

assess the effectiveness of conservation decisions. Part of this is due to a lack of collected data to provide clear arguments for decision makers regarding the specific benefits that cultural heritage conservation can bring in socioeconomic terms. One participant commented:

“It is important to see heritage as a means of development, not just as an object of pride.”

Other sectors (e.g. infrastructure, health) benefit from long-term planning, and arguments should be made for cultural heritage funding to be allocated on a similar basis. Therefore, better approaches to funding cultural heritage conservation should be devised. To this end, improved skills and tools are required, including socioeconomic indicators and impact assessments both as arguments for funding, and as a means to develop better projects.

The administrative context of decision-making

It is important to examine the administrative structures where decisions are taken. As the process happens at different levels, there are many types of decisions and contexts in which they are made. Within the chain, there are points where heritage professionals can influence decisions. Nevertheless, engagement with, and realistic understanding of, the roles and expectations of all parties in the chain is critical for effective and sustainable decision-making. Here, good communication is a vital skill for heritage professionals, since a clear initial definition of the problem, goals and expectations of the process is essential for informed and successful decisions.

The adoption of useful terms of reference from other fields (e.g. economics and sustainable development), as well as techniques for consensus building and negotiation could help to make the arguments for conservation more accessible and transparent, facilitate conflict resolution and thereby promote better decision-making. To this end, it is important to engage with other fields that could provide these necessary tools and assist with their development for application in heritage conservation.

Training

A concrete aim of the seminar was to review the ICCROM training strategy for sharing conservation decisions and gather recommendations on the integration of interdisciplinary decision-making into conservation education and training at national and regional levels. A review of ICCROM’s SCD courses and of recent training experiences implemented in various educational and cultural contexts stimulated the reflections below.

To enable conservation professionals to respond appropriately to external pressures and participate effectively in influential heritage