

Preface

This publication is part of the dynamic of interests that led to the scientific meeting that took place on the 27th and 28th of June 2022, organised by the Research & Development Unit CITCEM - Center for Transdisciplinary Research «Culture, Space and Memory» and by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto, Portugal: International Meeting Integrated Risk Management in Museums. Past Lessons, Future Ways¹.

The meeting gathered groups integrated in different thematic lines of research and dedicated to the preservation and legacy of cultural heritage, by different agents, strategies and in different contexts. Naturally not forgetting the others, the context in which we are most interested in focusing is that of museums.

Facing times of change, museums reflect and discuss how to efficiently adapt and evolve, considering their role in resilience, development, sustainability, and quality of life of the twenty-first-century society.

Despite risk management being in the order of the day for several years, especially due to the climate emergency, unfortunately not accepted by everyone, different sectors of society embrace it at different times and with different perspectives. Tendentially, museums, and globally the cultural sector, don't lead the race, almost always full of obstacles.

The lack of strategic political investment in the sector is, globally, the biggest obstacle, despite the dynamics of academia and professional associations, the dedication and effort on the part of human resources in their education and training and in the development/capture of research applied to the context. Many and very serious losses to cultural heritage have been recorded, with also very serious negative effects on society.

Managing risk in museums is a cha(lle)nging process, especially when the perspective we defend is that of an integrated management, and not compartmentalised as is so often

¹ Website: <https://citcemnews.wixsite.com/irrm22>

observed. A perspective that has to attend to the diversity of contexts and their specificities and to integrate different agents and competencies. A perspective that defends the need for a change of mentality, a change in the institutional management model, where risk must be considered transversally to the policies and practices to be adopted, where the procedures inherent to the different museological functions to be performed must be harmoniously articulated to promote its integrated management. It is a complex process, without a doubt, but so is reality, and if we must face it to survive and evolve, we must also face such complexity and the uncertainty associated with it. The precious contributions made by the authors who were able to participate in the publication confirm, very clearly, the need for this change and how challenging it is.

Much has been learned from past mistakes, ours and others, getting to know other realities, gaining new sensitivities and adopting new ways of thinking and proceeding. Inclusive and diverse teams enhance better results. Sharing experiences and discussing their results, both good and not so good, in a friendly environment, are crucial for joint learning, scientific enrichment and for more informed and sustained decision-making. This is what it's intended to promote.

The future forces us to, finally and truly, take a path towards an interdisciplinary, inclusive, transparent, and responsible approach. An approach that promotes the strengthening of international cooperation ties between professional, scientific, and educational communities.

The path is long. We still have a long way to go, but the technological resources that facilitate integrated risk management are there to be applied and improved. The education and training of professionals is good and consistent, but it has to adapt. Policy for the sector is crucial. Let us raise awareness among politicians and decision-makers. Let us consciously take on the difficult and long path. It is important for the longevity of museums and for facilitating their mission in society!