

KISTA OPEN ACADEMY

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF KISTA OPEN ACADEMY.

Within the framework of KOA there are a number of activities providing learning facilities and possibilities: Kista Job and Learning Centre, Stockholm Matching, Kista Open Academy Learning Centre and a Mini Learning Centre at the Borough Library. The first three share localities and all four activities share staff, equipment and many of the facilities offered.

Kista Job and Learning Centre

This centre is meant for the unemployed of the borough. Here coaching and mapping of the individual is offered and help with planning the future. Here are recruiters to help finding jobs and trainee posts.

In this centre you have access to professional study and career guidance staff and you have also the possibility to attend short introductory courses. Great importance is attached to activities that aim to changing and influencing attitudes to the positive. The ambition is, with individual coaches at hand, to make participants get some self-knowledge, find out their best sides and make the most of resources that have not previously been fully used. Here you can get help to break ingrained patterns and build up a self-confidence.

In this centre also newly arrived refugees are received. Information is given about the objectives of the job and learning centre and resources available there. Here you have the possibility to take part in various courses like Swedish, Vocational Swedish, Computer knowledge, etc and relevant information about the Swedish society.

Here help and advice is given in matters of valuation and assessment of previous knowledge, competence and professional experience.

The chief aim of all activities at this centre is to provide a job or a trainee post as fast as possible.

From here you also have the possibility to find your way into the project of Stockholm Matching.

Stockholm Matching

Stockholm Matching is first of all there to long-term unemployed and people living on social secure benefits, but also newly arrived refugees could be considered for participation. Stockholm Matching concentrate on short vocational training courses that respond to the demands of the employers. The courses are planned in close collaboration with the employers and are tailor-made to satisfy their specification of requirements. Participants that complete their vocational training with approved results are guaranteed 6 months employment on trial and after that a possible post with conditional tenure.

In the project of Stockholm Matching 15 boroughs in Stockholm and three neighbouring municipalities (Järfälla, Solna, Sundbyberg), local social services departments, local trade and industry departments, local integration service departments are co-operating with a range of educational companies and employers in order to develop methods that lead to work on the open labour market for unemployed and receivers of social security benefits.

Stockholm Matching collaborates with a company, Ibility AB, that offers help with career planning and competence developing. They have created an advanced instrument for self-assessment to help unemployed finding a way to apply for a job on their own.

Stockholm Matching has achieved very good results so far.

Kista Open Academy Learning Centre

KOA is an Equal project the aim of which is to realise the idea of the open university, i.e. to give the possibility to all those who can and want to study irrespective of formal competence and without obstacles of a formal regulation system.

KOA became a member of a nationwide network for local learning centres, Nitus, in November 2002 and started the first university courses in January 2003 in co-operation with Högskolan I Gävle.

To become a member of Nitus you must live up to 11 specified requirements as to well-equipped and well-adopted localities, video-conference facilities, internet access, computers, telefax, copying machines, TV and video. Personnel resources shall be provided for administrative, technical and pedagogical support. Study counselling shall also be provided for. Resources and competence for carrying out regular assessments of the activities are a must and the learning centre is also supposed to provide possibilities for examinations with supervision and all sorts of student service in connection with this.

When KOA started the first courses in 2003 the citizens of Stockholm at last got access to a learning centre with all its facilities within reasonable distance.

Previously they were directed to learning centres 70-150 kilometres away! In KOA the municipality of Järfälla is a partner and there a learning centre started at the same time. The two learning centres collaborate closely for the benefit of the citizens of Stockholm.

The interest for university courses on distance is increasing immensely and in all probability we can look forward to a future great demand concurrently with an increasing knowledge of the possibilities to get hold of university education on distance more flexibly and on your own conditions. Here possibilities for new target groups open up and a widening of the recruitment to university studies is more realistic. The day there will be a more generous view of the problems related to qualification requirements the pressure will increase even more.

Today there exist such possibilities in theory but rather insignificantly in

practice. We more or less have to co-operate with Finland (Åbo Academy) and Britain (London Open University) to achieve this.

Via KOA Learning Centre the citizens have access to a large number of university courses throughout the country.

The 3 most important tasks for our learning centre are

1. *A Meeting place* - providing easily accessible localities for open and flexible forms of learning in a friendly and welcoming surrounding. Providing administrative, pedagogical and technical support.
2. *A Broker* - providing study and career guidance/counselling and ways of evaluation. Collaboration with a wide range of actors.
3. *A Motor* - stimulating local and regional growth

MINI LEARNING CENTRE AT THE BOROUGH LIBRARY

In March 2003 a mini learning centre at the local borough library in Kista was opened up as a means of creating a new entrance to studies and of reducing obstacles for prospective students.

The centre is located in the middle of the library in an open space and the whole concept is built on collaboration between Kista administrative services department, Kista library, the Labour Agency, Kista Job and Learning Centre, Lernia (responsible for Swedish for immigrants in Kista) and KOA.

The centre is open 20 hours a week and the staff consists of a project leader (50 %) and an assistant teacher from Lernia (9 hours a week). The project leader is a study guidance officer by profession which serves the whole concept well.

The aims of the mini learning centre:

- support for studies
- help with finding information
- a place to study
- a possibility for distance studies
- access to course literature
- study guidance

The visitors have access to 4 computers with internet access free of charge.

Libraries are environments most people have a positive feeling for, not too demanding, and you can drop in casually for various sorts of needs. They have

rather generous opening hours and very often they offer various forms of society service. It's an unconventional study environment that inspire studies and the staff is there to give service.

SOME STATISTICS FROM THE PERIOD March 26 – December 12, 2003.

Our experience of the mini learning centre is very good so far and exceeds our wildest expectations.

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| Number of visits | 642 |
| Of which women | 423 |
| Of which men | 219 |
| Average age | 32 |

Type of questions:

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| - study grants and how to finance studies | 130 |
| - municipal adult education | 107 |
| - university and academic studies | 59 |
| - study guidance | 47 |
| - Swedish for immigrants | 43 |
| - certificates of foreign origin | 35 |
| - sundries: financial supports and allowances, trainee posts, evaluation, foreign driving licences, etc | 31 |
| - folk high schools | 26 |
| - learning support | 24 |
| - CVs/job applications | 18 |

The number of visitors is very good considering the fact that it is a new activity and open only 20 hours a week. The questions extend over the whole area of education. It is often a question of how to proceed to higher education but also how to get a short vocational training.

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Ulf Finnhammar