSE exam. He lost his job as an ICT-manager at a chemicals company and hopes the MCSE-certificate will give him a better perspective on finding a new job. The 49 year old is so focused that he doesn't allow himself some off time to visit the city. Swiss freelance ICT professional Jose Tapia also does little else than study for exams. He is 48 and has been at Koenig for over 2,5 months, also to better profile himself in the job market. Both men are very happy about their trainer, and particularly about the cost of the training. "But cultural differences remain," says Tapia. "If you are someone with little patience, you shouldn't go to India." Koenig Solutions was established in 1993 and caters for foreign ICT professionals exclusively since 2002. The company offers training in numerous certifications such as MCSE and CCIE. Courses take from 3 weeks up to 3 months.