

## US to help provide skills training to 400 million Indians

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A Skill Development Centre in Ludhiana. (Source: Express photo by Gurmeet Singh)

In a boost to India's ambitious skill development programme, the US will collaborate with it on a number of education-related projects to help the country achieve its goal of providing such training to 400 million people in the next decade.

"We recognise that higher education and vocational training are essential to economic development, and we remain committed to strengthening our exchanges of students, scholars, and technical knowledge," the State Department yesterday said.

The new six-week Community College Administrator Program, sponsored by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, started on September 20 this year, the US said.

Through this programme, Indian administrators from post-secondary vocational and technical institutions and Indian officials with higher education planning responsibilities intend to complete a program of professional development with Florida State University and Santa Fe College.

The US has also announced a study tour for officials from Indian state-level skills development entities to study the US network of community colleges with the objective of developing expertise and contacts to help the state build a more effective vocational education system.

Building on its long-standing partnership and support for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has said that it intends to partner with Duke University and Research Triangle International to support the Indian Institute of Technology – Gandhinagar.

By convening the expertise of US higher education institutions, USAID is advancing the goal of the January 2015 bilateral Joint Declaration of Intent on Providing Support to IITs to intensify collaborations in research and development and its engagement with industry and entrepreneurship, the State Department said.

Working with the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) program of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, the US said its intention is to pursue the expansion of the USIEF-administered Fulbright specialist programme in 2016, to allow more American professors the opportunity to conduct trainings and workshops in Indian institutes of higher education and advance our shared goal of increased technical exchanges.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI) yesterday also signed a memorandum of understanding to foster Indo-US cooperation on standards and conformity assessment.

The MoU would cover areas such as smart cities and infrastructure, renewable energy, water and sanitation while also enhancing the scope of the Standards Portal that was created by both organisations in partnership with the Indian Bureau of Industrial Standards in 2007, said Joe Bhatia, president of ANSI.