

**BUILDING BRIDGES: THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD FOR LEARNING AND
COMMUNITY BUILDING**

CONSTRUINDO PONTES: O MÉTODO DE VIAGEM NO TEMPO PARA O
APRENDIZADO E CONSTRUÇÃO COMUNITÁRIOS

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Building Bridges

The Time Travel method for Learning and Community building

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Abstract:

This article presents the Time Travel method, an educational method that uses local heritage to reflect on contemporary issues. The goal is to promote learning, social cohesion and contribute to community building. The Time Travel method started in Kalmar, Sweden in the mid-80s and has spread to more than 20 countries around the world. Target groups are schools and local communities. The definition, principles and the three phases (process, event, follow-up) of the Time Travel method are here explained. Examples of Time Travel programs in South Africa, Kenya and Sweden are presented in an extensive way, and the effect on schools and local communities. Finally, achievements and challenges are discussed and some ideas on how to take the Time Travel method and the organization Bridging Ages into the future, also in South America.

Resumo:

Este artigo apresenta o método Viagem no Tempo, um método educacional que utiliza o patrimônio local para refletir sobre questões contemporâneas. O objetivo é promover a aprendizagem, a coesão social e contribuir para a construção comunitária. O método de Viagem no Tempo começou em Kalmar, Suécia, em meados dos anos 80 e se espalhou para mais de 20 países ao redor do mundo. Os grupos-alvo são escolas e comunidades locais. A definição, os princípios e as três fases (processo, evento, acompanhamento) do método de viagem no tempo são explicados aqui. Exemplos de programações de viagens no tempo na África do Sul, Quênia e Suécia são apresentados de forma extensa e o efeito nas escolas e comunidades locais. Por fim, os resultados e desafios são discutidos e algumas ideias de como levar o método Viagem no Tempo e a organização Bridging Ages para o futuro, também na América do Sul.

Keywords:

Time Travel method, local heritage, contemporary issues, learning, community building.

Palavras-chave:

Método de Viagem no Tempo, patrimônio local, questões contemporâneas, aprendizagem, construção comunitária.

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CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN SOCIETY AND THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD

There are many substantial challenges in today's society, such as conflicts, war, poverty, climate change, integration and inequality. When writing this article, the world is experiencing a pandemic, one of the most extensive challenges in modern times. There are also more personal challenges. Issues of identity, belonging, well-being, social relations, and values are essential (WOLLENTZ 2017; HOLTORF 2020).

How do we respond to all these challenges, individually, in local communities, as a nation and globally? UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as agreed by 193 world leaders, promotes a way towards a better world by 2030. 17 goals have been identified (**Figure 1**). In what way can heritage institutions contribute to reach these goals? Heritage is about life, in the past, today and the future, including all the experiences, good and bad. The Time Travel method is an educational method that has the ambition to address the challenges of today using the experiences of the past. It creates safe spaces for people to meet, reflect and find solutions for the future. The Time Travel method is using Soft Power, which means that it builds upon social relations and dialogue for change. This article will give a short description of the Time Travel method and the international organization Bridging Ages which promotes the method. It will also present how the method has developed, from the Kalmar region in Sweden in the mid-1980s to more than 20 countries in four continents. It will give some examples of Time Travel programs, discuss results and challenges, and finally provide some thoughts for the future. Before presenting the method, I will outline the kind of understanding of heritage and the role of heritage institutions, which has influenced Bridging Ages in its work.

THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



Figure 1: The 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

HERITAGE

Cultural heritage is most often connected to the past, to preserve tangible remains like buildings and objects or intangible expressions, like traditions. However, adopting a more process and practice-oriented approach to heritage along the influential work of Laurajane Smith (2006), emphasizes that heritage is always changing, sometimes rapidly and sometimes slowly. We know for sure that the heritage of hundred years ago is not the same as today, and we know that it is going to be different in the future (DESILVEY, 2017; HÖGBERG et al, 2017; HOLTORF, 2018; HARRISON et al, 2020).

We often look at heritage as something positive that we want to transfer to future generations (FREDHEIM, 2020). But there is also a difficult and dark heritage, heritage of the oppressor, of inequality and conflict (MACDONALD, 2008; RICO, 2008; WOLLENTZ, 2019).

Heritage can be based on very personal experiences. Nonetheless, we often connect heritage to what several people, or groups of people, have in common. Most people may share certain forms of heritage with some people, and other forms of heritage with other people.

Heritage is used in many different ways: for commercials, tourism, branding, narratives, political arguments, education, as well as in conflicts and war. Heritage is often used to separate and divide, creating an Us and a Them. Cornelius Holtorf argues: "That legacy of Romantic Nationalism motivates distinctions and exclusions which easily raise tensions between different cultural groups in any one society." (HOLTORF, 2020: 58). However, heritage is not only used to manifest power or to oppress others. Heritage is also used by those who feel oppressed. Indeed, a bottom-up usage of heritage can empower marginalized groups in society (ANHEIER e RAY ISAR, 2011), as well as be used in resistance to those who enforce conflict or division through heritage (WOLLENTZ et al, 2019).

Heritage can be a catalyst for change, be part of shaping the future and promoting cohesion, respect and positive development. (HOLTORF, 2011; ŠEVČENKO, 2011). Using the past in creating the future is what the Time Travel method is all about.

What is the role of museums, heritage institutions and heritage disciplines in today's society?

Cornelius Holtorf express it in this way: "Archaeology should not be afraid of dealing with the big societal challenges of our time as they are expressed in those goals of Agenda 2030. Archaeology ought to provide benefits for all." (HOLTORF, 2020)

And this is how ICOM, International Council of Museums, defines the role of the museum: "Museums are in the Service of Society and its Development." (<http://icomsweden.se/verksamhet/icom-museidefinition/>) So in what way can a museum serve the society and its development?

From here follows a presentation of the Time Travel method, which has the aspiration to work in line with the mentioned strategies and ICOM's definition (WESTERGREN, 2018).

THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD

The Time Travel Method is an educational method, using local heritage in a learning process, to create reflection on contemporary issues, and provide tools for community building.

The **goal** is to promote learning, social cohesion and contribute to community building (WESTERGREN, 2018)

In the Time Travel method local sites and stories are used for reflection on today's issues in the community, to learn and find ways for the future. By making local heritage and history relevant to people and to the society, the method aims to build bridges between today, the past and future, between young and old and between people in the community.

THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD, HOW IT STARTED AND CONTINUED

The Time Travel method started in Sweden in the 1980s (WESTERGREN, 2017). The Swedish primary schools got a new curriculum in 1980 that emphasized the experience of the pupils and their own "research", which opened space for more use of local history and life experiences in education. A pilot project between Kalmar County Museum, Regional Department of Education in Kalmar County, and three schools started. Nearby history, local sites and stories, were connected with the life realities of pupils. One of the schools chose a Stone Age site close to the school for their grade three classes and used the pupils' own questions to research life of the Stone Age people. Kalmar County Museum supported with historical facts and training days for teachers. Several school subjects were involved, including social sciences, natural sciences, craft, art, and Swedish language. The project team decided that for one day the pupils together with teachers and museum staff would experience life at a local Stone Age site that is close to the school, using all their senses. The pupils became the persons who lived 5000 years ago – those they had researched and studied. This very first Time Travel event was organized in 1986 after more than one year of preparation. After three pilot years the Time Travel method was introduced to all schools in the Kalmar region. In the first year, 1990, more than 50 schools were already involved. **(Figure 2)**



Figure 2: The first Time Travel site, close to Kalmar, Sweden. This Stone Age site has been used for Time Travel events from 1986 and onwards. The picture is from 2006, grade three learners at the neighboring school.

In the 1990s, this learning concept was made available also to adults, organizations and institutions. Kalmar County Museum organized many training days for teachers and community members. Up to 100 Time Travel events per year including big public historical events were held. The local sites, which were always close to the schools, spanned time periods from the Stone Age to the 20th century.

In the year 2000, Kalmar County Museum received a National Commission for three years from the Swedish government, to spread the Time Travel method all over Sweden.

In 1999 Kalmar County Museum was invited to go abroad with the Time Travel method to Ostrobotnia, Finland and to Minnesota, USA. This was the start of international cooperation and the spread of the Time Travel method to many countries: initially to USA, Finland, the Åland Islands, Estonia, Italy, Latvia and Turkey, later to African countries, mainly Kenya, Uganda and South Africa.

In 2004 representatives from eight countries involved in Time Travels gathered for three days in Vimmerby, Kalmar county, Sweden. At the end of the symposium the participants decided to start an international network with the office at Kalmar County Museum. The network was called Bridging Ages. In 2007, at a conference in Tukums, Latvia, Bridging Ages was established as a formal organization, to promote and implement the Time Travel method. Bridging Ages has grown since then. As of 2020, persons and organizations from more than 20 countries are involved and national chapters exist in several countries. Bridging Ages is organizing an international conference every year, 2019 in Estonia, 2018 in South Africa. Next conference will be in Turkey.

PARADIGM SHIFT

In 2006, Kalmar County Museum was invited to South Africa to introduce the Time Travel method. Several collaboration projects started and have continued up until today. In South Africa it was clearly demonstrated that heritage is very much connected to the society of today. This affected the Time Travels and the method changed gradually. Contemporary issues became more and more into focus. Key questions and safe spaces for reflection were introduced which will be presented later in this text. There is no doubt, that there was a paradigm shift in the Time Travel method from just learning about history, to learning something about today's society, through history. In an expert seminar in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2016, the Bridging Ages countries agreed on the definitions, principles, process and event of the Time Travel method, which are as follows.

5 PRINCIPLES OF THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD

- Local sites and stories (WESTERGREN et al, 2018)

What are the important sites, the heritage sites in the local community? It can be a residential house, a shop, road junction, river, religious building, factory, school, or maybe an archaeological site. What are the stories connected to the sites? Why was the site important in the past and what has the site and stories to do with our lives today? For the first Time Travel program, one site and the stories of that site is chosen.

- Several perspectives, Bottom-up history

There are always several perspectives to each site, not only one truth and one story, but many truths and many stories. In the Time Travel method, the focus is on history from below, from workers, slaves, children, women, history of ordinary people. The power/ upper class is always present, but is seen from another perspective, from below.

- Key questions

Key questions are the very centre of the Time Travel method. Key questions are issues that connect the past with today, towards the future. It is a contemporary issue to reflect upon, for instance climate, violence, health, religion, gender, power, migration, or pandemic. Everything in the Time Travel program, circles around the chosen key question. What issue is important in the community today? What local heritage site can give a reflection on that issue? Or the other way around: What is the main key question of the chosen heritage site and the connection to society today?

- Partners

It is an advantage to work together and to have several partners in a Time Travel program. The community can work together with a school, supported by a museum or university. Everybody

helps in the research on their level as well as in the educational part and event. We are stronger together and more perspectives are provided.

- Reflective dialogue

A dialogue, to listen, argue, discuss, listen again is a good way of learning. A real dialogue generates reflection and new knowledge. At the end of the program, people might come to a common solution or at least respect and understand various opinions.

THREE PHASES: PREPARATION-EVENT-FOLLOW-UP

The Time Travel method includes three phases. Process/preparation - event/role-play - follow-up. The result is better if all three phases are involved (WESTERGREN et al, 2018).

1. PROCESS, PREPARATIONS, WORKSHOPS

The process/ preparation can be done in a short period of time, but it can also take months or even half a year/ a year, depending on what is needed or possible. It is a way to implement the curriculum at school and improve the knowledge and understanding of the learners. If the community is the target group it is a way to reflect on an important issue in the community, using a historical site, and finding solutions for the future. Community members or organizations meet, engage, discuss, reflect, research, have workshops on the chosen topic/issue using local stories and sites

Here are some components or steps in the preparation phase that could be used in sequence, combined or separately.

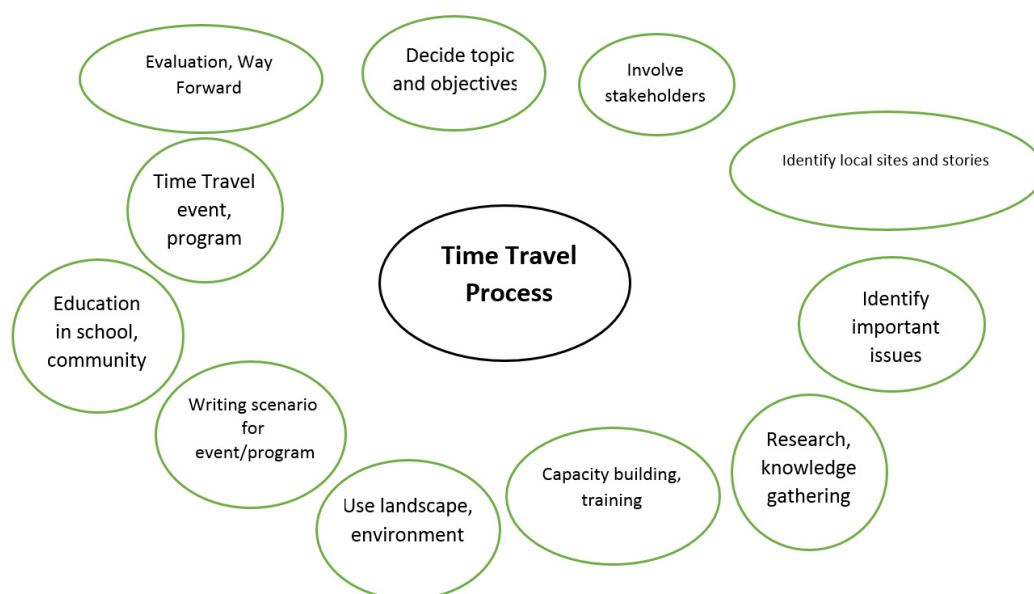


Figure 3: The Time Travel process, preparations for the Time Travel event. Various components that could be used.

- Deciding topic and objectives
- Involving stakeholders. Most often the local community and the school work together with support from a museum and/or university.
- Selecting a local site and the story (stories) of the site. See above. The local site and story are connected to more general, national or global perspectives.
- Research and Capacity building. Literature, interviews, documents, archives. Trying to get many perspectives.
- Using the landscape. What is left from the past, what has changed? What is the future?
- Writing a scenario for a Time Travel event

The scenario is a fictional story of what might have happened at the site, a frame for the role-play. A common story for an event is: doing the last preparations before opening a railway station/ a church/ a shop. Or a gathering to prepare for a protest march; a meeting on how to take care of new immigrants; how to deal with a pandemic or climate change. There are many opportunities.

Key questions can be on what actions to take for a certain problem, needs and dreams of the society.

- Education in school

The Time Travel program is always connected to a certain topic in the curriculum. The learners study the topic and stories, do interviews, look into documents, do research on their level. They study the scenario and are able to write their own character for the role-play.

2. TIME TRAVEL EVENT

The role-play is fictional, based on historical facts, reflecting on an important issue of today and the past. It is staged at the chosen site. The goal is to reflect and find solutions to a certain topic and a way forward, learning about the historical site and its significance in our lives today.

A Time Travel event normally takes 2-4 hours, including the preparations before and reflections after the event, on the day. The participants change their names and assume the role of another character. The leaders have the leading roles, maybe known historical characters. The participants are most often on the same level, such as workers, slaves, children. Everybody keeps their age and gender. There is no audience. If possible, the participants are dressed up in periodic clothing, if not, a symbol of the time will do.

In a Time Travel event the participants are divided into groups, each group with a certain activity or task. These activity groups serve as learning areas and safe spaces, where the key questions are discussed and every person can express their views, listen, reflect and come up with solutions, while working with their hands at the same time. **(Figure 4)**



Figure 4: The Time Travel events create safe spaces to reflect and talk on the key questions while working with the hands. A Time Travel event to 1853 in South Africa.

The Time Travel event is a drama with a considered dramaturgy, in order to increase the learning and reflection process.

The event is always followed by a short evaluation, to find out about the learning that has taken place, if the goals have been achieved and compare the key questions/ topic with today.

3. FOLLOW-UP

One or two days after the Time Travel event there is a follow-up in school and among the community members. The follow-up is a reflection of the event and personal experiences. It gives the participants opportunity to compare the historical situation and the key questions with today.

In the follow-up an evaluation of the whole Time Travel program is made, and the way forward is agreed upon.

I will now present some examples of Time Travel programs, from South Africa, Kenya and Sweden.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a country strongly hit by colonialism and apartheid; an institutionalized racial segregation that existed until early 1990s. It was a way of dividing people under white supremacy

and affected all parts of society in a brutal way. After a long struggle, the first democratic election was held in 1994, and Nelson Mandela was elected president. The effects of apartheid are still clearly visible in the South African society today.

History has traditionally been written by the whites in South Africa and heritage sites have often been connected to colonial history. Documents are primarily from the supreme class. After 1994 the country has gradually changed, but it is still a long way to go.

In 2006, Kalmar County Museum was invited by Cape Winelands District Municipality, Western Cape, South Africa to introduce the Time Travel method and funding was received. Several workshops were organized, trying to adapt the method to the South African society. How does this method benefit local communities and schools in South Africa? (Westergren et al 2012)

PORT SHEPSTONE

In 2008, Kalmar County Museum was invited to Port Shepstone, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and received funding for a partnership with Port Shepstone Twinning Association (PSTA).

PSTA is a local NGO that has existed since 1994 (Khan 2015). According to their constitution, PSTA provides opportunities for people to come together to communicate, to share ideas, skills and resources, regardless of race, profession, religion, culture, gender, age and political persuasion. It promotes co-operation, friendship, and reconciliation among the people of Port Shepstone.

PSTA embraced the Time Travel method from the very beginning and has since 2008 been a strong force in developing the method in Port Shepstone and in the KwaZulu-Natal province, as well as in other provinces in South Africa. Their work has had vital influence on the Time Travel method in the entire Bridging Ages organization.

GAMALAKHE TOWNSHIP, PORT SHEPSTONE

Gamalakhe is a township, about 25 kilometers inland from Port Shepstone, where black people were forcefully removed from their homes along the coast in the 1960s and 1970s. Today about 35 000 people live in Gamalakhe. As in many townships, there is a history of lack of services, poverty, unemployment, crime, neglect, but also a fight for survival, friendship, and struggle for freedom. When a public library was established in the township about ten years ago, the library did not have a single document on the history and heritage of Gamalakhe.

When it was decided to make a Time Travel program in Gamalakhe, through the partnership between Kalmar County Museum and PSTA, the people of Gamalakhe were involved in study groups. They conducted interviews with local people and documents were studied. This is a good example of the Time Travel process, engagement of people, learning and dialogue in the local com-

munity. Several stakeholders were involved, research was carried out, sites and stories identified, and the historical landscape was made visible. In the meetings and workshops, the past and present challenges of the township were discussed.

At the end of the process one of the sites were identified as the site for the first Time Travel event, the history of Smangele Memela and her family (Khan 2015).

Smangele Memela, her mother and younger brother were forcefully removed from their house on the coast in October 1968 (Khan 2018). She still clearly remembers the knock on the door early in the morning, having one hour to bring some of their belongings on a truck. They were moved to a place 25 kilometers inland with no services. The family was told to stay in a 3,5x3,5 meters tin house. About one month later another truck stopped outside their tin house with a new family of five persons. They were also designated to the same tin house, No 258.

The scenario of the Time Travel event is focused on the time when this new family arrives at Memela's tin house in Gamalakhe. What are the reactions? Is there space for everybody in this small house?

Learners in a local school prepared for the Time Travel event. They studied forced removal, interviewed their own relatives, discussed Gamalakhe then and now. In the Time Travel event they played neighbors of the Memela family and wrote their own characters. Community members and teachers were trained to be leaders of the event and found suitable characters. Smangele Memela played her own mother.

On the day of the first event, 30 learners and 30 members from the community, PSTA and a few persons from Kalmar County Museum, lined up behind a truck with the belongings of the new family. The Time Travel to October 1968 started with everybody walking to the Memela's house, behind the truck, singing Zin Zinina (What have they done?). The Memela family was of course very surprised to see a new family coming but had to accept it. In the activities the participants prepared for the new family, cleaned the tin house and the yard, made a sheet to divide the house in two parts, did some laundry, prepared sandwiches and tea and planted some vegetables. At the same time there were intensive discussions on the key questions around segregation. Why racism? What to do? How to work together in the new surroundings? In the middle of the event a security officer came to outline the rules and troubled the group. At the end, all participants gathered, made a plan how to work against segregation and meet the challenges in the township, together. **(Figure 5, 6)**



Figure 5: Sماغele Memela at her tin house in Gamalakhe. Her story was made into a Time Travel program.



Figure 6: The Time Travel event in Gamalakhe started with the truck coming with a new family moving into Memela's tin house. Neighbours are helping. October 1968

The Time Travel event was a strong and emotional experience, especially for those who have faced forced removal, but also for the young people, when the stories they had heard of came alive. The connection between then and now was obvious. An evaluation was done immediately after the Time Travel and for the learners also in school afterwards.

The Time Travel program inspired in the development of the community in Gamalakhe. More stories were recorded. Evaluations showed that self-esteem and pride of those participating improved. A clear result was that the road at Memela's house was tarred a year after the first Time Travel event. A book of Gamalakhe is being completed. And the Time Travel program at the tin house continues with both public and educational Time Travel events (Khan 2015).

MORE TIME TRAVEL PROGRAMS

Port Shepstone Twinning Association, often in cooperation with Kalmar county museum, has created Time Travel programs in many other communities in the Port Shepstone surroundings. The focus is mainly on education and community development but also tourism. (Khan 2015).

EVALUATIONS

The Time Travel program has become rooted in PSTA, although there is often challenges with funding. Here are some comments from members of PSTA:

“People worked together to find the information. It brought our community together to discover places and sites of importance. Children learned through doing things, an experience of a lifetime. A platform to reflect.” Judy Mkhize, teacher at Nobamba High School. (Gounden, Khan, Westergren, in print)

“The Time Travel program encourages dialogue on past and current issues. Implementation of the method takes into account current needs of our country. Resources of communities are utilized, in this way there is a total buy-in to the program.” Gulshera Khan, PSTA, social worker (Gounden, Khan, Westergren, in print)

More examples of Time Travel programs in South Africa and other countries are presented in *Archaeology of Time Travel* (Westergren 2018), *Use the Past, Create the Future* (Phelago et al 2015), *This place has meaning* (Westergren et al 2012) and on the website www.bridgingages.com.

TIME TRAVEL AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

PSTA has written an educational manual on the Time Travel method. (Gounden, Khan, Westergren. in print). Dr. Gounden, principal of Marburg Primary School, and one of the authors argues that from an educators’ point of view the Time Travel method is a relational, reflectional, experiential and transformational educational method. He has summarized in a diagram how the Time Travel method enhances critical thinking in learners using their ***Time Travel experience (1), engage in reflection (2) and critical thinking (3) and apply (4)*** them to present and future realities. (Figure 7)

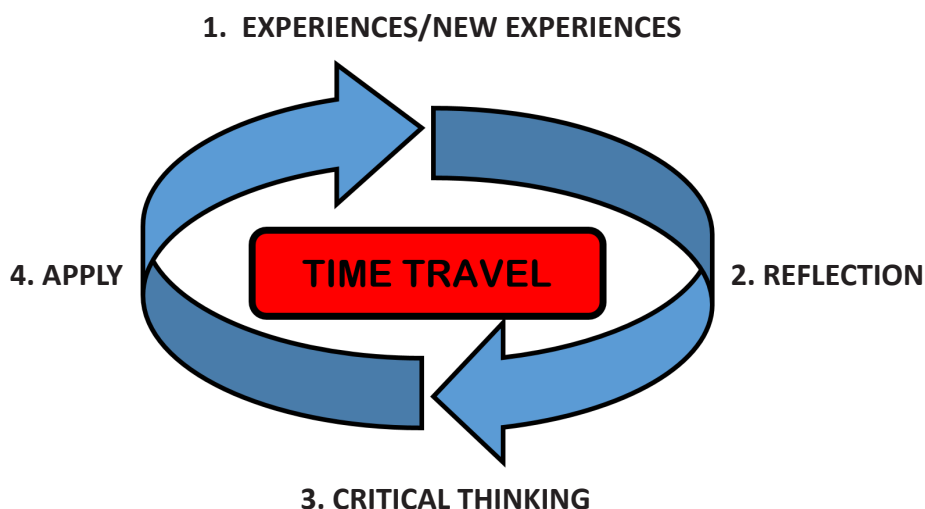


Figure 7: The learning process in a Time Travel program according to Dr Gounden (Gounden, Khan, Westergren in print).

Dr Gounden continues: “The Time Travel method allows students to be actively involved thereby strengthening their skill and depth of knowledge and understanding. The Time Travel method can be a strong pillar of support to the school curriculum. It can assist to promote individuals who are able to identify and solve problem, make decisions using critical and creative thinking.” (Gounden, Westergren, Khan, in print)

KENYA, NGURUNIT

The Time Travel method was introduced in Kenya in 2011 through a project on Mathematics in the Historic Environment. Partners were Linnaeus University and Kalmar County Museum in Sweden, Kenyatta University, Maseno University and National Museums of Kenya. (Westergren, Roos Johansson 2016). The focus was to stimulate Mathematics education in schools by using the Time Travel method and the local environment. One of the case studies was the small village of Ngurunit in the desert in Marsabit county, northern Kenya.

Ngurunit is a village of Samburus, a nomadic and pastoralist tribe. The Samburu has their livelihood in domestic animals: goats, sheep, camels, and cows. The Samburu is a strict patriarchal society with all major decisions taken by men and elders. Polygamy is common. Each family has their home in a manyatta, a group of huts for the members of the family, surrounded by a thorny fence.

Several workshops were held on Mathematics and the Time Travel method in Ngurunit in the years 2011-2016, together with a mix of people from the community: men, women, elderly, young people, and teachers. Important sites were identified by the community as well as the challenges they are facing. An educational Time Travel program was created. The influence of modern society and how to keep the community together was one of the challenges that were discussed, in relation to basic challenges such as water shortage, poverty and grazing.

The first site decided for a Time Travel program was the manyatta which is something that everybody can refer to. How is it possible to teach Mathematics using the manyatta (Westergren, Roos Johansson 2016)?

There were preparations in school and in the community, research, interviews, and the scenario was developed. Finally, a pilot Time Travel event was held, with a mixed group of learners from a local school and community members. In total circa 50 people participated. The fictional story was a gathering for a girl and a boy leaving for university in Nairobi. There were mathematical activities, for example building a hut, making a necklace, sports, and games, drawing of the manyatta and intensive discussions on the key questions, which traditions to leave and which traditions to keep. Finally, the groups delivered their suggestions to the girl and the boy. The various ideas on traditions to keep or leave created a lot of emotions and talks continued. As this was a fictional event, most people dared to speak their mind, also children and women. **(Figure 8)**



Figure 8: Traditions to keep, traditions to leave. A young boy giving his opinion, while men and women, elders and youngsters are listening. Time Travel event in Ngurunit, Kenya.

The Time Travel program in Ngurunit provided a platform for reflections on issues of traditions, gender and development of the community. The participants learnt that Mathematics is a practical subject connected to various parts of life. And, almost without knowing, people also learnt a lot about Samburu and Ngurunit history.

“The work with Mathematics that evolved as a solution process to a task is the central difference between this method and others”. (Khakasa Miheso 2016)

After the first Time Travel program in 2011, the community decided to form a local CBO called Bridging Ages Northern Kenya (BANK), to continue and develop the program. The CBO faced some challenges the years after. Ngurunit is situated in a food insecure area, quite often experiencing draughts, causing huge challenges for people and livestock. But the Time Travel programs have continued, including research of the history and heritage of the Samburu. The biggest achievement, so far, was when BANK hosted the Bridging Ages international conference 2014 in Ngurunit, “Education, Heritage and Community Building”. 150 persons from all around the world, including quite many people from central Kenya, came to Ngurunit and stayed for five days, discussing local, national, and global issues and experienced the hospitality of the Samburu. Making this conference a success gave a lot of confidence to the community members and connected Ngurunit to the world. (Figure 9)



Figure 9: Bridging Ages international conference in Ngurunit, Kenya 2014. 150 people from all over the world in a manyatta.

SWEDEN, KALMAR COUNTY

Kalmar county in south-east Sweden is the home of Time Travels as it started here in the mid-1980s and still continue. For thirty years Kalmar County Museum has organized about 100 Time Travel events every year, mainly for learners from schools but also community members. The events are held at a historical site close to each school. Schools of all levels participate, primary and secondary schools. Any time-period from the Stone Age to the end of the 20th century is used.

The museum also holds capacity building workshops for teachers and/or community members on a certain historical time period/ event or an important contemporary issue. Interactive workshops on democracy, biodiversity and climate, equality, civ-

il courage, conflict, migration and integration have become popular in recent years, for adults in community organizations, schools, companies and public administration.

The interest in Time Travel programs from the schools and from the communities have all the years been extensive. The main challenge has been the economy, for the schools to be able to pay for the program and for the museum to have enough income to match the expenses.

You can read more on Time Travel programs at Kalmar County Museum in the article by Adam Norman in this volume.

THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD, RESULTS

About 20 000 students and adults take part in Time Travel programs throughout the world every year, in total more than 250 000 people since the inception. The reactions and evaluations from leaders and participants reveal that the Time Travel method has brought many positive results. “Time Travels have presented us with the golden opportunity to bridge socio-political divides and work towards social cohesion in a country desperately in need of healing”. (Marais 2012). To what extent and in what form the method has made a difference is more difficult to say. Hence more research is needed.

The persons leading Time Travel programs, in any country, have big ambitions. There is a desire to make a change, to make a difference in society. “Time Travel is a method with capacity to change” (HÖGBERG, 2018)

CHALLENGES

There are several challenges for the Time Travel programs. Time Travels are still very much dependent on engaged individuals and volunteers. Development of a program requires engagement and time. For several countries, it also seems difficult to achieve regularity in the programs.

It can be a challenge to choose which stories and what perspectives to focus on in the programs. It is often difficult to have all parties involved. Those who are considered as perpetrators are more hesitant.

Furthermore, the so-called first world countries, including its museums and universities, have a history of colonialism and are sometimes seen as distant institutions. It often takes time to build trust.

The Time Travel method is built on an idea of heritage as a tool for change, for inclusivity and for respect. It wants to contribute to reaching UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. However, we are now and then asked whether this is a main task for museums and heritage institutions? Some agree, but not everybody.

FUTURE

How can heritage institutions contribute in creating a future society that is sustainable and cohesive?

Professor Holtorf raises the question in this way for archaeology: *How will public archaeology be able to provide additional and broader benefits for societies in the future?* (Holtorf 2020). What can we learn from the present pandemic crisis, which at the time of writing is still ongoing, optimizing positive outcomes and benefits for people and heritage institutions? One answer is: **To be in the service of society and its development.** Heritage institutions need to prove that they are relevant to people and communities.

As implied in this article, the Time Travel method and Bridging Ages have the ability to be a tool for improved learning and contribute to a cohesive and inclusive society. There has been enriching experiences during more than 30 years of existence. What is needed to make the Time Travel method sustainable into the future and even take it to another level? It is crucial to have a common vision that directs the work. Partnership with various kind of organizations strengthens the efforts. There is a need for consolidation of the structure but also to take more space in the general debate; to be a reliable organization, that is professional academically and practically.

To listen, to reflect, to create, to serve.

SOUTH AMERICA

Bridging Ages and the Time Travel method has expanded a lot the past twenty years, mainly through the work of Kalmar County Museum. The expansion is not built on any strategic decisions but occurred when the museum was invited to introduce the Time Travel method, sometimes connected to a pilot study, in a country, region, museum, or university. When the inviting organization has the capacity to take on and continue with the Time Travel method, the progress has started.

The Time Travel method has been adaptable to different countries and conditions. People are similar all over the world, young and old.

If invited, of course people from Bridging Ages institutions would be willing to go to South America to introduce the Time Travel concept. It would be fascinating to see how it works in the various conditions of the continent.

“The Time Travel can challenge boundaries and become a starting point for reflection and critical discussion” (Fritzén, Gustafsson 2007)

“Time Travel is a powerful method which transcends all boundaries. It is more than educational. It unites people. It builds self-respect and confidence. It creates new horizons and gives people hope through their efforts.” (Khan 2015)

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