





## **KED For All**

In a recent Newsletter, we told you about the new material created by Kunskapsskolan Sweden's pedagogy expert Helena Berggren for base groups to collaborate around social and emotional learning. The material was initially created to target students in Year 7-9. Then, Kalpana Hariharan and her team at Kunskapsskolan International, India decided to adjust it to suit their target learning group in the primary grades. You can read her story here.

There are opportunities for everyone to learn by connecting in the KED Network. While we are adjusting our existing exchange formats to suit younger students, we are also looking to set up new project formats for upper secondary students. Projects designed for you, at your level and pace, in line with our shared framework. KED works for all.

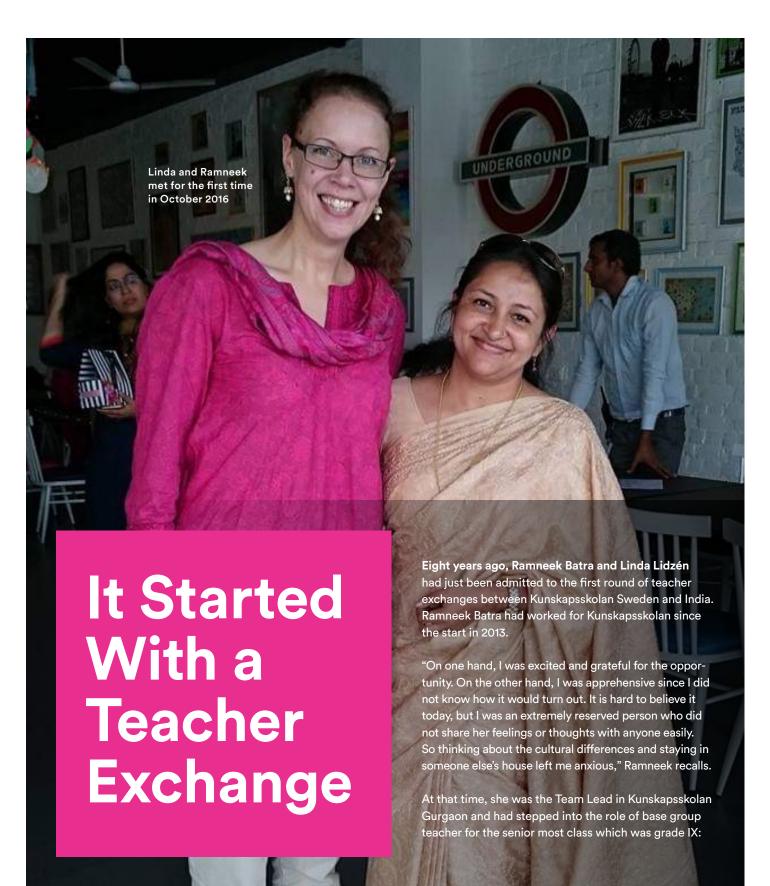
We can connect and learn from our differences, because we find comfort in the things we have in common: workshops, goals and determination to shape the world of tomorrow. Our joint platform helps you to learn from someone who is different from you - perhaps through an exchange with someone teaching a different year group. After all, the insights will be communicated in the same KED language. Imagine if the United Nations had that superpower.

Cecilia Aronsson

Network Director
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#### **KED NEWSLETTER Issue 6 2024**



With KED TEP to India



Linda and her students visiting Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon in November 2017

"There was a lot that I looked forward to so that I could strengthen my coaching sessions with senior students and ensure that my planning was more effective. Though I seemed comfortable in my understanding of the KED Program, I still had a lot to explore and discuss with others in confidence."

At the same time in Sweden, Linda had worked at Kunskapsskolan Spånga for six years and was thinking about moving on.



"When I saw the ad for the teacher exchange to India I thought that 'if I get admitted, I'll stay on' and I did! Being a teacher in English, this project was a fantastic opportunity to learn more about a part of the English-speaking world that I previously hadn't been to. I was curious about how the KED Program was implemented abroad, and thought it would be fun showing my hometown Stockholm to a guest."

Ramneek, please describe the most significant developments in

your personal and professional life since visiting Linda the first time in spring 2017.

"The Teacher Exchange Program enhanced my skills in every domain of life. It gave me cultural understanding and helped me develop a global perspective changing the way I approached things. By experiencing different educational systems within the KED Network and experiencing the diverse cultural contexts, I gained a broader understanding of the challenges and the opportunities for Kunskapsskolan. I realized that every school



and all the teachers have their own set of challenges irrespective of the country we belong to. The exchange helped me deepen my understanding of the implementation of the KED Program in different schools. It revealed that personal coaching can be done in multiple ways. I got the opportunity to interact with

teachers across three different schools in Sweden and was enriched with many new strategies for our students. 'Learning is a lifelong process' and this trip just reinstated that belief.

Personally, it gave me the confidence to believe in myself. It made me a better listener and helped me reflect on my daily actions. Slowly, reflection became a part of my daily routine. I would say that not only did I build a lifelong relationship but also my children, who connect with my exchange partner Linda, and can freely have a one-on-one conversation with her."

During her journey of nearly eleven and a half years with Kunskapsskolan, Ramneek has stepped into different roles in Kunskapsskolan; from teaching pre-primary to Grade XII, to working as a Team Lead, Coordinator, Head Mistress and today, along with being the Vice Principal of Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon, also appointed the Head of Academics and Pedagogy for Kunskapsskolan India.

"After the teacher exchange, I brought back some innovative teaching and learning ideas. Further I could also adopt different strategies which could be used as part of the coaching conversation. Both professionally and personally I see myself having evolved into a more confident and open-minded

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person who is looking for opportunities to learn and in some form give back by empowering my team," says Ramneek.

The strong bond with Linda resulted in the first ever student exchange between Kunskapsskolan Sweden and India in 2017. Visits to each other's schools provided opportunities for students from both the schools to promote their cultures and pursue international learning opportunities.

"I was welcomed back by Ramneek and the lovely Batra family into their home once more, and the students lived in host families. This was an exceptional experience for the students, and for me it was lovely meeting a dear friend again. The following spring we hosted the Indian students in Sweden, which became a big success. This exchange wouldn't have been possible without the initial teacher exchange where Ramneek and I became such good friends. I very much like the idea of these small group exchanges and would like to start one again," says Linda.

Over the years, Kunskapsskolan has evolved while expanding its Network across schools globally. Within India, there are now four KED schools and one KED inspired school, operating on the core principles of personalized learning with the focus on student agency and goal setting. Regular exchange programs for both teachers and students ensure continuous learning and growth beyond the ordinary.

"One way to look at growing is through constantly reflecting on how we can become better than what we were yesterday. And while we concentrate on empowering our students, we also need to strengthen their accountability. It is imperative that everyone feels an important part of the community," says Ramneek.

She thinks the personalized learning approach is the right way to get there:

"The emphasis on coaching and goals gives each student the support needed and fosters a strong sense of community and collaboration. Kunskapsskolan is my second home. I carry it in my heart and truly believe in what we stand for."

Cecilia Aronsson Network Director









In our increasingly interconnected world, education plays a crucial role in creating inclusive, empathetic, and empowered global citizens. Building bridges across countries and cultures through networking has become an essential aspect of this process.

The KED Program aims to foster academic excellence and effective learning strategies while developing students' resilience, empathy, and decision-making skills. This aligns perfectly with the principles of social and emotional learning (SEL), which provides a theoretical framework and practical tools for achieving these goals.

SEL is the process of acquiring and applying knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage



emotions, achieve goals, empathize with others, maintain relationships, and make responsible decisions. It focuses on five key competencies: self-awareness, selfmanagement, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Connecting schools worldwide through online exchanges offers a convenient way for young learners to connect and interact with their counterparts across different geographies and time zones. In line with these principles, the young learners of Year 5 of Kunskapsskolan International (KI), Gurgaon, India collaborated with students of Year 4 of Kunskapsskolan, Ystad, Sweden to initiate an online base group project across both schools.

The agenda was enthusiastically steered to fruition by Caroline Nair, Kunskaps-





skolan India and Zophia Severin from Kunskapsskolan Sweden, notwithstanding the time zone differences and different working hours.

Zophia, what are your impressions of this project?

"This is a perfect way to learn new things. I think everyone should try it at least once with every base group." "It is truly a unique experience and incredibly rewarding for the students, but also for me as a teacher. My students are fully engaged in joining and meeting the students in India."

At the beginning, she was worried that the project would lead to a loss of teaching time. Instead, it turned out that the collaboration highlighted new topics that she had not thought of teaching about before. The Swedish students have continued working on the exercises from India after the joint sessions:

"This is a perfect way to learn new things. I think everyone should try it at least once with every base group from middle school upwards," says Zophia.

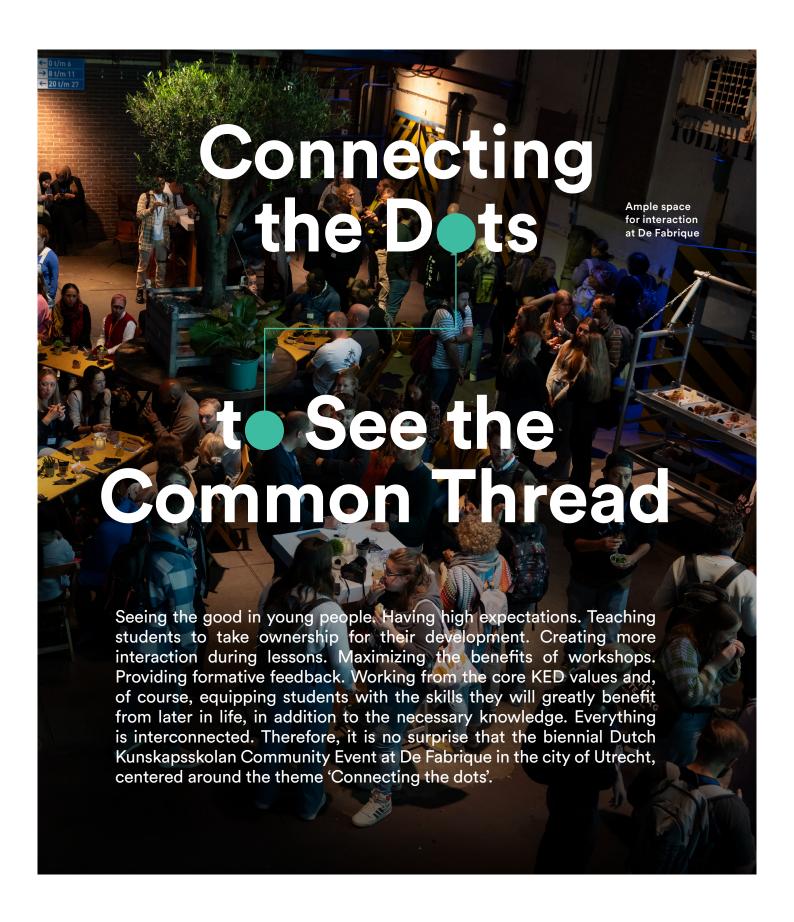
The students participated in a meetand-greet to get to know each other, followed by a mindful art activity focused on building self-awareness. They also explored their inner strengths through discussions about superpowers and learned self-management techniques via mindful breathing exercises.

They thereafter celebrated culture and tradition, with students exchanging their rich heritage through dance, food, clothing, language, and traditions. Indian students taught the energetic Bhangra dance, while their Swedish counterparts introduced the unique Swedish Frog dance. This cultural exploration extended to discussions about traditional cuisines, attire, languages, and customs that shape their respective worlds. We look forward to more exciting updates and wonderful exchanges between our students.

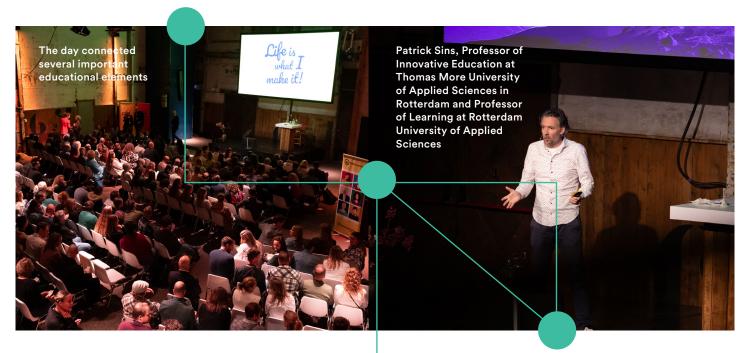


#### Kalpana Hariharan Primary Coordinator Grades 1-5, Kunskapsskolan International









However, this educational event - attended by around 600 participants from across the Netherlands — is not fully characterized by that description alone. Not only does this day connect several important educational elements, but the personal encounter among so many educational professionals is also significant. Each school is different, every transition to personalized learning is different, and each region has its own challenges. Therefore, it is important for this diverse group of professionals to see and hear each other on this day, as intended within the Kunskapsskolan Community. Collaborating, sharing experiences, and advancing things together. Not only at the level of school leaders and administrators but also among subject communities, individual teachers, teaching assistants, coaches, and others.

Thus, there was not only a series of keynote speakers from both the Netherlands and abroad, and 53 different workshops available for participants to choose from, but there was also ample space for interaction, in line with the Swedish Fika tradition. Some participants were new to this form of personalized education, while others already had extensive

Collaborating, sharing experiences, and advancing things together. Not only at the level of school leaders and administrators but also among subject communities, individual teachers, teaching assistants, coaches, and others.



experience. This event complements the Quality Days, Expert Groups, Subject Communities, and the Administrative Learning Community that are already active within the Kunskapsskolan Community throughout the year.

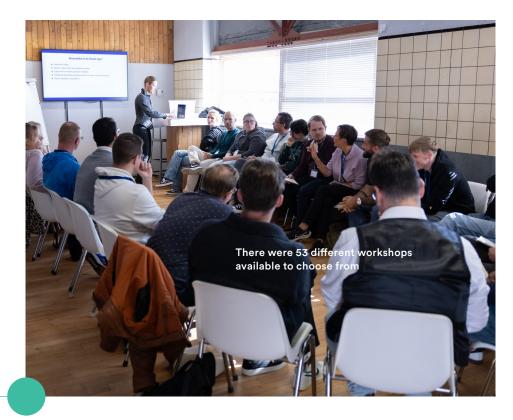
What also stands out is the logic of the program. Naturally, everything on this day is designed and modeled within the framework of Kunskapsskolan education. But beyond that, a larger common thread is made more visible. This is expressed, for example, by the various keynote speakers. Take Dr. Kaisa Vuorinen from the University of Helsinki with her 'See the Good!' philosophy and approach, which is now active in many countries. She calls on societies and education to stop focusing on what young people cannot (yet) do well. Because it has been repeatedly proven that emphasizing what students can do well is a tremendous stimulus for their further development and provides space for developing new character traits. For Kunskapsskolan education professionals, this is naturally a familiar message. Although many acknowledge that realizing this principle — with so much emphasis in the Dutch curriculum on 'measurable knowledge' — is not easy.



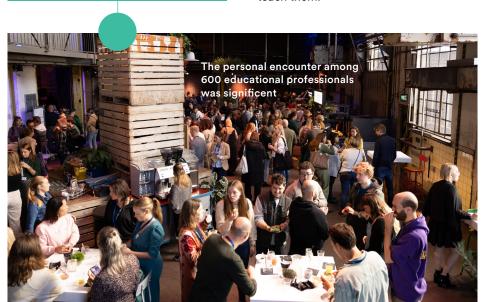
Then there is Mats Barlow, a Kunskapsskolan school leader and coach from Sweden with over 20 years of experience. His message: having high expectations of students is a variation of 'See the Good' and, in fact, an expression of trust. It is also a prerequisite for promoting equal opportunities, as it positively activates students and — with intensive coaching — creates clarity about their talents.

Students should be able to learn at their own pace and level and, when ready, take charge of their own development. However, 'you cannot learn self-regulated learning on your own,' keynote speaker Patrick Sins, Professor of Innovative Education at Thomas More University

"It is nonsense to assume that students around the age of twelve are suddenly capable of making the right decisions about their learning. You must teach them."



of Applied Sciences in Rotterdam and Professor of Learning at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, tells the 600 education professionals at De Fabrique in Utrecht. It is nonsense to assume that students around the age of twelve are suddenly capable of making the right decisions about their learning. You must teach them.



The Kunskapsskolan Community Event 2024, therefore, has multiple experiential layers. For those who are new, there is an intensive 'deep dive' into what personalized education really entails. For the more experienced Kunskapsskolan professionals, there is an opportunity to deepen their knowledge based on insights from scientists from both the Netherlands and abroad. For those who truly want to challenge and improve themselves, there are over 50 'interactive workshops' (working together). And finally, but certainly not least, there is the level of knowing and being known, hearing and seeing, meeting and connecting. Because people make the difference, also within Kunskapsskolan's personalized learning.

#### Koos Woltjes Communication Manager, Kunskapsskolan Nederland





#### Hello Sheila,

I hope you are well. I am Hafsa Shariff, your partner in the KED Teacher Exchange Program. I am a Year 5 English and Science teacher at Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. I am the head of Student Leadership and Green team at my school.

As part of this exchange project, I am keen to explore how student agency is fostered and supported at your school, Kunskapsskolan Fruängen in Stockholm, Sweden. For example, what role do teachers and the school culture play in either promoting or hindering student agency?

And what strategies can be used to develop student autonomy and decision-making skills? I am also interested in what your Green initiatives look like in Fruängen. Moreover, I look forward to visiting different lessons and observing coaching sessions too. See you soon!

#### Monday

Every Monday, students plan their weekly tasks, incorporating both their own objectives and teacherassigned work. They track their progress throughout the week, ticking off completed tasks and watching their completion percentage change.

After interviewing two Year 8 students at Kunskapsskolan Fruängen, I gained valuable insights into their experience with the KED Program. The school employs a flexible system of 14 teacher-led lessons and 11 workshops per week, where students have significant autonomy in managing their learning. Students can book workshops based on their needs, even switching five minutes before start time, with two parallel workshops allowing freedom of choice.

All workshops are mixed and include various year levels, while classes are year-specific. Students use digital platforms, worksheets, or books during workshops. Some workshops have two teachers avail-



able for help. Workshops are taught by all teachers, allowing students to know every teacher and most students in their year. Friendships form across classes.

The students expressed high motivation due to the ability to work at their own speed and set personal goals. They appreciate the visual goal tracking system and the flexibility to manage their focus.

While the KED Program at this school seems to effectively foster student agency for some, it also presents challenges for others who may need more support in developing the skills necessary for self-directed learning.

Despite these challenges, the Principal emphasized a positive outlook. Even students who didn't specifically choose the school for its educational model are still being exposed to a different approach compared to traditional schools. This exposure is expected to have a positive effect in the long run. Students are gaining beneficial life skills such as goal setting and learning to be responsible for their own education. These skills are likely to be valuable beyond their school years, preparing them for future academic and professional challenges.

#### **Tuesday**

The school day structure is flexible, with some students starting at 8:15 for individual coaching sessions, while others join at 9:15. The early morning slot from 8:15 to 9:15 is utilized for one-on-one coaching with four students outside the classroom, while the rest of the class engages in independent study. These coaching sessions occur weekly with the teacher, though students arrive early twice a week. Every day students have a base group session from 9:15 to 9:35.

One teacher expressed that coaching is their favorite aspect of the system,

highlighting that the focus extends beyond academic subjects to guiding students holistically. The coaching notes are shared among all teachers and parents, fostering transparency and collaborative support for each student's progress. This open communication system is a key feature in supporting student development and maintaining strong school-home connections.

The school's sustainability group comprises members who join out of interest in climate change and enjoyment of council participation. They meet biweekly in the mornings. The group is part of a Swedish initiative called Green Flag, which requires them to organize three activities or initiatives in their school to receive certification. The group has undertaken various projects, including a sustainable idea competition, trash collection day, a bottle recycling program that raised money for charity and a simplified test organization linked to social sustainability.

#### Wednesday

Students are exposed to interdisciplinary projects that blend economics, natural science, and engineering. For instance, they design playgrounds considering cost and environmental factors, fostering critical and independent thinking.

Observations of various classes reveal a mix of traditional and modern teaching methods. Year 6 mathematics, for example, utilizes both physical books and online resources. Students particularly enjoy hands-on activities in subjects like home economics and sewing, as well as the freedom to choose presentation methods. The integration of technical lessons from a young age, teaching engineering and world systems, is a distinctive feature of the curriculum.

#### **Thursday**

The English teacher explained the curriculum structure, which is organized into blocks. Each block consists of about five steps. During regular class sessions, teachers focus on teaching concepts that the whole group can understand, while students work on steps independently during workshops. Each step comes with instructions, allowing students to learn and complete work on their own.

The final step in each block involves a presentation. These presentations involve not only creating and presenting a written piece but also answering questions about the topic. I noted that Year 6 students appeared confident during their presentations, indicating a level of comfort with this educational approach. Feedback was provided immediately and also recorded in the student's digital logbook.

#### **Friday**

Today, the coaching sessions utilized coaching cards with questions categorized into coaching, strategies, current status, goals, and conclusions. During the observed session, students were asked various reflective questions. One student discussed what they had learned since the last meeting and what they were grateful for that day. Another student evaluated their progress based on their weekly plan and identified areas for improvement.

Some students require additional support in task organization, with the teacher assisting in prioritizing tasks and scheduling appropriate workshops. Overall, these coaching cards prove to be a valuable resource for guiding these sessions and promoting student self-reflection and problem-solving skills.

#### **Hafsa Shariff**

English and Science Teacher, Nün Academy Kunskapsskolan, Jeddah



# Shaping the Next Generation of Schools in India

It all started 20 years ago. Shailaja Jayashankar then began her journey as a K-12 technology teacher and progressed through multiple leadership roles within schools. After completing her PhD, she ventured into education technology (EdTech), focusing on building products tailored to the K-12 space.

While working in EdTech was rewarding, Dr. Shailaja soon realized that her heart belonged in schools, among students and teachers. She feels a strong sense of belonging in the school environment, and the privilege of contributing directly to the growth and development of young minds makes her work even more fulfilling.

I see her every day at school – always on time for morning meetings, with a busy schedule ahead. Yet she remains focused, calm and professional, as she is now during our conversation. I prefer to think of this as a conversation and not an

Shailaja Jayashankar recently started her appointment as Kunskapsskolan Bengaluru's Head of School. Here she is at a recent school council ceremony.

interview, about her perspectives on education, as well as who Dr. Shailaja is. What are her unique talents? Does she have any lesser-known interests? Where was she born? These are some of the questions I asked her on a busy day at Kunskapsskolan Bengaluru (KKB) in autumn 2024.

Dr. Shailaja discovered Kunskapsskolan through its reputation for personalized learning. She was impressed by how the KED Program





empowers students to take charge of their own learning, fostering skills in goal-setting and self-management. This approach, which encourages students to set and reach their own goals, resonated with her educational values, and she felt a strong desire to be part of this environment.

Her short-term goal for KKB is to enhance student engagement significantly. She wants to introduce more dynamic, personalized learning experiences, built on robust partnerships among teachers, students, and parents. A vibrant community that champions student success will be the result.

What about her long-term vision? Dr. Shailaja aims for KKB to become a model for personalized learning, setting the standard for the next generation of schools in India. She also envisions creating an innovative educational environment for KKB students that continuous-



Shailaja Jayashankar, Kunskapsskolan Bengaluru's Head of School

ly adapts to meet the diverse challenges of a globalized world.

"Bangalore is the place to live and work. From its lush green gardens to vibrant tech hubs, every corner of Bangalore holds a special place in my heart," Dr. Shailaja says—a true reflection of her pride as a Bangalorian.

"Bangalore is the place to live and work. From its lush green gardens to vibrant tech hubs, every corner of Bangalore holds a special place in my heart."

She was born and raised in this city, and has witnessed its growth and transformation day by day. As a leader and decision maker, she highlights the importance of collaboration and thoughtful analysis. She remains calm and focused, relying on data when necessary, while also emphasizing transparency and open communication:

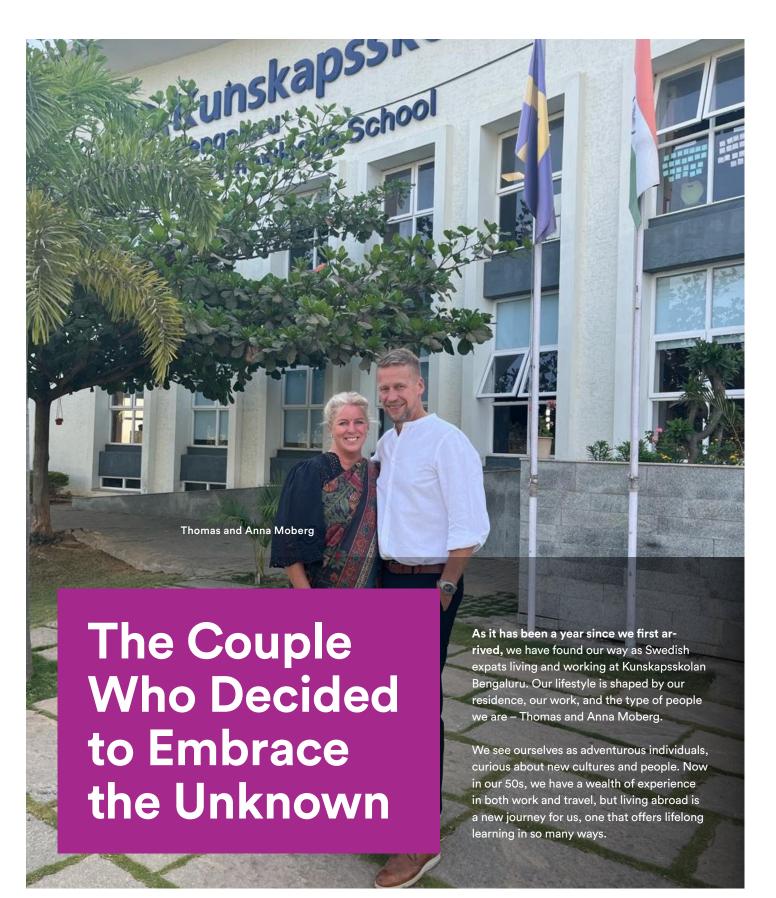
"I am an avid trekker who enjoys solo travel adventures. My love for nature brings me peace, allowing me to recharge and reflect. I also cherish the opportunity to meet new people along the way and connect with them, sharing stories and experiences that enrich my journeys."

#### What makes you happy?

"Being part of a community that shapes well-rounded, capable individuals brings me the most joy. Watching students grow as problem solvers, achieve their goals, and develop the confidence to tackle real-world challenges is incredibly fulfilling."

**Anna Moberg** Marketing Team, Kunskapsskolan Bengaluru











Adiyogi, a 34-meter tall bust of Shiva, where meditation is central



Thomas, as the Academic Head at KKB, is responsible for strengthening school operations based on the KED Framework, overseeing teacher training, and supporting the school leaders. My own role in marketing and communications is constantly evolving. Cultural context demands humility and analysis, but also action and resilience, and that is how we navigate the challenges we encounter.

It takes about two hours to reach the city center from our home in the suburb Sarjapur, and approximately 25 minutes to KKB. On our commute across the bumpy roads, passing by small and large temples and village residents washing their cows, creating mandalas outside their homes, and engaging in daily activities, we sometimes exchange smiles. Are we really living here? This is India, after all, with approximately 1.4 billion people, 34 million of whom live in Bangalore.

We try to explore as much as we can in India and its surroundings. So far, we have traveled to Goa multiple times, Kerala - Kochi and the backwaters of Alleppey, Kathmandu in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the capital Delhi, with Agra and the Taj Mahal. Next up is Darjeeling and its tea plantations, with hopes of clear skies

to see the Himalayas.

In the areas surrounding Bangalore, we have tried to explore as much as possible within our time constraints, visiting Nandi Hills, several vineyards, and Adiyogi, a 34-meter tall bust of Shiva, where meditation is central. A fantastic getaway is also Mysore, with its palace and the lightning of the same, the colonial atmosphere and heritage, a must visit.

The festive season is upon us, and Bangalore sparkles more than ever! Being part of this experience is thrilling, and difficult to express in words; it must be felt. Indians excel at celebrating with vibrant colors, music, dancing, food, and countless joyful faces. We are grateful to be invited.

Some of our daily life and routines are the same as in Sweden. We enjoy our walks, exploring the simple life in nearby villages, which is best done on foot. It is rare to see two blondes walking by here, but we embrace the moment in our unique style.



**Anna Moberg** Marketing Team, Kunskapsskolan Bengaluru







# KED Model United Nations 2024

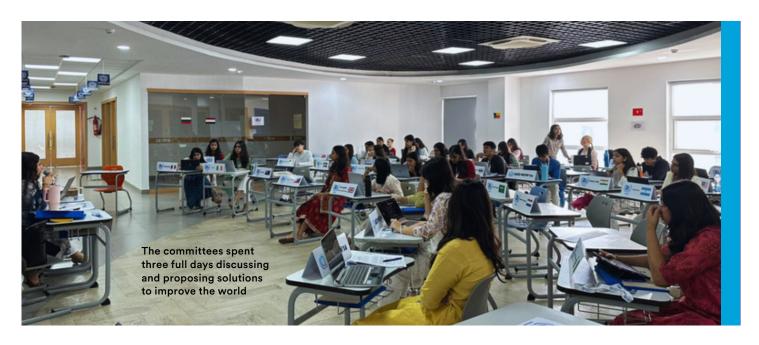
Yes, we did it again! The last weekend of October, KED and the United Nations joined forces at Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon, India to provide solutions for a better world. Participants included more than 300 students from Kunskapsskolan Gurgaon, Kunskapsskolan International, Kunskapsskolan Bangalore and DPS Abohar in India, Kunskapsskolan Enköping, Örebro and Borås in Sweden,



Kunskapsskolan partner school Van Kinsbergen college in the Netherlands and KED Network school Shevington High School in the UK, as well as a bunch of other local Indian schools.

The KED Model United Nations conference was divided into different agendas, mirroring different sections of the United Nations organization and addressing





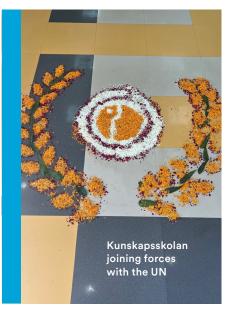


challenges such as trade and the global economy, human rights and migration, atomic weapons, gender equality, plastic pollution and drug crime.

The participating students were spread across the various committees, each focusing on specific burning topics. In the role play that followed, each student represented a real member state of the UN.

For example, Nova from Kunskapsskolan Enköping represented Germany in the committee on women's rights. This committee was characterized by its constant mentions of artificial intelligence and social media platforms being identified as potential threats to women's safety online.

In the room next door, Cas from Van Kinsbergen college represented Ukraine in the







committee on drug crime. He pointed out the difficulty for a country ravaged by war to confront transnational crime, an issue that requires stability and comprehensive support. Throughout the event, there was a press team of student journalists, reporting about the work of each committee.

The underlying mission of KED Model United Nations is to foster understanding and cooperation. And the skills and connections gained in Gurgaon have good chances to survive and grow stronger, considering that we all belong to a shared Network.

Cecilia Aronsson Network Director





# GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE













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A podcast series brought to you from Stockholm by Kunskapsskolan Education (KED). Reflecting and connecting educators of more than 100 schools that use the KED Program for personalized learning across Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, India, USA, and the Middle East. Working around the globe to personalize each student's education according to their individual needs and abilities. Empowering the students to master the challenges of today and shape the world of tomorrow.