



JEDDAH SCHOOL BUILDING

KED

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KED

Expeditions

Near and Far

by Cecilia Fällgren
KED Network Director

"I have been on a journey that changed my life." So begins Nelly's story about her student exchange at Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon. No matter where the KED Network takes you, the journey in Kunskapsskolan is going to change your life.

In this issue of the KED Newsletter, you can make yourself familiar with the newest network member, Kunskapsskolan Nün Academy, about to start in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

We also get an overview about the rapidly rising usage of the KED Program in the Netherlands.

Kenneth Nyman has been working with Kunskapsskolan from the very beginning at the turn of the century. Now, he is getting

ready to fly to his new KED office in India. How does it feel?

Without moving much, you can travel through new landscapes of knowledge every day on the Learning Portal. Like a Pokémon in the bush, there are hidden treasures on the Portal that you want to collect before your next teaching and learning session.



Kunskapsskolan Jeddah Welcomes First Students

by Johan Beckmann

COO, Nün Academy, Kunskapsskolan Jeddah

"So the building will not be ready in time..." It is the second week of October 2015. Five weeks earlier, I had moved to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia with my family. My job is to start a KED school in the fall of 2016. Now it was clear that the school building would not be ready in time. It seemed that I had moved here one year too early.

Plan B. We have not given up. We need to find a rented location that has been approved by the local municipality. Together with Maha Bawazir, our educational consultant, and Nirmeen Alireza, one of the founders of the project as well as our Educational Director and Head of School for the starting years, I spend most of October visiting different premises. Maha is a former school inspector from the Ministry of Education who has retired from her governmental employment to start her own consultancy. We laugh a lot during these visits and finally we find a villa that has potential. It is in a good location, but it is dark and worn down. It will require a lot of renovation.

November 3, 2015. The board has just approved Plan B, we will rent the villa we found and we will have a decent budget to renovate it. This means that we can go ahead and start executing our plans for marketing, recruitment and all other things. We are off

to a late start, but Nün Academy, Kunskapsskolan Jeddah will open in September 2016.

This project started long before I moved to Jeddah. The agreement between the local Saudi partners and KED was signed in 2013 after almost a year of discussions and negotiations. The agreed project is to start three schools in Saudi Arabia over a period of seven to ten years. It caters to the demand from Saudis and other Arabs in Saudi Arabia for a school that does not turn their children into expats in their own country, but instead provides them with an international education, including the acquisition of the English language, without having to accept the trade-off on local heritage and the Arabic language.

One of the first activities was the development of the Arab International Portal. The chosen curriculum was Cambridge International, to which local subjects such as Arabic and Islamic studies were added. The school was designed to be



bilingual with Arabic as the dominant language of instruction until Year 3 (age 7). Thereafter, English would take over as the main language.

During January and February, Nirmeen and I visit London and Dubai. Together with Kenneth Nyman, the current COO of Kunskapsskolan India, we interview a lot of teacher candidates. From March onwards, we interview local teachers and administrators. Again, there is a lot of laughing.

On 3 March, 2016, Peje Emilsson, the founder of KED, is invited as guest speaker at the Jeddah Economic Forum. We have decided to hold our market launch in conjunction with this. We are hosting a lunch event at the Hilton for a selected number of people. The Swedish Ambassador has come from Riyadh and many of the prominent families of Jeddah are represented in the audience. Peje and John Baumber, former head of KED schools in Sweden and the UK, hold speeches that dazzle the audience. So does our Arabic Coordinator, Huda Sraieb from the UAE. Nirmeen holds a personal speech about the background of the school that goes straight to people's hearts. The event is a success, as confirmed by the positive coverage in the local press.

From March through May we hold a large number of parent information sessions on



weekends. Huda flies in from the UAE, Kenneth flies in from Sweden, and so does Hoda Kasim Malla. Hoda is a KED teacher from Sweden who speaks Swedish, English and Arabic. She is going to live in Jeddah with her family to be our KED Program Coordinator. The team has also grown with Mohamad Khaldoun Dia, our Administrative Manager, and Fatma Sheibani, our Head of Admissions, both with extensive experience from reputable international schools in Jeddah.

In April, we open for admissions and our enrolment grows slowly. Very slowly. During the last couple of years, three new international schools have opened in Jeddah.



Unfortunately, they have all failed to deliver on their promises, so parents are cautious:

"Everything you are telling us about the school sounds great, but why would you succeed where others have failed? I will wait and see. Once you have started the school, I will enrol my kids in the second year."

June 2016. The month of Ramadan is here. As people are fasting during daytime, little gets done. The renovation should have been ready a month ago, but it is still far from ready. Before the building is ready, we cannot get a school license, and without a school license, we cannot get visas for our overseas teachers. Time for another Plan B: we try to get visas through a manpower company. We have done so many Plan B's now that it is hard to remember what Plan A looked like. We all need our summer vacation.

August 2016. The renovation is ready enough for us to hold guided tours for parents, and they like what they see:

"This is the nicest school I have ever seen in Jeddah!" we hear several times.

Enrolment has reached satisfactory numbers and the tours attract more students. With the help of Pritpal Chandan from KED UK, Sunitha Nambiar from KED India and Andrea Atkinson, KED's Special Educational Needs consultant from the UK, we get our teacher training going. The team building is phenomenal:

"As much as I was anxious about showing up today, I'm excited about coming back tomorrow," one teacher commented.

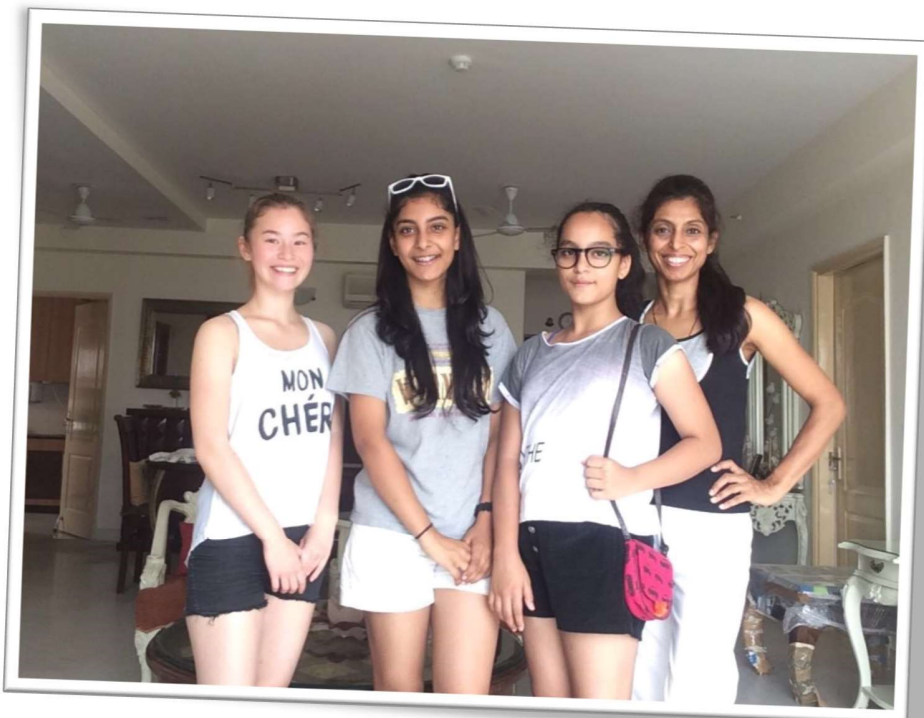
"This teacher training has made me realise how a real teacher should be. I need to go back to my old students and apologise for the way I have been teaching all these years," said another teacher.

Starting a school is never easy. God knows starting one in Saudi is challenging, but now most things have fallen into place. We are all looking forward to 25 September when we finally open the school. Wish us the best of luck, because I think we have run out of Plan B's.

KED Buddies Brought Nelly to Gurgaon

by Nelly Einvall

Year 1 student, Upper Secondary KED school Kunskapsgymnasiet Västerås



I travelled to Kunskapsskolan at the other side of the world – a journey that changed my life.

As part of a student exchange, I lived with an Indian family for two weeks as I went to Kunskapsskolan (also known as The Knowledge School) in Gurgaon, close to the capital Delhi. I got to learn a lot more about the Indian school system and Indian lifestyle in general, while trying new kinds of food with lots of spice and flavour.

My host, Mrigya, was in 9th grade just like me. Since children start school two years earlier in India compared to Sweden, the 9th graders in India are 13–14 rather than 15–16 years old. The school seemed quite serious, which is good as students then learn the value of good education. In Sweden, students do not take their education as seriously, I think.

Unlike my school in Sweden, there were no showers for students to use after P.E. class,

which I found uncomfortable since we had been sweating in the heat. On the other hand, you would probably get used to it after some time. Even though there are some differences between Kunskapsskolan in India and Sweden, they are slowly becoming more similar as India is getting more international and less traditional in general.

Some things in school reminded me of a previous student exchange with the United Kingdom, such as the fact that students have to wear school uniform and call their teachers miss, ma'am or sir as a sign of respect. The food was the best part of my experience. Most dishes include a lot of chili, and I learnt to eat a little bit spicier food than I was used to. For me as a vegetarian, there were many choices. The school serves typical healthy, Indian food. However, most students bring food from home or buy snacks from the cafeteria. Before lunch, students have a snack break, when they usually eat a pizza slice, muffin or chocolate bar.

I wanted to go to India because I had never been that far from home before. India is a whole world in itself – so different from Sweden. There are about 22 people in one square km in Sweden, while in India there are 390 people in the same space. My host family lived in an apartment on the 15th floor out of 20.

The concept of student exchange, where you live with a local family, is a perfect way to really get to know another country and culture.



Kenneth Ready for India

by Cecilia Fällgren
KED Network Director

In April 2017, Kunskapsskolan opens in Bangalore. It will be the fifth school in India. Now, preparations are well underway. Kenneth Nyman is just starting his position as Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer for Kunskapsskolan India, after working with Kunskapsskolan in Sweden for 17 years.

I sat down with Kenneth just before his plane took off from Stockholm on 3 September.

Where are you going to live?

I'm going to live in Bangalore until the new school starts in April. Then I move to Gurgaon.

You are planning to stay in India for two years. What are you most excited about?

I've had the privilege to work with Kunskapsskolan in Sweden since its very foundation in 1999. It's super exciting to get the opportunity to lead the same concept for personalised towards success in India.

What are you going to miss the most in Sweden?

My children and friends, and my wonderful and skilled colleagues in Kunskapsskolan. I'll also miss the Swedish autumn and pleasantly brisk winter. But to be honest, I look forward to avoiding winter for a couple of years.

What is the best thing about India?

I sometimes say that India is like "extra everything". It offers a rich culture, a central position in the world politically, and a deep history of education. Even though many people still lack access to education, the fraction of children attending school is rising every year. India is colourful and you get a lot of smiles. It strikes me how happy the students are at the KED schools in India.

As Deputy CEO and COO, who are you going to work closest with in India?



The principals of the schools, as well as the central management team including CEO Kunal Bhadoo, Education Director Sunitha Nambiar, Amit Bhalla and Prashant Bhalla.

What are the three major things that Kunskapsskolan in India can learn from Kunskapsskolan in Sweden?

First, the systematic approach to quality based on students', parents' and team members' experience. Second, how students develop ownership of their learning. Third, teaching of modern languages.

What can Kunskapsskolan in Sweden learn from India?

How to develop teachers professionally based on the KED Teacher Program, and that it's possible to make the Learning Portal more interactive and easy for students to use on their own.

One of your new tasks is to promote greater exchange of experience and expertise in the KED Network of schools. How should KED raise the level of student, teacher and school exchange?

In a couple of years, I think there'll be pedagogical development teams within the KED Network. Maybe also a couple of theme courses offered to students in all KED countries at the same time, while they complete the coursework together as KED Buddies.

What is your dream country to establish a new KED school?

I don't have a dream country. Every new KED school, no matter where, is a great success. We contribute to a better world of education.

How many KED schools are there in India in 10 years?

12 schools, which means 30 000 students.

KED Inspires the Netherlands

by Mieke van den Berg

Change Manager, Kunskapsskolan Nederland

Fads are fascinating. Previously unknown to many, a service or item can attract a sudden, enormous, inexplicable attention. At Kunskapsskolan Netherlands, we are experiencing how overwhelming this can be. One year ago, we started collaborating with twenty schools. This year, we will work with twenty more schools to transform traditional schools to "KED Inspired Schools". Our organisation is growing; we are reaching the tipping point and we are aiming to make personalised learning the new normal in the Netherlands.

Swedish KED schools fulfil an important role in this fad. Most schools that come with us on our journeys to Sweden, and pay a visit to a KED school, return home very inspired. By experiencing what Kunskapsskolan can do for students, and seeing that this can be organised available, viable, and manageable, teachers start believing that it is possible to realise the idea of personalised learning. You realise their dream. And because of that, they start recommending Kunskapsskolan to their peers.

At this moment, we team up with twenty secondary schools, helping them to transform to personalised learning based on the methodology of the KED Program. This is

what we mean by "KED Inspired". We team up with existing schools, rather than starting our own schools. In this way, 3 000 students are currently involved in the KED Program in The Netherlands.

The biggest challenge for these schools is to help their students take ownership of their learning. To reach that we have trained roughly a thousand teachers through the KED Academy, which is our blended learning environment for teachers, staff and school leaders. The main topics are "Working with learning goals" and "Basic coaching skills".

Next year, we will collaborate with even more schools. As we speak, another twenty secondary schools are seriously considering to start a transformation process inspired by Kunskapsskolan. And our reputation is growing. We received requests from primary schools (4–12 year olds) and vocational education (16+). We look forward to bringing them to meet you at your KED school.



Hidden Treasures on your Learning Portal

by Cecilia Fällgren
KED Network Director

Your Learning Portal also gives you access to the Learning Portals of the other KED countries. Browse steps and themes from all Portals in the KED Network to design your teaching and learning – no extra login needed.

The Learning Portal is a cornerstone for teachers and students in the KED Program. Your Web-based portal contains the curricula for steps and theme courses along with associated goals, knowledge criteria, proposed working methods, exercises, texts, photos, films and test examples. The resources on the Learning Portal can be accessed from anywhere and are updated through systematic collaboration between teachers at different schools in your KED country. So far, this is common KED wisdom.

But the marvellous story does not end here. Did you know that by signing onto your home Portal, you automatically get access to the content of the Swedish, Dutch, Indian and US Learning Portals?! Ingemar Ladekrans, Global Director of ICT at KED, explains the greatness about it:

“In this way, you have much more material to use in your work. You can rest assured that this material is correct and of high quality, which would not be the case if you browsed randomly for teaching resources online.”



For example, when students in Sweden are taking the course “Världen 3”, they are learning about the United Nations, interaction between different countries and cultures, and peacekeeping. By clicking on the link to the Indian Learning Portal, a teacher or student in this course can browse to an Indian theme course called “Government, People and Ideas”. Here, there are plenty of more perspectives on the questions brought up in the Swedish theme course, such as the section “Government and Social Justice”. The Indian and US Portals are in English. There is also a glossary for many of the courses on each Portal.

It might seem less straightforward to use material on the Swedish or Dutch Portals if you are not speaking these languages. However, Ingemar Ladekrans has a solution even to this:

“Google Translate is easy to use for all the languages you find on the Portals.”

So, now when many of us are looking for a way to reinvigorate the coursework in the new school year, the other Learning Portals can be really useful. Only one click away, without a new log-in.

Soon, another link to the new Portal for Saudi Arabia will be added. Also, KED is building a new platform called “KEDschools.com”, where teachers will be able to browse additional resources for their job.

What is your next Portal discovery going to be?

