



Mindful start of the school day drawing mandalas in base group session

KED

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The Power of Perspectives

Highlights in this issue include:

1. **Teacher exchanges:** Swedish teachers, who have worked alongside their Network counterparts in the Netherlands and India, share their findings.
2. **Student exchanges:** Another rewarding exchange visit to India for students from Kunskapsskolan Nacka in Sweden.
3. **Pedagogical practices based on KED principles:** Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan, Jeddah uses the Reggio Emilia approach to learning and explains how it aligns with KED basics.

Connecting and collaborating across cultures make us discover new things and realize things we have in common. Seeing something from another point of view is a powerful learning strategy. Dónal from Kunskapsgymnasiet Malmö gives us some ideas on how to apply it in your classrooms.

The exchanges can also help us reach our bigger goals as an organization, as witnessed by the students from Nacka exploring global sustainability practices during their time in India. Together, we continue to cooperate, learn, and take action for a peaceful and sustainable future.

I hope this issue inspires you to take time for reflection. Senior KED teacher

Karin from Sweden explains why she is bringing back the concept of Group Reflection Sessions to Kunskapsskolan Lund after her teacher exchange at Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon.

What question do you want to explore from a new perspective? I found an interesting one in the new KED Talk episode, now available on all podcast platforms: What if the world's current leaders had been educated at a KED school? A new perspective on global politics, indeed.

Cecilia Aronsson

Network Director
cecilia.aronsson@kunskapsskolan.com



The Reggio Emilia philosophy puts the student at the center just like the KED Program

How Reggio Emilia Supports our KED Journey at Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan, Jeddah

Chryssa Stampouliadou is the Early Years Teaching and Learning Lead at Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan, Jeddah

At Nün Academy, our Early Years (EY) department is rooted in a child-centered philosophy. We see children as capable, naturally creative and curious, with a strong potential to grow and learn. We know that they learn best through play, active exploration, and their interactions with others and their environment.

As a KED school, we are committed to personalized learning, student agency, and collaborative education. Our goal is to provide the strongest possible

foundation for every child's educational journey. To achieve this, we sought an approach for our youngest learners that not only aligns with these values but elevates them - and found that harmony in the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

What is the Reggio Emilia Philosophy?

The Reggio Emilia philosophy, developed in post-World War II Italy, emphasizes child-driven and inquiry-based exploration, respect for children's unique voices, and the role of the environment

as a third teacher. It sees learning as a dynamic, interactive process of constructing meaning that is unique for each child and generated in a playful, aesthetic, emotional, and relational dimension. These principles align seamlessly with those of the KED Program.

How is the Reggio Emilia philosophy the perfect getaway for KED?

By integrating the Reggio Emilia approach in our EY program, we nurture a culture where children lead learning,

develop critical thinking skills, and form meaningful connections with the world around them. This strong foundation prepares them for the personalized learning experiences that define the KED Program. Our culture is one of...

Curiosity:

The more curious a child is, the more they learn. With the Reggio Emilia approach in our EY program, we nurture our students' curiosity by curating our environment in ways that spark interest, wonder, collaboration, and internal motivation for discovery. Learning emerges from the students' interests and the questions they bring to the team. This aligns with the KED Program's flexible learning environments that foster exploration and discovery.



Learning is
a dynamic
process,
unique for
each child

Personalization and Independence:

Seeing our young learners through the Reggio Emilia perspective, we see them as active participants in their learning process. We encourage them to ask questions, make choices, solve problems, work collaboratively, and express their thinking, ideas, and emotions in 100 different ways. We act as guides, carefully observing the students' play urges and listening to their ideas, ensuring that learning is meaningful and connected to the real world. This mirrors the KED Program's personalized and student-driven learning.

Collaboration:

The Reggio Emilia approach views learning as a shared journey where collaboration leads to deeper understanding. At Nün, we embrace this value and foster collaboration between students, teachers, families, and the community. We aim to learn from and alongside each other and engage in close, reciprocal interactions. This mirrors the KED Program's emphasis on coaching, collaboration, and a supportive learning environment.

Ownership and Responsibility:

The Reggio Emilia approach focuses on the learning process rather than the final outcome. Part of the teacher's role is observing and documenting each child's and the group's learning processes, making them visible. These documentation practices act as a mirror, allowing both teachers and children to see their growth, revisit their thinking, reflect, refine, and build on their experiences. As a result, children take ownership and responsibility for their learning journey. This aligns with the KED Program's continuous reflection and goal-setting practices, allowing for ongoing adjustments and personalized support.

As a KED school, choosing Reggio Emilia for our Early Years is more than a program decision; it is a commitment to valuing children's natural curiosity and creativity while fostering a lifelong love of learning. Together, these philosophies form a pathway where every child thrives as an active participant in their educational journey.

Chryssa Stampouliadou
Early Years Teaching and Learning Lead,
Nün Academy Kunsapsskolan, Jeddah

New Perspectives on How to Give New Perspectives

Nova, the school's therapy dog, plays a vital role in supporting the students at Dr. Nassau College Aa en Hunze

Currently, I am at KED Partner School Dr. Nassau College Aa en Hunze in Gieten, located in the north of the Netherlands. You might wonder why a high school teacher from Sweden has traveled to the Netherlands to visit a middle school in the foggy and cold weather. The answer lies in my desire to learn how drama and role play can be harnessed as tools for education. Thanks to the KED Network, I have

the incredible opportunity to visit schools in other countries and learn from colleagues around the world.

The classes where I will be observing the use of drama and role play are scheduled for later in the week. However, being in a new environment has already sparked fresh ideas and reflections. I am interested in using drama and role play because it helps increase student engagement and gives students the ability to take on material from new perspectives. I find that students

that get to "live" material by acting and using drama get a deeper understanding of it.

One of the most striking differences between Dr. Nassau College in Gieten and Kunskapsgymnasiet in Malmö was apparent as soon as I arrived. A staff member greeted me with a sniff! Nova, the school's therapy dog, plays a vital role in supporting the students. She offers them a chance to take a break from the pressures of school by going for a walk or simply sitting with her for some calming moments. I will admit that scratching one of my "colleagues" behind the ears felt a bit



Dónal Gaynor from upper secondary KED school Kunskapsgymnasiet Malmö collaborates with Nellie de Roon at KED Partner School Dr. Nassau College Aa en Hunze

unusual at first, but it quickly became a soothing highlight of my day.

As a high school teacher, I am not accustomed to the concept of a base group that meets at the start of each day. Despite this difference, I recognized many elements of Kunskapsskolan's teaching model during my visit. I had the chance to join several coaching sessions, and the discussions are remarkably similar to

those we have with our students, even with the age difference. These conversations have sparked fruitful discussions about how coaching can help students plan their studies, set goals, and prepare for challenges both inside and outside the classroom.

The staff at Dr. Nassau College, especially my host Nellie, have made me feel incredibly welcome. Even without

speaking Dutch, I have been able to participate in lessons, staff training sessions, coaching meetings, base group activities, and workshops. Observing how the KED Program is implemented in a different educational system has highlighted the strengths of personalized learning.

Conversations with staff and students have also given me valuable insights into how we can further enhance our support for students' development and learning back home in Sweden. Above all, students at all levels need help with setting goals and more importantly breaking them down into actionable steps to reach the goals. At Dr. Nassau College, I have seen lots of good use of the logbook as a concrete way to get students to write by hand their own planning. The use of an analogue tool helps the students to have an overview. Both coaches and teachers are getting students to write in their logbooks and plan ahead how they will complete the work.

Then we had a lot of interesting discussions about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. We know that students perform best when they have their own motor and are intrinsically motivated, but in reality many are motivated extrinsically by grades and the need to pass exams. This is something we also work a lot with at Kunskapsgymnasiet Malmö and a really important factor is the relationship with the teacher. Helping all our students find intrinsic motivation takes time and effort, and like our Dutch colleagues, we work a lot with helping our students keep up through extrinsic sources of motivation.

I look forward to applying these perspectives in my teaching.

Dónal Gaynor
English and Geography Teacher,
Kunskapsgymnasiet Malmö

The Way to a Peaceful and Sustainable Future

We made dream catchers from recycled material

In mid-January, eight students and two teachers from Kunskaps-skolan Nacka traveled to Gurgaon, India, for a one-week exchange. We were met by a fascinating country that is the complete opposite of Sweden. We were shocked by the chaotic traffic, all the litter, the polluted air, and the class differences in society. At the same time, we got to experience a fantastic culture, eat incredibly delicious food, and be welcomed with unparalleled hospitality.



At the Sustainability Park, the teacher explained to us how water can be purified by flowing through roots



Gabriel and Sharv from Kunskapsskolan Nacka (in the middle) during Indian cooking lesson at KKG

We were divided into two groups, with one attending Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon (KKG) and the other Kunskapsskolan International (KI). We had different programs, but the main theme of the week was sustainability. At KKG, we observed regular base group meetings and lessons, but we also had a special program together with the Indian host students. On Monday, we learned Indian dance. Not so easy, but very fun! On Tuesday, we visited a Sustainability Park, where we learned about sustainable building and farming methods. Most of it seemed obvious to us, such as solar panels on rooftops and composting. However, it was valuable for our students to see how far we have come in Sweden while also recognizing that a populous country like India is working hard for improvement.

In the middle of the week, we visited a daycare center for children living in the slums. The children, who are 3-13 years old, come there during the day to receive education and meals. Everything is run through private donations. It was the most memorable visit in my teaching career so far. Our students introduced themselves and talked about Sweden. Spontaneously, they came up with the idea to teach the Indian children how to dance the traditional Swedish frog dance (Små grodorna). They then danced and sang different songs together. Some of our students played badminton with the older children, while others taught the younger ones to play tag. Seeing the joy in

both groups of students was touching. Our students were truly moved by the visit, and I am very proud of them. There was no holding back tears.

On Thursday, we visited a fashion designer who creates clothing from environmentally friendly materials. She also uses leftover fabric to sew beautiful designer clothes. We participated in a workshop where we made greeting cards using leftover fabric pieces and beads. Another rewarding visit where we were warmly welcomed.

The KED students from Sweden and India visited a local daycare center for underprivileged children



Emil, Alice, Ebba and Sophia from Kunskapsskolan Nacka joined their Indian buddies to make cards from spare material at a fashion designer's studio



Collaboration between Swedish and Indian buddies during a base group session at KI

On the last day, we participated in regular lessons at KKG, and we also got to cook delicious Indian food. Then KI held its annual carnival on Saturday, in which our students participated. This year's theme focused on the traditions of different Indian states. The students dressed in traditional Indian clothing, explored colorful stalls, tasted regional cuisines, and immersed themselves in cultural performances.

As a teacher, it was rewarding to see that Kunskapsskolan's Program for teach-

ing and learning works the same on the other side of the world, with personal coaching, base group sessions, and workshops. Similar to us, the teachers in India feel that the most rewarding part of working at Kunskapsskolan is the strong relationships they build with their students.

In the afternoons and evenings, the host families took care of the Swedish students. They organized a fantastic and fun program for them every day.



Leo from Kunskapsskolan Nacka with his buddy Kanav at the carnival

The students not only got to experience Indian culture but also enjoyed activities like Escape Room and paintball. In the meantime, my colleague and I got to try various Indian dishes and explore local culture. We walked barefoot into a gilded Sikh temple and then participated in a 'langar', where we sat on the floor and ate food with our hands. It was a completely new experience, showing us how a community can support and care for one another.

I believe that understanding how people live and think in different countries is key to creating a better world. An exchange like this gives our students the opportunity to develop that understanding. Our circumstances and cultures vary greatly in different parts of the world, yet at our core, we are the same. We all want a planet that will last for many generations to come and a world where we can live in peace.



KED teachers Love and Annika from Sweden with their local hosts Shibani and Sanjay going into the Sikh temple

Annika Stenman
Senior Teacher, Kunskapsskolan Nacka

Best Reflection Session of All Time

Karin L Svensson recently completed a KED Teacher Exchange project in India, hosted by Chitra Vishakha

On my first day at Kunskaps-skolan Gurgaon (KKG), I was overwhelmed by all the new names, but I was warmly welcomed by everyone. The school was huge - and empty. The students were at home due to government restrictions related to air pollution, so the school was in hybrid mode, alternating between online and offline teaching. I was impressed by the teachers' adaptability.

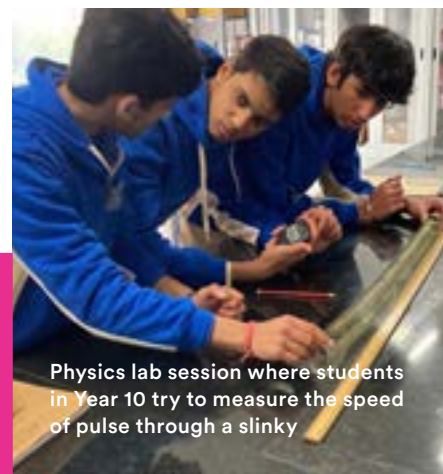
The purpose of my visit was to learn more about science classes and laboratory work. I had some insightful conversations about the challenges of conducting science labs online. I could relate to this, recalling my own online classes during the pandemic and the difficulties of doing lab work from home. I also had genuine and interesting discussions with the science teachers about the value of having laboratory work as a way to

deepen students' understanding of science, and we all agreed on the importance of these sessions.

I had the opportunity to interview students about laboratory work, and they had a slightly different perspective. They didn't fully realize the importance of lab work in the learning process, which made me reflect on how to make this clearer for students in the future.



Group Reflection Session with students at KKG



Physics lab session where students in Year 10 try to measure the speed of pulse through a slinky

When the students were back at school, I observed some physics lab sessions. I was impressed by the quality of the lessons and the students' engagement, and how they did all the calculations without a calculator.

ease, and I realized that many of them share the same passion for football as my students. To my surprise, they even knew more Swedish football players than I did.



Chemistry teacher Divyja conducting a chemistry lesson online

Vishakha was so kind to show me India outside the school too. We took a road trip to the Taj Mahal, which was an adventure in itself. We drove early in the morning through thick smog and experienced the unpredictable traffic jams in India. But we made it, and I had an experience of a lifetime. The Taj Mahal is, by far, the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.



A teacher exchange brings out both differences and important things we have in common

I also observed some Group Reflection Sessions (GRS), where students prepared a 4-minute speech in small groups. This time, the topic was online behavior and social media. During these sessions, only clarifying questions were allowed, so that everyone's opinion could be heard, even the quieter, more reserved students. I was inspired to implement something similar with my own students.



Celebrating the Indian festival Lohri at KKG in hopes of good harvests to come

Base group 9D gave me a warm welcome to their coaching sessions and base group time. I immediately felt at

In summary, I was deeply impressed by KKG, and struck by how they, with rules and respect, connected with the students. It reminded me a lot of my own school, Kunskapsskolan Lund.

I also experienced some Gul Gape (too spicy for me), cricket games (I still can't understand the rules), and some genuine heart-to-heart conversations with Vishakha about being a teacher, a mom, and a woman in today's world.

Thank you, Vishakha. Thank you, KKG. And thank you, India.

Karin L Svensson
Senior Science Teacher, Kunskapsskolan Lund

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