



BRIDGING AGES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN
APPLIED HERITAGE AND TIME TRAVELS

Annual report 2025

20 years, 20 countries. In 2004 the first symposium, that was going to become Bridging Ages, was held in Vimmerby, Sweden. A little late, we celebrated 20 years by once again host the international conference in Sweden. Here we were both looking back on the years past, but mainly on our way forward. During 2025 the world has changes a lot and the need for international cooperation and the work for social cohesion is increasingly important. Within Bridging Ages people and organisations work together for community building, social cohesion and a better future using local heritage. Heritage does not end where our country ends. And we all linked together! With the Time travel method, we gain perspective of the past that help to navigate in the present. The digital infrastructure continues to develop so that it sometimes is just as easy to work with another country as with another town or region.



Last year was a year of many anniversaries. Gargzdai Land Museum celebrated its 20th anniversary where they also invited Time Travelers from the Baltic region. BARK in Finland had 15th year anniversary and was host for their National Children Culture conference.

During 2025 our network has produced 2 printed publications. There has been transnational project between both South Africa and Sweden and Kenya and Sweden. Within the Baltic Sea region there has been several study visits learning from each other. In this annual report we present some of the highlight and statistics from around the Time traveling community.

Linda Liljeberg, president Bridging Ages International



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International Board 2025

President, Linda Liljeberg – Sweden, Vice President, Mildred Ayere - Kenya

Secretary; Scott Green - USA/Canada, Treasurer: Monica Mattbäck - Finland

Board members: Gulshera Khan - South Africa, Samson Semakula – Uganda, Hakan Adanir – Türkiye, Made Isak – Estonia, Egita Volinska – Latvia

Honorary president, Ebbe Westergren - Sweden.

Administrative Secretary, Adam Norman – Sweden

During the year the board had 5 meetings.

Strategic plan 2023-2025

During the year we have been continues to work according to the strategic plan. On international level the strategic plan outlined 8 focus areas.

1. Emphasis on networking, cooperation, partnership, (social) inspiration, and mentorship between the Bridging Ages countries.
2. Develop methodological material for use in the countries.
3. Remain active in communication, social media, newsletters, website etc.
4. Engage the board and, if possible other members, in working groups to delegate responsibilities.
5. Be sensitive to the contemporary issues in society, trends in heritage and to the needs and opportunities of the Bridging Ages countries.
6. If possible, with countries working together, organize trainings on the Time Travel method, on various levels, including academic.
7. Develop the administrative and practical work of the board and the secretariat.
8. Fundraising

These areas are the base for the annual action plan.

Communication

Newsletters: During year 2024 two newsletters (April and Nov) were sent out and can be reviewed on the website: www.bridgingages.com

Website: The structure for the new website is finished, but there are a lot of material and the process of moving everything to the new website is still on-going.

Social media: Bridging Ages has Facebook and Instagram accounts, but during 2025 they have not been so active.



Review of the year.

International Conference.

On the 4-5th March participants from 14 countries met for Bridging Ages 18th International Conference. The Conference was hosted as a hybrid conference by Kalmar County Museum and Bridging Ages International in Kalmar, Sweden. On site were 36 delegates with another 51 online.

During the Conference, the focus was both on the past 20 years as well as new adaptations and new ideas. We had presenters both on site and online. This made it easier for members and presenters to participate regardless of if it was possible to travel to Kalmar or not. Our Keynote Speaker, Prof. Cornelius Holtorf from Linnaeus University, talked about how Time Travels, are more than engaging in history.

The conference began with a celebration of Bridging Age's 20th anniversary. A review of the first 20 years was presented, and we also had greetings from different parts of the world sent by e-mail and video. The Celebration ended by launching the book "*I will never forget it, even if I try*". *Bridging Ages 20 years*. Here Time Travel stories from 23 countries are presented.

As part of the conference dinner in the evening, we made a short time travel to the year 1889 in the museum's Jenny Nyström exhibition highlighting the gender issue of being one of the first female artists presented in Paris.

In the final discussion we talked about the relations between physical experience and the digital benefits and limitations. We will hopefully never let go of the physical experience, but the digital complement and adaptations are here to stay. The physical experience is needed for the reflection, especially when working with hard heritage but, by adapting the Time travel method, we passed thought the pandemic while continuing doing time travels. We can also stay connected even when it is hard to find funds for travelling.



AGM

In connection to the conference a hybrid AGM was held 22 persons from 8 counties were represented. Mildred Ayere from Maseno University, Kenya chaired the meeting. Linda Liljeberg was re-elected as president. Board member Saale Randaru, Estonia and Kristine Ozola, Latvia left the board, and we had two new board members elected: Made Isak, Estonia and Egita Volinska, Latvia. Vote of thanks was given by Agrita Ozola, Tukums museum, Latvia. Minutes, Annual report and Action plan can be found on the website.

When members were gathered in Kalmar, we also hosted a seminar about the future of bridging ages and one outcome from this was the idea of a global time travel. During the year the board have looked at ways to make this possible.

Highlights from Counties

Estonia

The Nationwide Time Travel: "1905 – Year of Revolutions"

In 2025, Estonia continued the tradition of nationwide Time Travels. This year the nationwide event focused on the year 1905 – the year of revolutions.

The scenario was set in December 1905 during a tense birthday celebration at an Estonian manor. The storyline brought together manor residents, peasants, industrial workers, and news of unrest and punitive expeditions, creating a historical simulation of social tensions and demands for rights in the Russian Empire.

Preparation for the nationwide Time Travel included several training and co-creation events:

- **Training, historic knowledge (March 19):** First training day at the Estonian National Museum, with historians Lauri Kann (University of Tartu) and Elle-Mari Talivee (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, Estonian Academy of Sciences). Approximately 25 participants
- **Scripting (May 7):** Scenario writing and preparation workshop in Tallinn at the Under and Tuglas Centre Museum). Approximately 20 participants.
- **Rehearsal (September 10):** A full rehearsal of the final scenario was conducted at Estonian National Museum.). Approximately 30 participants.

The active Time Travel period ran from **October 15 to December 15, 2025**. During this time, **760 participants** from **12 schools** and **6 museums** across Estonia took part.

Notably, the Estonian History Museum stood out by organizing a public version of the event for the wider community.

Academic Lectures and Teacher Training

Throughout the year, the Time Travel method and experiences were shared at Estonian universities:

- 12 March – Lecture by Kaari Siemer for teacher education students at the **University of Tartu**, 19 students
- 14 March – Lecture by Kaari Siemer for social work students at the **University of Tartu**, 28 students
- April – Lecture by Pille Rohtla at **Tallinn University** (master’s programme for history teachers), 25 students
- October – Lecture by Pille Rohtla at the **University of Tartu** (primary teacher students), 30 students

International Cooperation and Highlights

Estonian representatives were active internationally:

- Participation in the Bridging Ages International conference “Re:Action – Time Travels in a Changing World” 4-5th March 2025
 - Pille Rohtla presented **“The Great Escape 1944, through the eyes of Estonian schoolchildren”**
 - In the conference publication “I will never forget it, even if I try” – Bridging Ages 20 Years“ was presented, Kaari Siemer contributed the article **“The ‘Estonian Way’ – Nationwide Time Travel Events”**
- Presentation at the Children’s Culture Forum in Vaasa, Finland (13 November 2025): **“The Nationwide Time Travel Initiative: A Successful Co-creation between Museums and Educators”** – Pille Rohtla, Kaari Siemer

Visibility

The 1905 Time Travel received public media coverage, including school publications, regional newspapers, and online media platforms.

- <https://saartehaal.postimees.ee/8343285/galerii-video-nooruse-kooli-opilased-nuusutasid-lossihoovis-massuaastat>
- <https://www.opleht.ee/2026/01/teistsugune-ope-saaremaa-abituriendid-laksid-paevaks-eelmise-sajandi-algusesse>
- <https://nooruse.edu.ee/meridiaan/?s=7495>
- <https://www.tarvastu.vil.ee/et/uudised/ajarannak-aastasse-1905>
- <https://www.sindigymnaasium.ee/ajarannak-1905-aasta-mass-viis-sindi-gymnaasiumi-opilased-sajanditagusesse-aega/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/KilingiNommeGymnaasium/posts/ajar%C3%A4nnak-aastasse-1905-on-alanud/1296023748993853/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/ajaloomuuseum/videos/1414301977367922/>

Finland

The Bridging Ages organization in Finland is the Ostrobothnian Children's Culture Network BARK, administrated by the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia. The region consists of 15 municipalities. The network is one of 38 children's culture centres in Finland, partly funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education. Through this national network co-operations are done also in other parts of Finland.



Work in Finland

In the region of Ostrobothnia, BARK worked together with heritage associations, museums and schools creating Time Travels and other heritage education programs.

Since a new national curriculum were introduced in Finland 2016, many municipalities in the region used a culture curriculum as a part of the curriculum. In these heritage education and Time Travels were also a part and gives the chance to all pupils to take part. Most of the Time Travels in the region are done through these culture curriculums.

During the years, many trainings have been held in other parts of Finland and today there are Time Travels done at several places in Finland.

Special projects

BARK celebrated 15 years as a Children's Culture Center this year. We held a future seminar in May and hosted the national Children's Culture Forum 12-13.11. This forum gathered 150 children's culture professionals from Finland as well as Sweden, Denmark, Greenland, Estonia and Romania. The four key note speakers included two on the Time Travel method: Linda Liljeberg from Kalmar County Museum on "We meet you where you are – a regional museum as a travelling museum" and Kaari Siemer and Pille Rohtla from Estonia on "The Nationwide Time Travel Initiative: A Successful Co-creation between Museums and Educators".

In a collaboration with archives in the north of Sweden, we created a „Time Travel box“on the Homefront theme, which has material from both Finland and Sweden and can be used when doing Time Travels as preparation material.

We tested „Time Travel walks“, in areas where there are many historic times gathered in a place. These we did in collaboration with local tour guides.

At the end of the year, an advent calendar on a historic theme “A new Finland 1920” was released. BARK was a producer and worked with the Time Travel method to educate about the history with both the actors and learners, who were part of the production. The advent calendar can be found here (in Swedish): <https://www.youtube.com/@dramadialog/playlists>

Statistics

During 2025, about 20 000 children and youth took part in Time Travel activities. This included both the live and digital versions, like the advent calendar.

Latvia

Tukums museum is representing Bridging Ages International in Latvia. One of the brightest events using Time travel method was public time travel “Barricades 1991” in January 2025. There were 459 participants from different schools and eyewitnesses to events at the time. Public time travel is a good example of cooperation between different institutions.



In 2025, a total of 15 different museum education programs were offered by the Tukuma Museum departments, which were implemented 174 times, with a total of 4,008 participants. Durbes Castle offered 4 programs that were implemented 30 times and were attended by 927 students, of which 5 times “Time travel”, which was attended by 107 students. Pastariņš Museum offered 4 programs that were implemented 62 times and participated 1,301 students. Fairy Tale Museum offered two programs that were implemented 45 times with 1,118 students. The Tukums Art Museum offered three programs, which were implemented 34 times and attended by 627 students. The Tukums Weaving Workshop offered two programs, which were attended by 20 participants. Tukums History Museum “Caste Tower” offered one program, and 15 students participated in it.

The Tukuma Museum is also an educational institution and offers professional development programs. In 2025 Tukums Museum implemented 4 professional competence development programs where participants complemented its knowledge and skills and received certificates: “Making components for archaeological costumes”, “The basics of traditional weaving”, “Fundamentals of Documentary Heritage Preservation” and “Teaching methods and techniques for exciting lessons at the museum”.



The Tukums Museum, in collaboration with the „Promotional Society of Museology in the Baltics”, organized three seminars for museum educators – workshops. In 2025, the spring, summer and autumn seminars were held on the topics “Participation in the museum”, "The ecosystem of emotions: from stress to strength" and "Teaching methods and techniques for exciting lessons in the museum." A total of 157 participants attended the workshops.

The Tukums Museum organized two seminars for teachers in the fields of visual arts, history and social sciences to promote cooperation between museums and schools. The SMART competition (Smile, Learn, Remember, Create, Meet!) was held for grades 1-3rd and grades 4-6. 15 teams participated in the competition in each grade group,

with a total of 90 students.

The SMART competition has become so popular that history and social studies teachers also proposed creating a competition aimed at generating greater interest among students and encouraging them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of history, social studies, and natural sciences in order to promote the development of civically responsible and well-rounded personalities. The competition took place in the spring of 2025 at Durbe Castle and was attended by 10 teams from schools in the Tukums region, i.e., 30 students.

In general, schools are interested in the pedagogical programs offered by the Tukuma Museum, but we also need to think about the offer of new programs.

Egita Volinska

Lithuania

Time travel method in Gargzdai Land Museum 2025

In 2025, Gargzdai Land Museum celebrated its 20th anniversary by reflecting on its growth, partnerships, and innovative educational methods. Among them, the Time Travel method has become one of the most significant directions in the museum's work.



20th anniversary celebration festival with the Time travel method

On 10-11th April, the Gargzdai Land Museum held a celebration event. On the first day, the main topic was educational programs: “How a small history became big.” Eight museum partners from Lithuania, Latvia, and Sweden presented their educational programs in local schools. Kalmar County Museum visited the “Krantas” Progymnasium in Gargzdai, where they conducted a Time Travel educational program. For a moment, the classroom in Gargzdai turned into 16th-century Sweden. Pupils found themselves in 1542, facing a difficult choice – to support the rebel Nils Dacke or remain loyal to the king.

For the local pupil, attending this educational program was a new experience and a good way to learn more about Swedish history. Colleagues from other museums joined this Time travel program and afterward discussed what they had learnt and how Lithuanian museums' educational programs could be enhanced.

The celebration continued the second day with an international conference titled “Cultural Roots in a Museum.”

During the conference, colleagues from Kalmar shared how the Time Travel approach can engage diverse audiences – from children and youth clubs to elderly care centres. They also introduced an innovative program set for 2068, encouraging participants to reflect on future challenges, including environmental issues and artificial intelligence.

The Gargzdai Land Museum team is very glad that the anniversary event was so meaningful. Those two days were full of new knowledge and connections among museum employees. At this event, members of the Lithuanian Association of Municipal Museums attended and learned more about educational programs and ways to incorporate the Time travel method into their work.



The Time travel method in a “Millennium school” project

From 2023 to 2025, Gargzdai Land Museum served as a consultant in the national education initiative “Millennium Schools,” implemented in 36 schools across Lithuania. The initiative seeks to reduce educational differences between regions and create equal learning opportunities for pupils across Lithuania. These aims were achieved through leadership strengths, cultural tools, and STEAM tools.

Project partners in the Klaipeda district created and organized an educational event that used the Time travel method. Event participants traveled to 1422 when the Peace of Meln was created. During this period, the Curionan lands had been divided, and pupils as curionans had to choose try to fight or give up. Educational programs were established in a historic place – a mound- and a courtyard of an ancient village was created. There were handicrafts and food heritage, horses, and a battle reenactment.

More than 100 pupils took part in this immersive day. For many of them, it was not just a lesson, but a memorable experience that brought history to life. Project partners left the Time travel scenario and accessories to other school classes and events. It is planned that activities will continue.

Cooperation activities related to the Time travel method

Gargzdai Land Museum has been cooperating with project partners for more than ten years, who work with the Time travel method. This cooperation allowed the creation of a new educational program, “Time travel to 1939”, and to attend the cooperation projects.

In 2025, the Gargzdai Land Museum implemented the project “Exchange of experiences and knowledge in development of cultural services”. During this project, colleagues from Finland and Sweden shared their experience with Gargzdai Land Museum workers.

In August, Gargzdai Land Museum employees met with the Ostrobothnian Children's Culture Network BARK. Coordinator Annina Ylikoski and her colleague Sini *Björkholm* *shared the creative methods they use to work with kindergartens and schools. The Time travel method is one of their parts of work. Colleagues shared their experience in creating scenarios, meeting educational requirements, and organizing educational programs using the Time travel method, in cooperation with museums and other organizations. It was a very valuable and interesting journey full of new knowledge, connections, and ideas!*

In October, Museum employees travelled to the Kalmar County Museum and observed colleagues working with funds, visitors, and businesses. Meetings with various specialists and local community members helped us learn more about the museum's work and potential projects.

During this meeting, employees of the Gargzdai Land Museum participated in the Time Travel educational program. Museum workers and pupils moved in time to the life of the medieval Swedish town of Gamleby in 1368.

Fourth graders and teachers at Gamleby Elementary School dressed in period clothing and became active craftsmen, cooks, and stained-glass artists. The students solved problems such as who is a virtuous person, and what are the most important human virtues. Also, at that time, Sweden was terrified by plague epidemics, and the village of Gamleby was no exception, so the children considered what to do if the plague returned.

It was exciting to attend this educational program and discuss how museum workers can collaborate with teachers to implement it. The visit provided practical insights into how such

programs are structured and how different spaces – schools, museums, even city environments – can become part of the journey through time.



For the Gargzdai Land Museum, the Time Travel method has become more than an educational approach. It has turned into a space for dialogue, shared reflection, and meaningful cooperation. By connecting past, present, and future, the museum continues to strengthen its role as an active cultural partner in both local and international contexts.

Kenya

Bringing Ages Kenya engaged in the following activities in 2025, mainly through Bridging Ages Maseno University:

- 2 members attended and presented papers at the Bridging Ages international conference in Vimmerby, Kalmar region themed Re:Action - Time Travels in a changing world in March 2025
- Bridging Ages Maseno chapter students wrote papers for the conference including *Technology and Loss of Heritage: The Changing Roles of Children in the Kenyan Society* and *Time Travel Method: Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in the University Through Applied Heritage*
- Trained new Bridging Ages Maseno University members on Time Travel Method.
- Joined the Bridging Ages International office and Kalmar County Museum in writing a proposal for funding of a global Time Travel themed 'Exploring the Impact of the Time Travel Method on Global Awareness and Empathy in Addressing Water Challenges',
- Secured funding from Swedish Institute for a gender hub project, which among other activities, will train 40 Maseno University students, Guidance and Counselling teachers from 4 schools, select human rights based youth organizations and nurses from JOOTRH who work at the gender recovery centre on the Time Travel method with a view to using the method to create safe spaces where children in secondary schools within informal settlements of Nyalenda in Kisumu can talk and have a reflection about sexual and gender based violence.



Dr Ayere leading a training session on Time Travel at Maseno University

South Africa

The Time Travel and Applied Heritage Programme continues to maintain a meaningful presence in South Africa. Originally disseminated nationally by Kalmar läns museum, the methodology reached approximately 50 museums across all provinces, establishing a strong foundation for long-term impact. Active from 2006 to around 2019, the programme culminated in the final Ebbe's Residency Programme facilitated through Bridging Ages.

During this period, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Museum Service implemented programmes and provided training. A number of museums across KwaZulu-Natal Province hosted Time Travel programmes. (KwaZulu-Natal is one of the 9 provinces.) From the information received, financial setbacks have been the main reason for the non-implementation by previously active institutions.



Olwandle High School learners. Educators and Time Travel volunteers

The Port Shepstone Twinning Association was fortunate to receive funding for this period. As an NGO, it facilitated 10 curriculum-aligned programmes, including commemorations of national days such as Women's Day, Heritage Day, and Youth Day, as well as 3 programmes for Therapy Child Care institutions. Additional initiatives included a programme at the Ntelezi Msani Heritage Centre focused on Zulu traditions and customs, and a large-scale event at the Old Prison in Pietermaritzburg, which brought together representatives from 41 museums and explored the imprisonment of King Dinuzulu.

An international Time Travel programme was also conducted in partnership with Slottskolan School, Viktoria Skolan (Sweden), Ingwemabala Comprehensive High School, and Marburg Primary School (South Africa), further strengthening cross-cultural learning and global collaboration.

Fifty-nine youth and unemployed participants were trained through the Time Travel programme and received stipends, contributing to both skills development and income generation. Training and preparatory presentations were conducted at each participating school to ensure that



Time Travel: Educators from Sweden supporting learning in 1912, with learners presenting their report to the School Inspector on whether the school should remain open.

learners were well prepared in advance of their events. This structured preparation significantly enhanced engagement: learners undertook community-based research on local heritage sites, sourced props and costumes, and participated with enthusiasm and a strong sense of ownership.



Training was further extended to tourist intern guides to support the expansion and development of heritage sites. In addition, a presentation to the South Coast tourism sector was positively received, strengthening collaboration between heritage and tourism stakeholders.

A notable highlight was a two-day training workshop conducted at the request of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Museum Service, attended by representatives from 42 museums across the province, reflecting growing institutional interest in the methodology.



Board member Thandi Mkhize is handing over a book to Depart of Education, Libraries, Ugu District

The programme has also benefited from increased marketing and international visibility. A dedicated website (www.portshepstonetwinning.org.za) has been launched, and several videos showcasing Time Travel programmes have been produced and shared online via the Port Shepstone Twinning Association's YouTube channel. Three members of the Port Shepstone Twinning Association attended the 20th Anniversary International Conference of Bridging Ages in Sweden, where South Africa was represented through four presentations highlighting local initiatives and experiences.

A landmark achievement was the compilation and publication of the book *Umlando Wethu: Our History Sites and Stories Through Time Travel and Applied Heritage*. The 184-page book was launched on 20 September 2025, attended by approximately 250 guests, with keynote addresses delivered by leading academics. The publication represents a significant milestone in documenting and sharing the programme's impact nationally and internationally.

Gulshera Khan, Bridging Ages Board member



Sweden

In Sweden Kalmar county museum host the Bridging ages secretariat and the administrative secretary post. During 2025 Kalmar läns museum together with Bridging Ages international hosted the conference “Re:Action, Time travels in a changing world”, which ended with a seminar for the attending members. After the meeting KLM started the process of a project application about a global Time Travel project.

During year 2025 KLM has presents Time travels on several occasions.

March – Short time travel and presentation about the method for Andreas Norlén the speaker of the parliament and the County governor Allan Widman

April – Time travel with students and Presentation on Gargzdai land museums 20th anniversary conference, Lithuania

Nov – Presentation on the national Children’s Culture Forum in Vaasa, Finland



During the year KLM also worked on two transnational applications. One for Creative Europe, this was unfortunately denied funding. The other to the Swedish lottery foundation (will be sent in during 2026) during the year KLM have been a part of the project Larpocracy.

KLM also had study visits from Lithuania and South Africa. The south African visit was related to an Atlas cooperations project together with Slottskolan in Borgholm which included a Time Travel to 1912.

Regional Time Travels

In Kalmar most of the Time travels are made with school children ages 6-16 years old. During year 2025, 108 Time Travels were carried out with in total 2689 children and youth, as well as 428 adults. During the past year, time travel was done in all 12 of the county's municipalities.

During 2025 we also had Time Travel inspired projects where we met people with disabilities using props, figures and costumes. We also had a project where we made time travels with small children together with local heritage organisations.

