

## **UK skills providers sign up to offer services to fill India's skills gap**

*UKIBC signs MoU with Centum Learning Limited during David Willetts' India visit*

India's economic story is gripping; its political influence, growing. The role of India's rising young workforce is crucial in fuelling this growth. But this 'demographic dividend' (the population over 64 versus the age of the population under 25 expressed as percentage) cannot come from the numbers alone; India will also require its young population to have the skills that increase productivity and output. Currently, only 5 per cent of Indians aged 19-24 formally learn a trade. However, the necessity to improve vocational education and training to reap the demographic dividend of a young population is recognised at the highest levels of government, the business community and civil society. India is exploring ways to train 500 million people by 2020; both in blue collar and white collar jobs, across urban and rural India.

To help India achieve this target, the UK India Business Council signed an MoU with Centum Learning Limited, a Bharti Associate company, during Minister of State for Universities and Science, David Willetts' visit on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The objective is to deliver aspects of Centum Learning's Joint Venture with the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC). The initiative seeks to train over 12 million individuals over a 10 year period, in 383 districts of India. It is estimated that the project will require 3500 skill instructors, with 200,000 to be trained in the above mentioned sectors.

Minister Willetts said, "The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding is a significant step towards creating the highly skilled workforce that India requires to match its fast economic growth. In order for India to meet its ambition for 500 million trained people across the country, it's important that partnerships are formed to ensure that training and skills are delivered in the most effective and informed way. I wish the UK India Business Council and Centum Learning Limited the best of luck in driving the country's skills agenda forward."

The UKIBC formed the UK India Skills Forum (UKSIF), as a collective umbrella for the UK skills and vocational training providers of all types from basic "blue-collar" trainers to higher end skills providers such as engineering etc.

UKIBC CEO Richard Heald said, "The UKISF is a one stop shop for UK skills providers. It has pioneered a consortia-based approach to the Indian market. In this way, we are able to mobilize an entity which can meet the requirements of large scale skills projects which are necessary if India is to achieve its goal of training 500 million people by 2020. The UK has an internationally recognised competitive advantage in skills provision. The shared history, language and culture between the two countries should mean that the UK is regarded as the partner of choice to drive forward the skills agenda in India. It will not only help India in increasing its productivity but will help address the social, economic disparity in terms of region, gender, etc."

Centum Learning CEO & Executive Director, Sanjeev Duggal, said, "Centum Learning, a Bharti associate company, is committed to bring to India: global standards in content, skill certification standards & internationally certified skilled instructors and this initiative is one step in that direction". UKISF will assist Centum Learning with appropriate introduction to UK businesses that are part of its member base and may be relevant to the setting up of such Institute.

The UKISF offers UK based skills providers a single entity through which they can collectively seek opportunities in this area and to engage with Indian entities with the objective to provide education and vocational training skills as required. On the other hand, the UKISF offers Indian companies – both public and private – a single platform through which they can access the broadest range of skills provision.

The UKISF will carry out a scoping exercise to assess the needs of the Assessor and Trainer Institute (ATI) with Centum Learning. The recommendation for the scoping exercise will inform the implementation of a pilot project ATI. Once the pilot project has been suitably evaluated, the project will be "rolled out" across six sectors - automotive, retail, telecoms, hospitality, construction and healthcare. The relevant skills providers within the UKISF will provide a range of services including training and accreditation, sharing curriculum and certification and supply of materials and equipment.

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**Notes to Editor**

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**About UK India Business Council:** The UK India Business Council ("UKIBC") is the premier membership-led organisation promoting bilateral trade and investment between the UK and India.

**About UK India Skills Forum:** UKIBC formed the UK India Skills Forum (UKSIF) in April 2009, for which it provides the secretariat. The UKSIF comprises UK based skills providers to collectively seek opportunities in this area and to engage with Indian entities with the objective to provide education and vocational training skills as required. It is responsible for the coordination of business input to UKTI-led Government-to-Government activity in these sectors, including the promotion of business-to-business activity. The UKSIF is Co- Chaired by Mr. RCM Reddy, CEO IL&FS CDI and Mr. Roy Newey, Group Board Director, A4e Ltd.

**About Centum Learning:** Centum Learning, a Bharti Associate Company, provides end-to-end learning and skill-building solutions aimed at impacting productivity of businesses and the nation at large. Besides, it also provides higher education to youth for transforming the face of modern India.

In the learning domain, Centum Learning's solutions cover the entire spectrum ranging from Learning Process Outsourcing, Custom Content Development, Training through Blended Learning Programmes, Executive Coaching and Performance Coaching to Process Management and Certification. Centum Learning has recently entered into a strategic collaboration with Bharti Airtel, Africa to enhance productivity & business outcome across 15 countries in Africa.

In partnership with National Skill Development Corporation, Centum Learning has also established Centum Workskills India Ltd. to skill 1.2 crore people and make them employable by providing livelihood opportunities.

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