

the programmes that the Central Institute for Conservation in Belgrade launched two years ago. We were trying to find a way to introduce some conservation management concepts into our training programmes, because surveys in local museums showed that management issues were mainly the ones to be given the highest priority. The first opportunity was a Conservation Management workshop for Serbian museums. It was difficult to choose where to start with a whole new subject, especially for museum professionals in Serbia, and how to make the participants comfortable with the notion of decision-making as a complex process. An introduction was needed to explain the process itself and also to emphasize the advantages of an interdisciplinary approach and teamwork in reaching conservation decisions. In order to facilitate understanding of decision-making concepts that could potentially be useful in the field of conservation, we decided to include an exercise on evaluating conservation options, based on the analytic hierarchy process.

The analytic hierarchy process (AHP), or multiple criteria decision-making (MCDM), was chosen as one of the methods of analyzing and evaluating options within the Exploring Conservation Options unit of the SCD 2008 course. The technique aims to assist in reaching decisions that are adapted to one's needs and understanding of a problem, and in reaching decisions based on multiple criteria. It was pointed out during this session that the principle of weighting should be considered, not as a tool, but more as a support to the decision-making process, which, specifically in the field of conservation, should not be automated. An important distinction was made between weighting based on criteria of the same value and decision-making based on criteria of different values, which is characteristic of most of the conservation decision processes.

Based on the Serbian workshop participants' evaluations, the subject was not easily accepted. Some were grateful for the opportunity to learn about any conservation accepted. Some were grateful for the opportunity to learn about any conservation management approach, some were sceptical about the applicability of the concept presented, and others were not keen on 'using mathematics in conservation'. As for the teaching approach, there were comments of the type that there was 'too much information in a short time'. Some comments, as well as the teachers' experience, showed there was an issue of accepting the notion of criteria-based decision-making, and even of the notion of criteria itself. Is it a part of collective comprehension in accordance with the mentality and habits or some other social and psychological issue? This has still to be discovered and dealt with. What was interesting is the fact that in the workshops where the majority of the participants were curators, the evaluating options and other decision-making concepts were more appreciated and well accepted. Most conservators-restorers opted for less mathematics, management and communication, and more hands-on tips and tricks. Some of the comments showed a lack of basic understanding of the role of management in conservation. It makes us wonder if decision-making topics