



The conference delegates, more than 200 people, at the Time Travel in the manyatta in Ngurunit.

The Bridging Ages conference in Ngurunit, Kenya brought together persons from nine different countries, from several parts of Kenya and a lot of people from the local community.

This was the first conference ever held in northern Kenya. Several presentations mixed with group discussions and a Time Travel held at a local manyatta. It all ended with a huge cultural event in the middle of the community.

Declaration from the Bridging Ages Conference in Ngurunit 2014

1. Use local sites, experiences and activities in education in various ways and subjects; this provides a lot of benefits.
2. Establish and develop Local Community Heritage Centers (Naabo) as social, knowledge and educational centers.

Conditions: Community ownership, partnership

Education and Community Building

Mathematics in the Historic Environment

There exists a relationship between Mathematics and the local history/ environment and the community around a local school can be used as a resource in teaching of Mathematics. This conference paper is part of a project Mathematics in the Historic Environment, collaboration between Kenyatta University, National Museums of Kenya, Linnaeus University and Kalmar läns museum. The project tries to improve the teaching and learning of Mathematics both in Kenya and Sweden. Although Mathematics is a very important subject in the curriculum, its performance has been dismal in the two countries partly because of poor methods of teaching and negative attitude towards the subject. A new method of teaching Mathematics is proposed which tries to make the subject concrete and alive to the learners by using their immediate environment. The teacher of Mathematics must not only be familiar with Mathematics content at a given level but also understand the local community where the school is located. This will enable him/ her to relate the content to what is familiar and available in the child's environment and therefore teach from known to unknown.

There are four categories of community resources which are available in the community and could be used in teaching: people (experts in Mathematics concepts, patterns, and shapes); places (avenues of Mathematical value where students can visit); events taking place in the community and specific objects/ models. In order to use the community as a resource there is need for support, goodwill and cooperation from: Local community, leadership and parents; Mathematics teachers; head teachers; National Examination Council which should incorporate local environment in their assessment; curriculum developers; Quality Assurance Officers to check on whether the new approach is being used and teacher training institutions to train the teachers in the new approach.

There are several benefits of using the local heritage in mathematics education which include making learning interesting, real, relevant, and easy to understand and apply not only at the classroom level but also in everyday life. This will eventually lead to improved performance and preparing learners for effective role in the society. It also improves school- community relationships and develops the community. The implementation of this approach is likely to face challenges: Inadequate time for covering the wide syllabus; large classes; lack of expertise on how to use the local environment; an examination oriented curriculum and also lack of cooperation from heads of school and education stakeholders. But all of these challenges are able to overcome in order to make Mathematics Education more meaningful and relevant.

Dr Mary Nasibi , Dr Mueni Kiio and Dr. Mumo Malonza
Kenyatta University, Nairobi



Construction of a hut, a mathematical challenge with female experts.

Mathematics and History together

Time Travels at Kisumu Railway Station, Kenya

The goal of the Kisumu Time Travels was to Discover how Mathematics Education can be used in the Historic Environment; Learn local history of Kisumu and the connection to today's society and also Connect university, museum and schools in Kisumu municipality.

The key questions were based on the concept of communication: What is the best means of transport – Cars, trains, ships, airplanes? How do we improve communication between different groups of people in Kisumu?

Historical Account of Kisumu

The Kenya-Uganda railway arrived at Port Florence (Kisumu) around 1901, where steamships would carry goods through Lake Victoria to Uganda. A new railway station opened in 1972, the same year that the municipal boundaries were extended. Kisumu has been a racially segregated town since it was first built in 1903, with clear demarcation of African, Indian and European areas.

The Time Travel Scenario, Kisumu railway station 1973

The old station is too small and cannot facilitate the growing amount of goods and passengers. A new station has been built and the first train is expected from Nairobi into the new station today. The East African Railways and Harbours Corporation has called for extra workers, young and old, to finalize the last preparations.

After several preparing workshops, two similar Time Travels have been organized in 2014, by teachers from Kisumu municipality schools, Maseno University, Kisumu museum, Linnaeus University and Kalmar county museum, about 55 learners and 20 adults in each Time Travel. The Time Travel provided an opportunity for learners to explore Mathematical ideas in a historical perspective:

- Concepts on speed, time and distance through the movement of the train from Nairobi to Kisumu
- Buying and selling activities to conceptualize and work out profits; exchange of currencies; Economic and racial differences in the society
- Weighing of parcels and selling and buying of tickets
- Preparing decorations with key concepts in geometry like shapes, area, surface area and patterns.

Lessons Learned

The Time Travel activity opened up communication channels between schools, museums and universities, showing clearly that the Time Travel method is able to bridge existing gaps in society and within a community. Thematic approach which is advocated for by the Time Travel activities brings collaborative learning and teaching in the sense that a math teacher has a lot to borrow from other subject teachers.

The best outcome of the Time Travel activities was that the university, museum and school teachers agreed to explore the possibility of starting a 'Bridging Ages- Western Kenya Chapter'.

Dr. Mildred Ayere, Maseno University
Phoebe Awiti, Kisumu Museum.



Cleaning of the railroad track. How many persons are needed, and how fast do they have to do it, to finish the cleaning before the first train arrives?



Designing boxes and filling them with sweets, a delicate job for the shop assistants.

Comments from the Ngurunit conference

On behalf of Bridging Ages Northern Kenya, BANK, Marsabit County Government and myself I want to thank all the participants at the Ngurunit conference. The people of Ngurunit felt honoured and appreciated your kindness and your creative ideas.

The conference brought a lot of excitement in the valley of Ngurunit and it also gave me the experience of a life time as an individual. The humour, the ideas, and a community formed from nations. The conference built confidence in many ways. I hope you all had good experiences and learnt something to take home, during your short stay in Kenya. Thank you and thank you again. Asante Sana

Steven Labarakwe, BANK, Marsabit County Government

The conference stressed the need to record history, but most importantly it focussed on the now – what can be done NOW to better the lives of people. The organisation of the entire The BANK members had different roles to play and different aspects taken care of. This was indeed an experience of a lifetime. I will make education more meaningful by taking on the Time travel approach and I formally apply to the Department of Education to allow learners to engage with Time Travel in 2015

Thanks to those who gave me the greatest opportunity to be part of this wonderful experience. I simply loved it.

Dr B. Gounden, Port Shepstone Twinning Association, Marburg Secondary School, South Africa

It was such a wonderful time together in Ngurunit. It was quite amazing that people from different nations with different cultures quickly agreed, united and put brains together to address the theme of the conference. What a successful memorable conference!

Applause to the organizers. Thank you thank you thank you I am surely a transformed person now. I am thinking differently about the challenges around me/my community/ school/nation.

It is my prayer that we remain in touch, form a task force team that can always come together and discuss issues geared to solutions whenever need arises no matter where.

I will always treasure that time I was in Ngurunit and your company my dear friends.

Rosemary Lipa, Nakiwogo Primary School, Entebbe, Uganda

The conference was different from all other conferences I've been to, the reception of the locals and the site's very special character. It was truly a „once in a lifetime“ – moment; without electricity and mobile networks, a platform for all the meetings. I got the chance to socialize with people from other countries and cultures in a relaxed way. This was an inspiration that I want more of.

Tore Danielsson, Swedish Exhibition Agency

More information from the conference on the Bridging Ages website, www.bridgingages.com



Group discussions on how the use heritage and education in community building. Vivid discussions and creative ideas.

I am so happy that I got the opportunity to participate in the conference. Not only did I learn more about the conference topic – education and community building – and see what it can mean in a real setting (Ngurunit made an excellent case study), I also got to know a lot of interesting, kind and passionate people and had a really good time.

I will definitely think more about how to connect the museum with the local community and how to use cultural heritage in a way that benefit society, for example in relation to issues concerning the environment and sustainability.

It was good for all of us “outsiders” to get a deeper understanding of the lifestyle and living conditions in that part of the world. It certainly gave me a new perspective on life.

Carolina Jonsson Malm, Kalmar läns museum, Sweden

This was my first time of attending Bridging Ages Conference and I have gained a lot from you people who have been members of Bridging Ages for long time. The conference brings together different people from all over the world to share other people’s culture and heritage. It is a forum where we interact with each other and make friends. I experience how community can come together to make their environment a better place to stay and I remember all the cultural dances performed by different Nations.

I have realized that Time Travel is a major tool in community building. My organization, the Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa has now given me the support to form a Bridging Ages Association in Nasarawa, Nigeria.

Adamu Mshelia, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, Nigeria

Never judge a book by its cover, the people of Ngurunit are very intelligent and have a wide knowledge. Africa is characterized by curriculum that don’t solve our problems in Africa, it is high time educationist expand, explore and be flexible so that they can come up with solutions which are relevant to our African problems

Sibiya Thandeka, Mpopohomeni Primary School, South Africa

I must say, the Bridging Ages conference has with it an amazing spirit, a spirit of gentleness from everybody. We had opportunity to learn from each other, live and taste the Samburu and Rendile cultures through Time Travel. The conference really helped me to learn how I can use history as a practical tool for change and development now. The principle of the applied history is perfect.

Denis Ngala, TICAH, Kenya



There was a lot of dancing and singing by women, morans and community members welcoming the conference delegates and even more in the huge cultural event with the whole community.

Bridging Ages South Africa

The benefits of the Time Travel method in Community Building

Community building is broadly a process where community members come together in order to take collective action and generate solutions to common challenges. The work is addressing the community needs and knitting society together at local community level to deepen democracy.

Researching local stories and sites brings to fore life during historical period and needs of that time. Comparisons are then made between the past and present to address and understand current community challenges, thus contributing to building communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect. The Time Travel method uses the historical perspective to achieve this aim within the school curriculum, while simultaneously addressing community needs.

The Time Travel method involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power. It is the only method known to engage the community irrespective of status. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. Within the South African young democracy, social cohesion is a critical building block and the Time Travel method is an excellent way to achieve this objective.

The contributions of the Time Travel in Community Building are:

- Capacity building through training and creating awareness.
- Lobbying and advocacy to have identified sites registered as heritage sites
- Developing partnerships with schools and community structures and other stakeholders to achieve community needs and programmes
- Economic contribution through job creation in implementing Time Travels, from facilitators, seamstress, and security.
- Preserving and promoting heritage and culture.
- Restoring dignity, promoting tolerance and social cohesion
- Support learning
- Development of tourist sites through recorded and registered historical sites as identified by the community.

Gulshera Khan, Port Shepstone Twinning Association, Chairperson Bridging Ages South Africa



Enjoying the Time Travel focused on education, Betania Mission, Nyandezulu.



A jungle gym, a playground for kids in a rural community.

Bridging Ages Finland

“A Place and its Story” – to discover the stories in your surroundings

The European Grundtvig project “A Place and its Story” is a project between 7 European countries (Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Germany, Belgium and Ireland) and focuses on applied heritage, adult learning for marginalized groups. Each country chooses the group to work with.

In Finland the Ostrobothnian Children’s Culture Network BARK focuses on young immigrants and their process to adapt to the new home country. In the city of Kristinestad there was already a project aiming at integrating new citizens through education, so we teamed up. After some discussions we discovered that there were several aspects of the place and its story that the migrants wanted to know: the history of Finland, the history of Kristinestad and Finnish traditions, like dances, music and food.

The story of a place can be told in many ways and from many angles. We kicked off with a Time Travel to 1812. This was a time when Kristinestad had a busy harbor and many foreigners were coming and going. At the same time, the country had just left Sweden after 700 years, becoming autonomy under Russia. What do we think of all the new people? How will the new situation be for us under Russia? Will the laws change? Do we have to learn a new language? These are questions many of the new immigrants are facing today.

Part two was an interactive workshop, where we presented the history of Finland since 1809. We used short films, oral history and music. We saw films from the 1900s and compared to the situation in their own countries. We told stories and sang songs. We explored local traditions, folkdances, weddings and more. And to celebrate it all, we had a party with the local community, where we danced traditional dances from all the different cultures and got to know each other!

Because many didn’t have good language skills at first, the Time Travel was a way to introduce traditions and history through practical activities. Every one could take part and we wanted it to be an including experience. As the language skills grew, it was natural to refer to what we had experienced. The next part of the project will be when both immigrants and locals tell their stories and we will make the stories into a small film.

Annina Ylikoski, Museum educator, The Ostrobothnian Children’s Culture Network BARK



New immigrants experiencing the history of Kristinestad, a diverse town in 1812.

More comments from Ngurunit:

It was the first conference I attended where individual titles were kept aside and all people were equal and that amused me and was awesome that even the community could easily interact with all persons for the barriers were broken.

Grace Mitambo, County Director of Sports, Marsabit County, Kenya

At the conference in Ngurunit, I had the opportunity to reflect on my own life, what I think is important and what I can manage to realize in everyday life. But also reflect on my work. What do I do? Which way are we heading? I will take home a lot of new, not yet fully finished ideas.

Victoria Nylund, Stundars' Open Air Museum, Finland

You are cordially invited to the
BRIDGING AGES CONFERENCE 2015
'A Place, a Border – Different Stories'
County Museum, Dundalk, Ireland
2 – 5 June 2015



The conference will examine how stories can be collected and shared with others in programmes and events, different stories to promote understanding and dialogue. Dundalk is a border town located in the Republic of Ireland which has been affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Both the museum and Diversity Challenges is involved in several projects on peace building and dialogue.

Céad míle fáilte – 'A Hundred Thousand Welcomes' - to County Museum, Dundalk



County Museum, Dundalk
Brian Walsh



Diversity Challenges
Will Glendinning, Maura Maginn

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