

Reconnecting the public with cultural heritage

The role that conservation can play in reconnecting the public with cultural heritage was highlighted through examples such as the reinvigoration of industrial heritage sites for community uses which engage and surprise the public; and the recovery of lost histories and memories, for example in connection with the cultural heritage of immigrant communities.

Tools and approaches

Over the years, the SCD course has been the opportunity to discover, develop and apply tools and approaches borrowed from other fields. The seminar reviewed risk-based decision-making, multiple criteria decision-making, cost-benefit analysis, as well as legislative instruments.

Context-dependent ethical principles and legislation

A common theme arising throughout the seminar was the need for the development of context dependent ethical principles and legislation. Many participants were of the opinion that existing international charters and laws are not fully applicable or appropriate in all cultural contexts. At the same time, increasing globalization poses a risk of excessive standardization of these principles and laws. Ethical principles and legislation related to conservation and protection of cultural heritage must reflect the relevant communities and cultural context.

Practical tools

Adequate frameworks and tools are needed to tackle the new and emerging challenges in conservation today. Decision-making tools can play a useful role in the development of decisions and as a means to monitor the processes by which decisions are taken.

Qualitative and quantitative tools and models from different fields are being increasingly explored in the heritage field to facilitate, record, and enhance the transparency of conservation decisions. Thus, they could play an important role in communication and accountability, and thereby foster community engagement. It is important, however, to understand the limitations of such tools and models, and they should be as simple, clear, flexible and practical as possible to maximize their application. Moreover, they should be evaluated for their relevance to cultural heritage and adapted as appropriate.

Arguments for sustainable investment

Sustained investment for conservation programmes is difficult to achieve, as opposed to short-term financing for one-off projects. This hampers the development of long-term strategies for conservation, in particular for capacity-building and monitoring activities to