



The KED Exchange between Kunskapsskolan Gävle in Sweden and Kunskapsskolan Partner School Dr. Nassau College Norg in the Netherlands resulted in a musical performed in both countries.

KED

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Go Your Own Way



It is stated in our vision: Our education should empower students to shape the world of tomorrow. And this vision became a song in my head when I saw our students' musical "Almost Famous" last week. Students from Kunskapsskolan Gävle and Dr. Nassau College Norg have formed an international ensemble to play this musical in Sweden and the Netherlands during a two-week, two-country KED student exchange.

The musical theme is about finding the strength to be who you are and believing in yourself – to shape the world and not be defined by it. This can be very hard

in a world where influencers and trends want us to buy an off-the-shelf personality, look, and life. Of course, this creates self-doubt, worries about what other people think, and lack of direction.


I am convinced that exchanges in the KED Network can help everyone in our schools find the strength to go our own way and be who we are. In an exchange, we meet people with other cultures, expressions, and lives, but who also struggle to believe in themselves.

I read an interview with an interior designer who said that the most beautiful

home is where the people who live there are comfortable to be who they really are. So, hold on to who you are and help your students reach the goal that they are singing out loud: to shape the world and not be defined by it. It is good news that more schools want to help realize this beautiful vision. A warm welcome to our new Dutch Partner School Almere College Het Perron, presented in this issue. ■

Cecilia Aronsson
Network Director
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BIG Student Exchange between India and Nacka



Kunskapsskolan India and Nacka
exchange students and teachers

13 secondary students selected from all four KED schools in India landed in Stockholm on a Sunday evening in late May. They came with two teachers and were greeted in the airport by students and teachers from Kunskapsskolan Nacka who would be their hosts for a full week. Omera, 14, and Vedika, 15, stayed with Matilda, 15. Below, they share the Indian and Swedish perspective on this exchange and what it means to them as KED students looking towards the future.

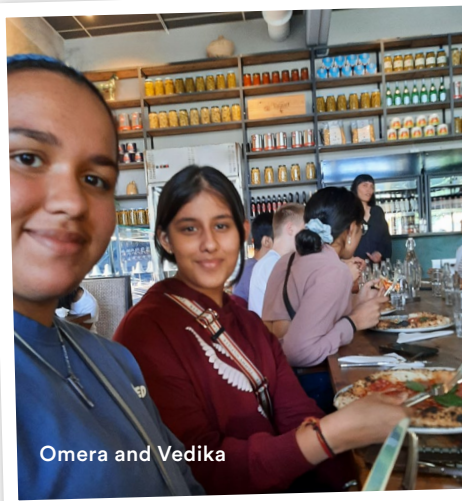
Our Swedish Student Exchange Journey

As young and adventurous students, we had always dreamed of exploring new places, immersing ourselves in diverse cultures, and forging friendships across borders. The opportunity to participate in a student exchange program to Sweden was the perfect chance to bring our dreams to life. With a mix of excitement and nervousness, we embarked on a journey that would help us create new memories to cherish for life.

The moment we stepped off the plane in Stockholm, we were immediately captivated by the Scandinavian landscape. The crisp air, picturesque views, and beautiful architecture painted a scene straight out of a fairytale. Sweden's natural beauty beckoned us beyond the cities. Venturing into the countryside, we discovered serene lakes, peaceful forests, and vast stretches of unspoiled wilderness.

Our host family warmly welcomed us into their home and treated us like their

One of the first things we learned during our time in Sweden was the importance of fika – a cherished Swedish tradition. Fika is the act of taking a break, enjoying a cup of coffee, and indulging in pastries while engaging in meaningful conversations.



own. They made us feel like family. Matilda and her family were so heartwarming and helped us explore Swedish culture. One of the first things we learned during our time in Sweden was the importance of fika – a cherished Swedish tradition. Fika is the act of taking a break, enjoying a cup of coffee, and indulging in pastries while engaging in meaningful conversations. It became a daily ritual that brought us together, fostering a sense of love and warmth. The people were very generous, kind, and loving.

Together with the other students from India, we prepared a cultural performance where we danced to some of the best Bollywood songs and introduced Kunskapsskolan Nacka to our culture. We displayed a few Indian sweets and snacks for the students and teachers to try and we were delighted to see that they liked them. We also gave a presentation about Indian culture. We even



performed two folk dances, Dandiya and Kathak, which helped us engage everyone.

As our time in Sweden ended, we could not help but feel a bittersweet mixture of nostalgia and gratitude. The bonds we had forged, the memories we had made, and the lessons we had learned had transformed us into more globally aware and open-minded individuals. Saying goodbye to our Swedish host family and new friends was undeniably difficult, but we left with the knowledge that our paths will always remain connected, regardless of the distance.

Omera Sidhu, Grade 10 & Vedika Srivastava, Grade 11
Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon, India

New Friends and New Perspectives

Having not only one, but two exchange students living at my house has been a great experience for me too. Not only because I got to experience a new culture within my own home, but because I got to teach them about my culture in a personal way. Omera and Vedika have been following me and my routine; at the same time, I have been introducing them to Swedish food culture and its traditional dishes. I showed them some of my favorite places in my neighborhood, such as my favorite shops.

The schedule was quite busy with many school activities, excursions, and exercises to complete during the exchange. However, we got everything done and I got to show them everything I wanted. Some days we went shopping at the mall or in the city. We also did some fun activities like a boat ride and pizza dinner together with all the 25 students



Omera and Matilda

involved in this exchange. At the end of the week, I brought Vedika and Omera to an amusement park, which they really enjoyed.

During the week, they learned more about Sweden and our culture, as well as how the Swedish school works, which



Omera, Matilda and Vedika

I think was a good combination. I also learned a thing or two about Kunskaps-skolan in India. Even though both our schools belong to the same Network and use the same Program for teaching, our dress codes and curricula are different.

Lastly, I just want to say that I am happy that I joined this project, not only because I have got two new friends, but also because I have learned more about India and practiced my English pronunciation. Hopefully, it will not be too long until I can visit Vedika's and Omera's beautiful country. ■

Matilda Lanthén, Grade 8
Kunskapskolan Nacka,
Sweden



Badminton in Nacka

International KED Musical on Tour



In the KED Newsletter one summer ago, Monica Stolpe, music teacher at Kunskapsskolan Gävle, told us about her dream. Her dream was to create a student exchange where students from different countries performed a musical together. “My ambition with this KED exchange is to help students from different countries share musical experiences and work together side by side towards a common goal,” Monica then said.

In KED Teacher Exchange, Monica had got to know Carlos Monteiro, music teacher at Dr. Nassau College Norg in the Netherlands. They decided to connect their student groups and started practicing songs and acts together in digital meetings.

With music as their common interest, the students soon became good friends and did not mind the digital technology necessary to bridge the distance between their schools. Monica wrote the English manuscript for the musical with a mix of Dutch and Swedish student actors.

In May, the students traveled on trains and buses to make it happen. The musical “Almost Famous” was performed on local stages in Norg and in Gävle. The students spent almost two weeks together, staying at each other’s homes, practicing, and collaborating to make Monica’s dream come true. Elgan, student at Dr. Nassau College Norg, captured the adventure for you. See next page.



Monica Stolpe, music teacher at Kunskapsskolan Gävle

The Musical that Made People Travel to Another Country



After months of online rehearsing the day was finally here, and the Swedish students came to the Netherlands. They arrived at dawn on Saturday. They had just traveled for 17 hours, so the rest of the day we took it easy.

Sunday, we started rehearsing in nearby village Gieten, and after the rehearsal we had a barbecue and karaoke together.

Monday morning, the Swedish students went to school with the Dutch students, before rehearsing again. Tuesday, we rehearsed during school hours and now everything was coming together. The dances, songs, dialogue, and storyline. Everyone was working on their own thing in smaller groups. Friendships were created and the bonds grew stronger.

The first two performances in the Netherlands were busy. We performed at a local restaurant and the Dutch newspaper arrived and made a big story about our musical exchange.

“It is an amazing experience. It is fun to meet people from a different part of the world with the same interest as me. I recommend this kind of exchange to other schools.”

Right after the second show, it was time to get on the bus to Sweden. We loaded our bags, took a seat, and started our 19-hour trip to Gävle through the night.

Now, this trip would be the only time when both the Swedes and Dutch were present. It was a lot of fun. We sang songs on the bus. We explored the ferry. We bought food at Copenhagen central station. And then on the train to Gävle, we just relaxed. All while trying (and failing) to get enough sleep. With that said, it was incredibly fun to travel so far with people that were a delight to be around. Everyone had a great time, especially since everyone stayed so positive.

The musical named “Almost Famous” is about a Music School of Performing

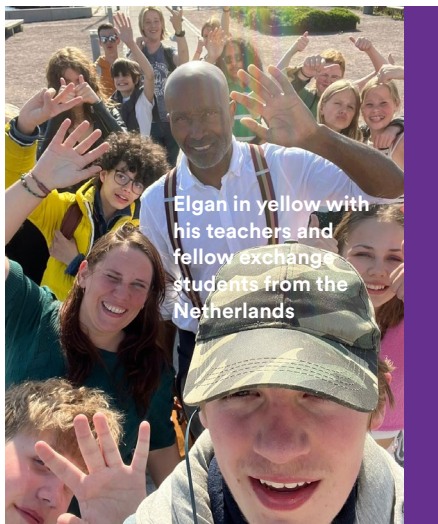


Arts and its students, with their typical teenage problems. The musical is written by Kunskapsskolan Gävle’s music teacher Monica Stolpe and her students. Together with our music teacher Carlos Monteiro the ambitious idea was born to make an international musical together.

“Almost Famous” contains many popular songs, sung and played by famous world artists. Our student actors are enthusiastic and love doing this. I asked Sofie Floor de Vries (who plays the character Luna) what she thinks about traveling to a different country to do this:



Nora from Sweden and Sophie from the Netherlands



Elgan in yellow with his teachers and fellow exchange students from the Netherlands

“It is an amazing experience. It is fun to meet people from a different part of the world with the same interest as me. I recommend this kind of exchange to other schools, but you need people who are passionate about your project, because it is a big endeavor.”

“Then remember that the musical and entire exchange is in English, while that is not the first language for any of us.”

The group did not just get together for rehearsals. On the day before our first performance in Sweden, we had another barbeque. Some people went swimming, we had a bunch of food, some

started playing beach volleyball and soccer, laughing, talking, while others went to explore the area. This helped to get the stress off our shoulders before next day’s show.

This exchange has come to an end, but we will always keep one quote from our musical in mind: “Even though we speak different languages, we can still understand each other through the music.”

Elgan van Brakel, Grade 9
Dr. Nassau College Norg,
the Netherlands

KED Opens Doors



Ruben Eisses and Ulrika Gullberg



Ulrika with students Majken, Filippa and Ludde going to the Netherlands

In the middle of the pandemic, I did an exchange with geography teacher Ruben Eisses at Dr. Nassau College Norg in the Netherlands. Since the world was shut down, I could not visit him, nor could he visit me. Our exchange was strictly online, and during our video calls we explored how to

improve workshop sessions. Our findings are recorded in [this short film](#). The exchange was a great experience and when I presented it to my students, they said they also wanted an exchange with Ruben's school. So, we decided to go there when the pandemic was over.

The students arranged garage sales, sold coffee and cake at parent meetings, recycled cans and collected money for tickets to the Netherlands. Familiar with the working habits of Kunskapsskolan, they set their goal and worked hard for it. For me, there was no doubt I would join them.

And what an exchange we got! The Netherlands is wonderful. I rented a car so that I could bring my students swiftly across the country. The small and fabulous town of Norg stole our hearts. It was interest-

ing to visit Dr. Nassau College and see how much it resembles our school in Sweden. My students interviewed the students at this Kunskapsskolan Partner School and discovered many similarities. We attended base groups and English classes. We worked in the workshop area and were reminded just how lucky we are to have this opportunity.

Everyone should take the chance to connect with another KED school. It is so rewarding, if you are willing to learn and share your own cultural background with the people you meet. You will find friends for life.

Just like we are different, all exchanges will be different. KED opens doors. Doors to the world. ■

Ulrika Gullberg
Science and Swedish Teacher,
Kunskapsskolan Örebro



A True Testament to How Small the World Can Be



Neha with Jane and the primary students at Kunskapsskolan Borås

Excitement, anticipation, and a touch of nervousness filled me as I embarked on a journey from my homeland, India, to the enchanting country Sweden. Sweden, renowned for its breathtaking lakes, lush forests, captivating museums, and its legendary Vikings, seemed like a dream come true. My purpose for this trip was to participate

in the KED Teacher Exchange Program, with the aim of immersing myself in the KED Program's unique approach and methodology, while also exploring the similarities in principles and values across different cultures.

To ensure that my visit was fruitful, I was warmly welcomed by Jane,

working as primary teacher at Kunskapsskolan Borås. Jane and her family showered me with love and hospitality. I had the privilege of exploring the school and delving into the rich tapestry of our respective cultures. It would not be an exaggeration to say that I forged a lifelong friendship during my stay.



Neha with Katrijn, Jeritza, Jasmine and Seval from Kunskapsskolan Nacka

invited me for a school tour and dinner with the language team. Of course, I could not resist ordering the famous Swedish meatballs and engaging in lively conversations. It was a true testament to how small the world can be, as we discovered shared connections and experiences.

My visit to Sweden for the KED teacher exchange and personal travel was an unforgettable experience, filled with a range of emotions and remarkable encounters. From the warm welcome and hospitality of Jane and her family, to the exploration of the innovative education-



Jane and her daughter Alicia hosted Neha during the exchange

My visit to Sweden for the KED teacher exchange and personal travel was an unforgettable experience, filled with a range of emotions and remarkable encounters. From the warm welcome and hospitality of Jane and her family, to the exploration of the innovative educational practices we both use with our primary students, and the delightful surprises in Stockholm.



Working with the primary students at Kunskapsskolan Borås

As part of my personal travels, I embarked on a boat ride and took leisurely walks, enjoying the beauty of my surroundings. These adventures not only provided me with incredible experiences but also helped me shed a few pounds. One highlight was the opportunity to visit Stockholm, where I decided to extend my stay for an additional week. This extension allowed me to delve deeper into the wonders of

Sweden's capital, such as the fascinating Vasa Museum, the Nordic Museum, and the Skansen open-air museum. Furthermore, I stumbled upon the charming old town, where I coincidentally encountered another Indian team participating in a student exchange program at Kunskapsskolan Nacka. This serendipitous encounter led to a delightful meeting with Seval, teacher at Kunskapsskolan Nacka, who graciously

al practices we both use with our primary students, and the delightful surprises in Stockholm – every moment left an indelible mark on my heart. I returned to India with new perspectives, cherished memories, and newfound appreciation for the interconnectedness of the world.

Neha Singh
Primary Team Lead,
Kunskapsskolan Lucknow

Almere College Het Perron Becoming the Next Kunskapsskolan Partner School



Students at Almere College Het Perron

The Netherlands has gained a new Kunskapsskolan Partner School:

Almere College Het Perron in Dronten, somewhat in the north of the country. A school that stands out from the rest of the schools in the Netherlands. Based on a double stroke that they now find quite normal themselves: structurally raising the opportunities for students to

a higher level and determining their final exam levels at a later stage.

The Netherlands is one of a few countries in the world where children are told at the age of 12 what they are expected to do at the age of 30, so called early determination. It has enormous effects for individual students, but such

is the Dutch practice. That is to say, except for the students at Het Perron in Dronten. Because that is where they managed to fundamentally break with early determination. Two thirds (!) of all their pupils are now taking subjects at a higher level than estimated when they were 12. The final determination of students is not done until the age of 15 and

one year later for the practical subjects. This is to give students time to develop, to discover their own talents and to get the best out of themselves, with the right support and stimulation.

Ingrid Klink is Head of School at Het Perron:

“As far as I am concerned, this is creating more equality of opportunity. And especially if you consider the coaching of each student, well-being, the identification of challenges and problems in the home situation and so on. For us, seeing and hearing every student is not an ambition, but our reality. And we see in practice that this motivates students to want to get the best out of themselves. Without an atmosphere of pushing and pulling, of obligations and nonstop performing.”

Janine Rodenburg is a striking example of this. A student who is very good at some subjects and struggle with others. Janine remembers her assessment in elementary school:

“If the smart students were allowed to do fun things, then we had to do the subjects we were not good at. It felt like



Het Perron student Janine with school leader Ingrid Klink

a label on me. I want to be challenged in both areas: the things I'm good at and the things I don't like.”

Janine is now one of the many students at Het Perron who take subjects at a higher level than indicated at the age of 12:

“Encouraging to get the best out of yourself means no pressure here, but room to try things. If it works, then it's fine, but if it doesn't, it's ok too. At Het

Perron, the starting point is always what you can do, not what you can't do. The same applies to planning our studies, which we learn here,” she says.

For Ingrid Klink, the transition to education based on the KED Program has been a challenge:

“Because you do not just want to do things differently, you also want to stick to the rules. And how do you explain to parents that you want to do things completely differently? We put a lot of effort into that. Moreover, the audits by the Kunskapsskolan experts from the Netherlands and Sweden look deep into the organization. It has been so valuable.”

Eva Risselada is an art teacher and personal coach at Het Perron. She enjoys coaching her students:

“For me, every coaching session is a serious meeting. That's my aim. Students ask for it too. You notice it even more when a coaching session is canceled for some reason,” she says with a smile.

“And the nice thing about this approach is that we also give students full attention when things are going well, not only when there is a challenge,” Eva continues.

“Teachers work together as a team and communicate a lot. We look closely at each student and give space where it is possible, and vice versa. And we have good contact with parents. The student, parent and personal coach meet for a development discussion three times a year, so we get to know each other well,” she concludes. ■

Koos Woltjes
Communication Manager,
Kunskapsskolan Nederland

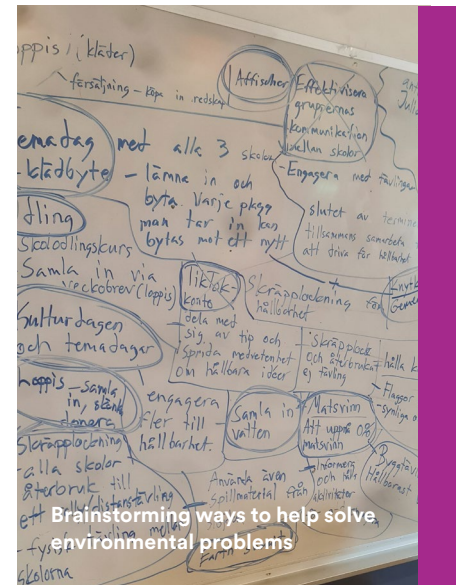
Kunskapsskolan partner schools in the Netherlands June 2023:

1. 2College Ruivenmavo in Berkel-Enschot
2. Almere College Het Perron in Dronten
3. Dr. Nassau College in Aa en Hunze
4. Dr. Nassau College in Norg
5. Lumion in Amsterdam
6. Van Kinsbergen college in Elburg
7. Veenlanden College in Vinkeveen

Sustainability Through Collaboration



The Green Teams from Kunskapsskolan Lund, Trelleborg and Landskrona Kicking off their new sustainability initiative



Brainstorming ways to help solve environmental problems

The KED schools in Southern Sweden have a solid track record of going green. They have participated in Earth Summit projects with other schools in Sweden and England and they have Green Team committees focusing on sustainability and tackling climate change as a natural part of their education.

In the next school year, Kunskapsskolan Lund, Trelleborg and Landskrona will intensify their work to create sustainable change by working together. The Green Teams from these three schools recently met in Lund to outline their plans. The students discussed various ideas how to make their communities more sustainable and how to collaborate to increase the effectiveness of their efforts. The idea that appealed to most is to collect rubbish and make

handicraft out of it. To take this further, the responsible teachers in the three schools have created a shared Google Classroom as the platform for communicating and working together.

In the next school year, Kunskapsskolan Lund, Trelleborg and Landskrona will intensify their work to create sustainable change by working together.

When the new school year begins in August, the Green Teams from all schools will come together again to fine-tune the action plan. Super exciting!

My colleagues in this project are Cajsa Lennartsdotter from Kunskapsskolan Trelleborg, Jonatan Kruse, Kunskapsskolan Landskrona and Julia Österlin, Kunskapsskolan Lund.

Do you want to make a change with us? We are open to new ideas and would love to collaborate with more KED schools. Let Network Director Cecilia Aronsson, cecilia.aronsson@kunskapsskolan.com, know and she will connect us.

Dujaporn Palmberg
Teacher of English and Swedish,
Kunskapsskolan Trelleborg

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