



KED

Newsletter Issue 2 2017

March 13 2017

STUDENTS FROM KUNSKAPSSKOLAN ENKÖPING

You Are Doing the World a Service

by Cecilia Aronsson
KED Network Director

"Why do you want to establish the KED Program in other countries?" asks Emma.

She is a student at the upper secondary KED school in Norrköping – the town where the KED Program was first introduced at the opening of the first Kunskapsskolan school 17 years ago.

"Imagine that you are running a bakery," I reply to her.

Working day and night to realize your dream, you have created the perfect recipe for cinnamon buns. They are lighter, creamier and crustier than any bun that has ever been on sale in Norrköping – or anywhere else. People start queuing at 6 am, two hours

before the bakery opens, to get hold of your special delights.

After a while, you receive calls from bakeries in London, New Delhi and New York. They want to put your Swedish buns on their home markets. You are flattered, but more importantly, you think it is an opportunity to serve more people what you believe is the best baked good in the world. Better buns make the world a better place. The more places, the better. A piece of cake?

Now, imagine the KED Program as a bun. It is filling, it promotes growth and we are passionate about its taste and texture. It is our favorite school program every day of the week, and we believe it can be equally satisfying for students in other parts of the world. This is the reason we want to establish the KED Program in other countries.

You are doing the world a service. Just like a bun, it can be a real treat. In this issue, we highlight what it means to work for KED in a completely new setting.

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 **Kunskapsskolan**
EDUCATING THE GLOBAL GENERATION

Making the Classroom Global

by Mårten Blad

Social Science Teacher, Kunskapsgymnasiet Norrköping

Having worked for more than 12 years at Kunskapsgymnasiet in Norrköping, I can finally say that I have made my classroom global. As a teacher in history and social science, world affairs represent a cornerstone of my teaching. I try to add a global perspective to local matters and vice versa, but still, the material has often been limited to texts, documentaries and films. Very seldom have I encouraged my students to interact with people on the other side of the globe. This has changed now.

There are 20 students in my course "Globalization", all of them attending the final year of the Social Science Program. As part of the coursework, they are expected to collect primary data through interviews, observation and surveys – methods that make data come to life. Until now, the respondents have mostly been people in our local community, but last semester we did a comparative study of cultural aspects of globalization. For this purpose, students created surveys in Google Forms that were answered by KED students in both Sweden and India. When students could apply these methods in several countries, the impact was something extra.

"It was rewarding to connect with the Indian sample group as it enabled us to gain a greater understanding of our chosen topic, and a foundation to make a comparison between the Indian and Swedish attitudes," commented one participant in the course.

Two of the students and I were lucky (perhaps not the best expression – they worked hard for it) to be invited to the KED schools in Gurgaon in India to complete their diploma project. We were joined by students and teachers from two other Swedish upper secondary KED schools. A lot of preparation had been done in advance. Our students organized assessment exercises, interviews and surveys in India.

They had also arranged fund raising events for the benefit of the non-governmental organization Pratham, created to improve the quality of education in India. During our

stay, we visited some of their on-going projects and saw the impact of their work with our own eyes – unforgettable.

Regardless if the connection happens through an online survey, or face-to-face, the interaction enabled through the KED Network enriches our learning. Sometimes we get embarrassed by our prejudice. Sometimes we find that we see things differently. Most of the time though, we are happy by the fact that we have many values in common. The expression "global village" comes to mind.



KED Educators Need Challenges and Goals – Just Like Our Students

by Marcus Brunberg

Academic Head, Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon

It was not a simple decision to take on the role as Academic Head of Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon. My wife and daughters were not easily convinced by the idea of moving to India. For a month, we discussed arguments for and against this adventure.

After all, we decided to go for it. I moved first and my family joined me eight months later. To be honest, it was an easy decision for me. I was ready for a new challenge. I had worked for Kunskapsskolan in Sweden for 14 years, and been involved with the international expansion almost from the beginning, starting with the UK. For many years, I had nourished the dream of someday working abroad myself. This opportunity was too good to miss.

On paper, my job here in India pretty much resembles my job as a Principal in Kunskapsskolan in Sweden. In practice, it does not. The school has about 850 students and 80 teachers, along with support staff, and I interact a lot more with parents than I did in Sweden. There is no security net for the working class in Indian society, so it is important that you have a family to rely on. I witness this closer than a Swedish Principal ever does. Through this experience, I am learning to appreciate all aspects of life.

15 months later, I can reflect and see what I learned here in India so far. To be able to work here, you need to have an open mind, be prepared to change, and adapt. For me, this meant getting out of my comfort zone, and understanding that methods and procedures can be different but still valid. Before, I have been very dependent on my calendar and its structured order of events. In India, schedules change constantly.

Another difference relates to the process of introducing new ideas. As a Principal in Sweden, I liked to test new ideas to see what worked before coming to a resolution. When I tried the same approach in India, I noticed that my team perceived such an idea as a firm decision right from the start. As a leader, I had to change my approach to get the team



and the school in the right direction. I appreciate the progress we are making, although some days it is hard to accept the many swift changes with people showing up late or not showing up at all.

As employees of KED schools, we need to challenge ourselves and set goals – like we teach our students. If you are up for a change, I highly recommend trying a job with KED in another country. Far away in India, I found fantastic co-workers, students, support staff and parents who give me a challenge full of joy.



What It Is Like to Work as a Teacher in a Swedish KED School

by Michael Siu

Lead Teacher of Mathematics, Elizabeth Woodville School (South Campus)

Who completed his teacher exchange at Kunskapsskolan Tyresö in February 2017

A typical day of a teacher starts off with a cup of coffee once they arrive at school, their fuel to get them ready for 600 students. The day starts with a staff meeting in the morning for five minutes where the teachers can get news or any important information from SLT (school leadership team) and other colleagues. This then forms the basis of the next meeting for ten minutes as year groups meet to talk about the messages that they need to deliver to their base groups. Promptly straight after, teachers are given an hour to conduct coaching sessions with four students, while the rest of the base group could be either working in a different room or still at home as they start at the normal base group time at 9:15. Once the base group time is over at 9:45, the teachers would then be in either a workshop, where students of all ages can come for help or to present their work to progress onto the next stage, or be in a few 40 minute lessons dotted around the day. Typically, after all of that, the teachers' day concludes with a collaborative meeting in either a year group meeting or a team meeting (each once a week).

After interviewing at least half the body of staff, I get the sense that they love working for the school and that the main driver of the school is the ethos of both the teachers and

the students. The students in this school have a real pride in taking responsibility for their own learning. "We like to learn" or "we want to get good grades" are the constant reminders that motivate the students to excel in their subjects. They learn from a young age that responsibility is what drives their education forward, as it is them that plan their day and not their teachers. When asked why they want to come to this school, they said that they want to learn to "handle the responsibility" and that this is to "prepare them for the future". Many times, I was shocked to see how the students were willing to be independent learners and to seek out their own solutions before asking the teacher for help. From the teacher's point of view, this gives them more reason to enjoy coming to work every day. Because of the opportunities afforded by the school, the teachers are given every opportunity to communicate and collaborate with one another. This is an aspect that all teachers respect and use to help make the students become better learners. One thing I took from this experience is that all teachers are responsible for all students' progress; no where do I hear "these are my classes and my students" in these hallways. They understand and proudly show that the way to ensure school success is to be responsible for the learning of all students. This comes in the form of workshops, as this is the time when students of all years come to seek help – a time that students actively schedule to get in their day, a time where they produce good work.

However, it is not all smooth sailing when it comes to both teachers and students. No matter the country, as teachers, we struggle with the same concept of time. Most teachers in this school said that they are behind, or not in phase, with their marking, reporting, and preparations. This is somewhat comforting to know that despite our differences in students, we still struggle with the same issues. From a

student's point of view, I see that some students get stressed when they are not able to make the goals that they have set for themselves throughout the year. The desire to progress comes in the form of presenting their work to their teachers during the workshop session. When they are not able to meet this goal, they tend to fall behind in some of their other subjects or worse, the struggling student is left behind to seemingly never catch up later. However, with the help from their teachers, most of the students effectively manage to plan and if such a case arises, the teachers expertly guide them so that stress is alleviated.



Overall, I hope to instill these values of collaboration and responsibility for all students back in the UK as I feel that despite our differences we all share the same desire to help our students grow, one in which we draw value and reward when we finally see them succeed in not only their subjects but in life. To round up my visit, I heard a teacher state that "our greatest weakness is also one of our greatest strengths as we don't control the students". And rightfully so, they do not need to; the students control their own learning. I am thankful to the school and colleagues in supporting my visit to Sweden; the experiences I gained will enrich my teaching career no end – it is certainly something I would recommend to anyone who has the opportunity.





Life Is What I Make It

by Hoda Kasim Malla
KED Program Coordinator, Nün Academy,
Kunskapsskolan Jeddah

"Miss Hoda, can I ask you something. Why Saudi? What made you leave Sweden for Saudi?"

Let me tell you my reason. 32 years ago, I asked my father why we had to leave the place I called home, the Middle East, to come to Sweden.

"One day you will understand that a father will do the impossible for his children to receive the right education," he replied.

That day has come. The fact that Kunskapsskolan believes in personalized education with a student-centered approach, and is establishing an international network, gave me the opportunity to do what my father did for me. Things we take for granted as every child's right to learn through play, to be of different opinion than the teacher, to be encouraged and empowered, and to "come out of their shell" – like one parent described it – are not always given.

Sure, tax free income would be a reason to choose Saudi, but as you realize that you could make a real difference, directly or indirectly to children's, teachers' as well as parents' lives, the tax reason becomes secondary.

Our students have started getting used to the logbook, personal coaching sessions, mini lectures, workshops and the Learning Portal.

"I can give my son the education he needs in another school, but the relationship he has with his teachers at Nün Academy, Kunskapsskolan, and the life skills he gains here, mean the world to me," a parent told me today.

When I was first given the chance to become the KED Program Coordinator in Jeddah, I did not realize how diverse, challenging, infuriating and fascinating the job would be. I thought I was resilient, yet now I can add that skill to my CV. To work in this international organization gives you

great prospects of friendship and professional growth, as you are surrounded by highly skilled people in our KED Network – stretching from Sweden all the way to India.

The Middle East might not be for everyone; it depends on your character, your expectations, your attitude towards people, society, faith and politics. So far, my experience has been valuable, and leads me to my final reason: I believe in the Global Citizen; I believe in the power of education to make change, and change starts with our children.



Kunskapsskolan at Estonia's Biggest Educational Leadership Conference

by Christian Wetell, Deputy Director of Secondary Education at Kunskapsskolan Sweden and Mats Barlow, Principal Kunskapsskolan Örebro

Kunskapsskolan represented by Christian Wetell and Mats Barlow were invited, as the first international guests, by Estonian Headmaster Association to speak at their yearly conference. It was the ten-year anniversary of the popular conference, this year with a special focus on future skills. 400 school leaders attended the two-day conference in the city of Pärnu by the Baltic Coast.

Estonia is one of the world's highest achievers at PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) on all parts, but is looking to find their path into an educational system to both support a strong foundation

in traditional subject knowledge and at the same time develop all students' skills to master the challenges the future will hold.

Speakers addressing these matters were, among others, Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid, Estonian Minister of Education Mailis Reps and founding engineer of Skype Jaan Tallinn. Christian presented the KED Program, focusing on how to develop skills for the future:

"The core of the KED Program is to make sure that we always put the student and his or her goals at the center, and then offer a personalized education with personal coaching," he told the spectators.

Mats gave a presentation on how to use professional tools and methods such as base group sessions and personal coaching to support the development of students' mindset and ownership of their own learning.

It is a great opportunity to speak about the KED Program in new countries and in new settings. It gives us the possibility to help others and at the same time learn more about those great educational things that happen around our globe.



International in Enköping

by Minna Thunberg

Language Teacher and International Coordinator, Kunskapsskolan Enköping

And off they go! The last car with English students leaves the parking lot. Parents are taking them to the airport. Only seconds ago the Swedish host students were saying goodbye to their English guests. It was the end of a five-day long visit for 20 students and three teachers from Poynton High School to Kunskapsskolan Enköping. The students already knew each other from our trip to Manchester in December 2016.



The last car pulling out from the parking lot marks the end of this year's exchange. The feeling of emptiness blends with a sense of relief. Everything in our plan worked out. Most of the time everyone was happy. The students have experienced the life and culture in each other's countries. Mission accomplished!

My name is Minna Thunberg and I am the International Coordinator at Kunskapsskolan Enköping. I have been working here for 13 years now. I teach English and French, but ever since my first year, I have also organized different international activities at our school.

Since our school opened, we have had a yearly student exchange with a school in

England. Now, Poynton is our new partner school and the plan is to continue working together for many years to come. The idea is that a group of students visit the other school, stay in host families, get to spend time both in school and at home with their buddies, and discover differences and similarities in our ways of life. For the Swedish students, getting a chance to practice and improve one's English is a huge plus. For the teachers, it is an amazing opportunity to learn new methods and discuss learning and teaching with colleagues who do not necessarily have the same perspective.

When I started working with internationalization, I must admit that my reasons to do so were rather selfish. I had found teacher training courses, applied for grants through the European Union and gone off to France several times by myself, before I started involving other teachers and students.

Through the EU programs, first Comenius and now Erasmus+, we have accomplished many things that otherwise would have been impossible. Many teachers and even more students have been on exchange projects in France, Spain, Italy, Romania and Turkey. We have hosted people from these countries in our homes here in Enköping, which has been an exciting

and interesting experience for the entire families. Many of us, both students and teachers, have made friends for life.

Because of the network of schools and colleagues developed through these exchanges, students and their families have gone back to the countries we have visited. Members of staff have met up with each other on holidays; grown-up children of members of staff have visited and given lectures on their countries at some of the schools; one Swedish mom and her daughter's British host mom are now best friends and visit each other every year. I could go on forever about the positive side effects.

The most recent thing that happened is that our Year 9 student Emma just came back



from two weeks in Cartagena, Spain, where she has been studying at our partner school in the Erasmus+ strategic partnership. Her host Cristina is coming here in April. The official EU partnership is over, but we keep on going.

There are no limits to what you can do at your school regarding internationalization, if you are prepared to invest time and energy. Just keep two things in mind: form a team, instead of trying to do everything yourself, and make sure that your head of school gets the picture.

