



KED INSPIRED GREAT OAKS CHARTER SCHOOL, NYC

# KED

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## “Can’t Take Your Call Right Now, Busy Growing Grit”

by Cecilia Aronsson  
KED Network Director

In Sweden, the winter is long this year. It takes grit to endure the snowy pavements, cold temperatures and lack of spring sunlight. Luckily, we get plenty of grit from the KED Program to keep us going. We all have goals for ourselves, short-term and long-term, that require a lot of work – difficult, repetitive and personally challenging work. Through hard work, perseverance and ambition, we eventually reach goals higher than we thought possible. Powered by grit – a skill that KED schools invite students to practice daily by accepting challenging goals, persisting and trying again. And again.

We are not alone in embracing the virtue of grit. It is one of the hottest trends these days, especially the idea that grit can be nourished in people by factors in the environment. A

school can be the perfect greenhouse for grit, says Torkel Klingberg, Professor of cognitive neuroscience and specialist in children’s brain development at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden.

When the winter seems endless, it is comforting to know that we are working in the grit greenhouse.

[cecilia.aronsson@kunskapsskolan.com](mailto:cecilia.aronsson@kunskapsskolan.com)





## A Year Abroad in NYC: An Interview with Swedish KED Student Rut

by DJ Hartigan

Tutor Corps Director, KED Inspired Great Oaks Charter School, NYC

Rut is in Year 6 at KED Inspired Great Oaks Charter School, NYC. Before moving to New York City, Rut studied at the Swedish KED school Kunskapsskolan Krokslätt in Gothenburg.

**Question:** What brings you and your family to NYC?

**Answer:** I'm here with my whole family (mom, dad, and younger brother). We've visited NYC before and we really love the city. When we saw on the KED website that they have a school they partner with in NYC,

we thought it could be a great opportunity. We've always liked the KED approach and we wanted to get the full NYC experience. We plan to return to Sweden in late June.

**Q:** What do you like the most about living in NYC? What do you like the least?

**A:** There is something always happening in NYC. In Sweden, I live in a small place that doesn't have a lot of action. But here, there is always a lot of traffic, a lot of people, a lot of different kinds of people. You can find every kind of person here – it's cool. I haven't been

here long enough to really say I dislike anything (other than the cold). I like having the chance to try new things.

**Q:** How is the school system, the culture, the set of traditions and values, different in the US than it is in Sweden?

**A:** Many schools are different in the US and it depends on where you are. In Sweden I first attended a regular (non-KED) school, but then I wanted to try something different so I went for a KED school. In the regular school people were very similar, but at

Kunskapskolan Krokslätt people had different cultures. It seems that way here too, it's a lot more mixed. I like that because you get to experience other religions and belief systems. The coaching and logbooks work similar here to how they work in Sweden.

**Q:** In what ways are you able to own your learning? How do you take responsibility for your learning?

**A:** I use my logbook a lot. I love it and I think it's one of the best things about the system. I write down my homework and my assignments – it makes school so much easier. After every lesson I update it. I know what I should do when I get home and I use my time in school to get my work done. To succeed in a school like this you need to take responsibility. If you don't have a lot of personal responsibility, it can be hard. In Math and English, I have the potential to earn Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The teacher helps me work at the level I am capable of. In Health and Social Studies everyone works on the same thing. This can be hard for me because I haven't been here for very long and I'm not as strong in English.

**Q:** What motivates you to work hard? Is it different than what motivated you to work hard at your Swedish school?

**A:** I didn't get grades in Sweden because grades don't start until the 6th grade. Now that I receive grades, I think I am working a bit harder. I am motivated to get good grades because I want to have a good future. I want to do as well as I can in every subject because I want to do the best I am capable of.

**Q:** What does the expression "KED Inspired" mean to you?

**A:** It makes me feel good, it's a good technique. The KED system is great because you can work on the stuff that is important and challenging for you. The teachers want to make it a great experience for you. All the teachers really enjoy their work. This is important to me. The coaching is very important too.

**Q:** How do you see your classmates responding to the KED Inspired philosophy of education at Great Oaks?

**A:** I see them using their logbooks and participating in coaching sessions. I think they enjoy it and that it is good for them to work this way because it will make things much easier for them eventually.

**Q:** What is your relationship like with your teachers and coaches at Great Oaks?

**A:** Good! Every teacher and tutor knows that I'm from Sweden and that English is my second language. This is important to me. Everyone is very good at explaining things to me. I feel safe with them and I feel good being here. I know how teachers teach the KED way and I know how to set goals in this format. I'm glad I chose this school.

**Q:** Have you set a Life Goal? What are you interested in pursuing as a career?

**A:** I want to be a writer. I've always loved to write stories – ever since I started school. I've written a lot of stories in Swedish. I love to create. I journal almost every day. I think it's going to be fun to read everything when I grow older. It will also help me to remember the experience here.

**Q:** What other goals do you have for this year?

**A:** I want to be less shy. I can easily be shy – less so when I was in Sweden but now that I speak in English I can get nervous when talking with my friends and teachers. It can be difficult to explain myself but I am trying my best. Overall, it's going well.





# The Perfect Environment for Student Progress

by John Wright

Director of Inclusion, Head of Year 11, Shevington High School

I have just returned from a fantastic visit to Sweden. Anna Hallgren along with her colleagues at Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra gave me the warmest of welcomes on a frozen, snowy week. Anna was a brilliant host and gave me a great insight into the Swedish Education System.

It was an absolute pleasure to meet the students, who have such a mature and forward-thinking approach to their personal and academic development.

During my week at Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra, I had the opportunity to observe and take an active role in many lessons, study workshops and personal coaching sessions, where I could get a valuable insight into how coaching has empowered students to be the driving force in meeting their own potential.

It was amazing to listen to the students discuss their progress in their coaching sessions. The most striking and refreshing aspect of these sessions is how independent and resilient the students are, when it comes to organizing and discussing their work. The close relationships they have built with their teachers was key, allowing students to

identify solutions to their own barriers to learning and progress.

The use of their student logbook is an effective way to evidence what had been discussed in coaching sessions and keep action points moving forwards.

The study workshops were an incredible demonstration of personalized, independent learning. The students were fully engaged in their learning tasks and when students did encounter problems, they would use research, as well as ask their fellow classmates to find the best solution.

The classes had a positive working atmosphere, students were fully focused on the tasks in hand and there was a real thirst for learning in the classroom.

I was amazed by the students' ambition and motivation. Many students, particularly in Year 9, had a clear plan of what they wanted to do in their future, after they had finished their exams in the summer, many thinking of attending colleges and universities.

The teachers at Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra put the needs of their students first. Every teacher had established outstanding relationships with their students. As a result, the children trust their teachers. The relationships between teachers and students are key when setting and reviewing goals.

As the Director of Inclusion and Head of Year 11 at Shevington High School, I fully intend on sharing my experiences in Sweden with my Year 11 students, emphasizing how motivation and resilience are key personal attributes that can lead to a successful final year at school.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable week. I enjoyed watching how highly motivated and independent the students of Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra were and how dedicated they were to make the greatest possible progress. The school had a friendly, yet diligent atmosphere which I believe is the perfect environment to ensure that students make the greatest amount of personal and academic progress.

# Kunskapsskolan Gaining Power in Saudi Arabia

by Cecilia Aronsson  
KED Network Director

CEO and President of Kunskapsskolan Education Cecilia Carnefeldt recently visited Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan Jeddah and addressed the teaching staff on our shared vision to personalize learning for each student throughout the global KED Network.

I asked Cecilia a few questions about her experience in Saudi Arabia from a KED perspective.

**Question:** How many students go to Kunskapsskolan Jeddah, and which grades are active?

**Answer:** Currently, 170 students are enrolled covering six grades from Nursery (2–3-year-olds) to Year 3 (7–8-year-olds). This is almost the maximum capacity in the temporary school building.

**Q:** The school system, culture and traditions are very different in Saudi Arabia compared to other countries in the KED Network. How

does it affect the school's ability to work with the KED Program?

**A:** School systems are different everywhere. I strongly believe, however, that the core of the KED Program can be used everywhere. Regardless of location, students receive a personalized education. Our school in Saudi is bilingual, teaching in Arabic as well as in English. The school is providing a glocal (global and local) experience as it combines an international exam system (IGCSE) with Arabic and Islamic studies. This is appreciated by many families looking for a global approach without losing their national heritage.

**Q:** What is your strongest impression of Kunskapsskolan Jeddah?

**A:** Meeting these young students and getting an insight into how they can set their own goals. Students taking ownership of their learning is always what impresses me the most in our schools.

**Q:** What are the next important steps for Kunskapsskolan in Saudi Arabia?

**A:** Moving into the permanent purpose-built school building that is now being constructed. It will have a full capacity of more than 2,000 students from Nursery to High school.

Yassir Butt will take over the role of COO for Kunskapsskolan in Saudi Arabia after summer, when Johan Beckmann returns to Sweden after his successful leadership of the establishment of the first Saudi KED school.



# What We Learn from Exploring the KED Network: A Principal's Perspective

by David Råbesjö

Principal, Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping

I am the Head of Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping, an Upper Secondary KED school in Sweden. During eight hectic days in February, I got the chance to visit India together with ten students and five teachers from Swedish Upper Secondary KED schools. The purpose was to experience another part of the KED world. Additionally, our students got the possibility to conduct research as part of their diploma projects. We were all excited as we left Sweden on an early Saturday morning.

country's socioeconomic situation, of which we got a glimpse when spending many hours travelling through different areas by bus. Grand detached houses with a modern, minimalistic design watched by uniformed security guards, resembling California's gated communities. In the same city, Bangladeshi guest workers living in the simplest conditions. Their accommodation consists of brick walls and a roof of corrugated iron. This construction can

easily be dismantled and moved to another part of Delhi if necessary. These workers help building some of the thousands of concrete buildings that emerge in the suburbs. My first thought was that India's caste system, despite being abolished a long time ago, still exists and determines who you are and what you can become in life. It may of course have to do

with the fact that India has strong economic growth and is driven by the market economy.

Despite the great economic inequalities, it is satisfying to see figures describing that most children in India receive education and learn how to read and write. To me, this proves that education is the foundation of a good life and a prosperous society. In India, engineers are building houses and roads at a pace that makes Swedes envious.

There is also a well-developed health care system providing welfare, and committed teachers who contribute to future generations in schools.

At our visits to the two KED schools in Gurgaon, and the non-governmental organization Pratham Education, we met pupils who dream of changing and improving Indian society. Apparently, there is strong commitment to the creation of the new India. This can be achieved with the help of quality education, and this is where the KED Program comes in.

The realization that our schools make a difference is a precious souvenir that I bring home from India.



As expected, India offered many fantastic experiences such as all sorts of horns sounding in traffic, tasty and spicy food, as well as the friendly people with a courteous approach. India is a versatile country with extra everything.

Throughout the week, two thoughts struck me; India is a country that is changing and developing quickly, and education is a powerful tool to enable these changes.

I have visited a rather large number of countries, but India is the only place where I have come across such a diverse mixture of vehicles on the road. People pulling simple carriages, mopeds, buses sharing the compact traffic with newly manufactured Tesla cars. This is also a reflection of the

