



KED

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KED Buddies Going Global Again

Kunskapsskolan upper secondary students from Sweden have a long tradition of going to India the first week in February. The tradition was put on hold during the pandemic, but this year we did it again, with the largest group so far. 14 students representing all 7 upper secondary KED schools in Sweden spent one week in Bengaluru together with teachers and new friends soon encountered in India. Most of them did research for their diploma project in social science, interviewing both grown-ups and children in the local Indian community on various topics ranging from the ef-

fects of singing in a choir, to the impact of social media on mental health.

And during the week, the Global Buddies from Sweden also explored Indian culture by visiting temples, bargaining in street markets, and entering the homes of Indian families. On the next page, Antonia Eriksson, teacher at Kunskapsgymnasiet Göteborg, who accompanied her students in Bengaluru, gives a personal account of the project. Instinctively believing in the power of crossing borders, I could not ask for any better validation of my instinct.

With this in mind, it is encouraging to see that collaboration in the KED Network comes in so many shapes and colors. Read about the latest developments here, including Swedish school leaders' joint mission in India, teacher exchange in the Netherlands and students using their local network to help their friends enter the job market. Superior student agency, isn't it? ■

Cecilia Aronsson
Network Director
cecilia.aronsson@kunskapsskolan.com

Welcome to Bangalore



Students in Global Buddies 2022/23

Louise Hager, Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping
 Hidajet Tursunaljeva, Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping
 Leona Karathanasis, Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping
 Madeleine Irenberger, Kunskaps gymnasiet Malmö
 Shayasta Bayat, Kunskaps gymnasiet Malmö
 Kenan Filipovic, Kunskaps gymnasiet Göteborg
 Ismail Salad, Kunskaps gymnasiet Göteborg
 Oskar Lindholm, Kunskaps gymnasiet Globen
 Johannes Wilhelmsson, Kunskaps gymnasiet Globen
 Sandra Burgos Santa Cruz, Kunskaps gymnasiet Västerås
 Valentina Löfgren, Kunskaps gymnasiet Västerås
 Ece Sengul, Kunskaps gymnasiet Liljeholmen
 Alexandra Crona, Kunskaps gymnasiet Liljeholmen
 Eden Bsrat, Kunskaps gymnasiet Uppsala

When meeting a Swede, I think most people would agree that the first impression we leave on people could be described as ‘cold’, ‘uninterested’, or ‘distant’. We distance ourselves from strangers, from social interactions, and from breaking out of our comfort zones.

When we get on a bus we choose not to sit next to other people, and we generally do not like when someone talks to us while on public transport. I am sure most people have heard about the “Swedes do not feed guests” phenomenon which went ‘viral’ last year; we let our kids’

friends hang out in another room when it is time for dinner, a situation I have been in multiple times as a kid. Arriving in Bangalore, India, only further cemented that for me, this typical Swedish phenomenon is true. And when I say that it is true, of course I mean in the general



sense, I am not saying that all Swedes are inherently unfriendly or inhospitable to guests, so bear with me.

What I am talking about is that when meeting Bangaloreans, I never felt unwelcome or like an imposition. They never made me feel like the kid who had to wait for the family to finish dinner. Of course, I am speaking from my own personal experience from this one-week visit, but I am sure that the people I

They made certain that if there was one thing that we would remember from this journey, it would be the feeling of being welcome, being included.

traveled with would agree. We were welcomed with open arms by people who had organized this journey for us, people from all walks of life. People who shared what they have, and what they know. They fed us, clothed us, and gave us insight into this new culture we had come to learn more about. They made certain that if there was one thing

that we would remember from this journey, it would be the feeling of being welcome, being included.

I remember the day we were sightseeing and had a sudden change of plans, so our voluntary guide asked a local farmer if we could eat our lunch on his farm. He said yes. He even treated some of us to a local dish as we were ready to leave. Had we stayed 15 minutes, all 20 of us would have been invited to eat with his family, as they were making lunch.

I remember the family who welcomed us with open arms into their house. They treated us to their own 'secret' masala chai recipe, and they, again, asked if we wanted something to eat. As we had already eaten, we politely declined, but they served us a small dish to pass around so that we could try the food. Again, all 20 of us. As we were there, they treated us to stories of how one of the children knows six languages, and

they told us how they had renovated parts of the house, and they showed us their home altar for deity worship.

From a Swedish perspective, I thought 'this would never happen in Sweden'. No one would invite 20 unknown people into their home, and welcome them with food, drinks, and interesting trivia about the family or their culture, staying true to the "Swedes do not feed guests" phenomenon. So, if there is one thing I will remember about Bangalore, it is the feeling of always being welcome. ■

Antonia Eriksson
English and Religious Studies Teacher,
Kunskaps gymnasiet Göteborg



Marie Bomark, Head of School
Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra

Taking Teacher Training to the Next Level

Schools apply the KED Program in places and cultures far apart. Coming from Europe, it can be difficult to realize that schools in India fulfill the same ideas, values and practices every day, several time zones away. The schools in the KED Network have a common core regardless of time and place, but like students in a base group they show different characteristics, strengths, and challenges. This provides excellent opportunities for collaboration.

Now, the schools in India have asked Sweden to support their next round of teacher training. A team of six heads of school and two specialists from the Swedish pedagogy department are

The schools in the KED Network have a common core regardless of time and place, but like students in a base group they show different characteristics, strengths, and challenges.

soon going to India to assist. India, in turn, is ready to display its strong implementation of the KED Program, expression of our global values and ability to build a community by believing in the same vision.

Marie Bomark, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra, and Thomas Moberg, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Gävle, are heading to Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon. Caroline Bergström, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Katrineholm, and Roberth Olsson, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Linköping, are going to Kunskapsskolan International. They will be accompanied by Helena Berggren and Elin Holm, specialists in teacher training, who are going to work with both schools in Gurgaon. Björn Nyman, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Borås, and Niklas Dahlström, Head of School at Kunskapsskolan Varberg, are going to Kunskapsskolan Lucknow. I

was curious to hear what to expect from this visit, so I called Marie Bomark.

So, Marie, you are soon going to India? What is the purpose of this visit?

Yes, we are some colleagues from Kunskapsskolan in Sweden who are soon going to India. The purpose of the visit is to collaborate with the team members in India at their teacher training.

What do you bring to India in terms of perspectives and experience from your school in Sweden?

I can bring some experience from how we are organized and how we work together to enable the students to reach their full potential.

What do you hope to learn more about from Kunskapsskolan India?

I am interested in how the organization is set up in India and how it works. It will also be interesting to have discussions about their challenges and how they solve them.

And your school, Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra, is one of three schools in Sweden that are soon going to start a collaboration for students during base group time with students in India. The students are going to interact online in a project about sustainability.



These Year 7 Students at Kunskapsskolan Uppsala Norra are going to collaborate with students from India in a project about sustainability.

Why do you start this collaboration?

Yes, it will be exciting, and we are looking forward to being one of the schools in this collaboration about sustainability. Sustainability is a big area. For example, you can talk about sustainability for the environment, economics, or social sustainability. It is important that we all contribute and that we teach our stu-

dents that they can impact the future – their future. It adds an extra dimension when we do this together with students from the other side of the world.

What do you think the students can learn from it?

I hope the students will feel that they exist in a bigger context and gain some perspective on their life. I also hope they get curious about exploring the world.

What does it mean to you that Kunskapsskolan exists in different parts of the world?

I really believe in the concept we have at Kunskapsskolan, and I think it is great that we are contributing to educating students in different parts of the world. Education and knowledge are important!

Cecilia Aronsson
Network Director

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Getting Grades in Perspective

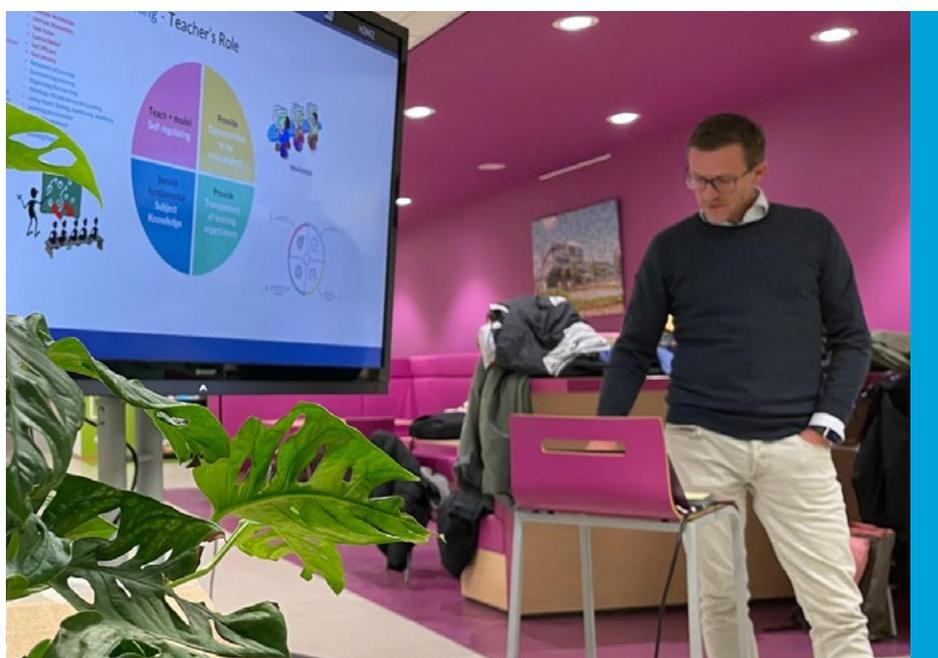
A little time ago, I had the opportunity to visit Kunskapsskolan in the Netherlands as part of the KED Teacher Exchange Program.

I am a teacher at Kunskapsgymnasiet Norrköping, Sweden. A School with 600 students at upper secondary level. The students at my school are very driven and set high goals for their grades. I witness this as we also have an ongoing debate in Sweden regarding grade inflation.

When I got the chance to do a teacher exchange, I wanted to study questions that have interested me more and more in the last few years, namely how much concern students in Sweden have about high grades without focusing on the learning process itself. Perhaps another school system would be different?

It turned out to be a great opportunity to compare how assessment of knowledge and performance is done in the Dutch and Swedish systems by interviewing and talking to teachers and students at Dr. Nassau College, where I went for my exchange. The school is located a half-hour drive from the lovely town of Groningen, and my partner in the exchange project and his colleagues were excellent guides during my visit.

I learned a lot and got new perspectives both at a personal level and as a teacher. The Netherlands has a different school system where the students are divided into groups according to performance at an early age, which can be crucial for their whole education and career. Also, the Netherlands has much more regu-



lated national tests than Sweden, and teachers seem more restricted to give out high grades. This is something Sweden can learn a lot from on a national level and at school level when we discuss grade management and grading, I think. At the same time, it makes me realize how damaging it can be for a student to fail an important test. Maybe there should be other options?

Most interesting was to see how the Dutch teachers introduced their students to the future skills and how they designed personalized learning connected to students' needs and goals. Here we can reflect on how we implement pronounced and clear goals for the students that are not just focused on grades and performance, but also on how the

students "learn to learn", cooperate and have strategies for their studies and future life after graduating.

In conclusion, the Netherlands has things we can learn a lot from regarding being more restrictive in setting high grades, a distinct division of students into different groups and ambitions (good or bad?), and the importance of future skills.

And of course, the Netherlands is a beautiful country to visit where our colleagues face the same challenges as teachers all over the world, but in a different system and context. ■

André Thörnqvist
Social Science Teacher,
Kunskapsgymnasiet Norrköping

KED Seminar on Student Agency

Today we had a seminar on student agency within the KED Network. There were participants from India, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, and Sweden. We had the great opportunity to listen to a presentation by Stephanie Hill. Steph is a Doctoral student at Cambridge University, and she presented some preliminary findings from her research on student agency. Student agency is a vital aspect of the KED Program, not least in relation to personal coaching and the aim to support students in learning how to learn.

Here I will start by giving a summary of the presentation and then I will give some reflection on the perspective of teaching and learning at Kunskapsskolan.

Steph has been collecting data in UK, Sweden, and Dubai. In this seminar she focused on the research in Sweden, involving interviews (both semi-structured and focus group interviews) with teachers and students at KED schools. Steph described how the students and teachers were instructed to individually create collages to describe how they are experiencing learning in the classroom. These collages then worked as elicitation in the next step when they talked in groups. Steph emphasized how the

collages created a stimulus for participants to engage in a meta-reflection on their own learning environment.

From the data, Steph presented some tentative key emerging ideas:

(1) 'Seeing' each other, (2) Time and space for questioning, (3) Grounding knowledge, (4) Building a learning community and (5) School as an organic system.



Stephanie Hill,
Doctoral student at
Cambridge University.

The idea of *Seeing each other* is about how the teachers recognize each student's individuality and ability to change. When teachers are more responsive to students' needs, it leads to mutual trust and respect.

Time and space for questioning highlighted the importance of creating opportunities throughout lessons for students to ask questions so that they can clarify and extend their thinking and make connections as learning builds in the lesson.

This is linked to *Grounding knowledge*, which suggests that organizing teaching and learning to include a variety of examples, experiences and perspectives allows students to negotiate their understandings and make meaning of the content in relation to their own experiences.

In *Building a learning community*, Steph drew on her data to describe how both the teachers and the students expressed the value of creating group interactions that enable students to support teachers in providing explanations and challenging their peers.

Firstly, the findings support that agency is something that can be developed and not just something that students have or do not have.



Sebastian Björnhammer,
Project and development
leader at Kunskapsskolan
Sweden.

Understanding *School as an organic system* is important for both students and teachers. Each lesson has its own idiosyncratic ways and as a teacher, it is important to both plan for continuity in the students' learning and to be ready to adapt to the contingent paths of the lesson. For the students, this is also important because the teacher modelling this adaptability helps the students to engage in a learning and knowledge-building culture where it is okay to make mistakes, and they develop skills to thrive in a complex and ever-changing world.

The preliminary findings presented by Steph are in many ways aligned with Kunskapsskolan's idea of student agency. Firstly, the findings support that agency is something that can be developed and not just something that students have or do not have. Secondly, it supports that student agency is important for how student learning develops, especially in the sense of meaning-making. In the KED Program, a lot of focus and time is put into helping the students learn how to better organize their work and understand their knowledge development, and to support students to become critical thinkers.

Finally, the presentation emphasizes the importance of addressing student agency on different levels and in different contexts, in teaching and learning in general as well as within the context of different subjects and learning goals. Creating opportunities for agency in the science classroom is different from student agency when learning how to communicate in a foreign language. However, we can all use Steph's key ideas as a starting point to unite, learn, and build new knowledge.

Thank you, Steph, for a lovely presentation, and thank you Cecilia Aronsson for organizing the seminar! ■

Sebastian Björnhammer

Project and development leader at the pedagogical department of Kunskapsskolan Sweden

Ph.D. student in science education at Stockholm University

Research coordinator at Stockholm Teaching & Learning Studies



KED Entrepreneurs Help Friends Find Jobs

It can be difficult for young people to find a job. At the same time, many employers in the service sector have a hard time finding educated youth labor. This triggered a group of upper secondary KED students in Sweden to start a recruitment business targeting people of their own age. Their company, Empowerment UF, was selected winner when 12 startups, all run by upper secondary KED students, competed in the renowned KED Business Challenge finals in Stockholm the other week.

Empowerment UF establishes contact with companies looking for staff. They match these vacancies with their network of 16–19-year-olds, who also get a training course to secure the quality of the recruitments. Companies in need of staffing in introductory positions often find it difficult to hire the right people, which has resulted in strong growth for Empowerment UF.

KED Business Challenge has been arranged for ten consecutive years. The business ideas presented by students each year are a strong indicator of the current trends in business and society. Last year, exercising and socializing were the predominant themes. This year, the rough economic times and global challenges generated many business ideas related to social and environmental sustainability.

They match these vacancies with their network of 16–19-year-olds, who also get a training course to secure the quality of the recruitments.

Runner-ups were the students in Certo UF, producing and selling mittens and other knitted garments in reflective wool that shine in the dark. The products are knitted by senior and unemployed citizens, who are happy to find a meaningful activity and an income.

Trashr UF finished in third place, selling a tool used to compress garbage in bins so that the bins can hold more garbage, thereby decreasing the required frequency of emptying them. As a result, garbage collectors can decrease their driving, energy consumption and pollution. ■

Viktor Storm

Business Studies Teacher,
Kunskaps gymnasiet Norrköping

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