

Current Issues and Future Strategies in Sharing Conservation Decisions. Findings of the ICCROM Seminar held in Rome, 4–8 July 2011

ALISON HERITAGE

ABSTRACT

In July 2011, as a follow-up to the ICCROM courses on Sharing Conservation Decisions (2002–2008), ICCROM organized a five-day seminar in Rome, to reflect on the impact of the course through the experiences of former SCD participants, and to consider current issues and future strategies for effective conservation decision-making. In addition to listening to presentations of prepared papers, which also appear in this publication, participants also took part in a series of working group discussion sessions, the synthesized results of which are presented in this paper.

Executive summary

In the last ten years, interest in decision-making processes in conservation has grown significantly, with an increasing number of conservation-related articles and meetings addressing this topic. During the same time, one of the flagship training activities of ICCROM focused on shared decision-making. The Sharing Conservation Decisions (SCD) course was held four times between 2002 and 2008, and provided a unique forum to explore the factors that influence conservation decisions, and the tools that can be used to support transparent, effective and participative processes in different contexts.

As a follow-up to the courses, in July 2011, ICCROM held a five-day seminar entitled “Current Issues and Future Strategies in Sharing Conservation Decisions”. The aim was to examine the impact of the course on the cultural heritage conservation profession through the experiences of former SCD course participants. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on some future directions and strategies for effective conservation decision-making.

The meeting gathered people who had been involved in past courses as participants or teachers, and also invited speakers. They were a varied group of 36 professionals working within conservation, with different educational and experiential backgrounds. Each participant contributed a presentation in relation to one of the seminar themes, which were: (1) New Concepts of Cultural Heritage; (2) Multidisciplinary Dialogue; (3) Community Involvement; (4) Decision-Making Tools; and (5) Training for Shared Decision-Making.

In addition to plenary sessions, working group meetings were held to synthesize the seminar results. This report is a distillation of the issues raised during the meeting, taken from working group reports and the comments of individual participants that reflected particular insights. The seminar structure has been preserved to facilitate collation of the findings.