

## ARTICLE

# Business models transformation in the creative industries: Performing arts organizations in the post-COVID era

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## Abstract

Rapid changes in the business models (BMs) of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) have occurred recently, owing largely to the dynamics accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and technological evolution, which have resulted in a strong interconnection between social, cultural, and digital challenges. The present research highlights the main changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the BM of 12 Italian performing arts organizations using a mixed research methodology (qualitative and quantitative) carried out through semi-structured interviews, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis, and an analysis of the economic-financial data of the organizations involved. The paper presents the study's main findings and contrasts them with some recent scientific research on BM, allowing for comparison and debate on significant issues developed (new technologies and social and environmental impact). The uniqueness of the approach employed in this research lies in recognizing these characteristics, particularly the challenges of sustainability, as critical in producing value for CCI.

**Keywords:** Business models; Performing arts organizations; Cultural and creative industries; Sustainability

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## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered both indirect and drastic changes in businesses, notably in the creative sectors. These changes had a tremendous impact, particularly on performing arts organizations (PAOs), which were forced to suspend activities for a prolonged period due to theater closures. The subsequent reopening of performing arts venues posed significant challenges for the theater and dance industries, largely because they had to adjust their spaces to comply with regulations that were difficult to implement within facilities that were not necessarily built in a canonical fashion (with stalls, a stage, a proscenium, and a double entrance and exit system). Furthermore, the same internal organizational structure of creative firms exposed its flaws, exposing its weakness in the face of a crisis that highlighted the necessity for organized staff in important areas such as management and external communication.

This research aimed to highlight the challenges faced by 12 PAOs operating in Italy that were forced to halt operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These organizations

were involved in two different projects organized by Ca' Foscari University, financed with regional funds and intended to support the economic revitalization of the sector. These organizations, based in different areas of the Veneto region (Padua, Venice, Belluno, Treviso), voluntarily chose to join the projects, which included financing for capital goods and the opportunity to attend training courses and receive targeted advice. In this scenario, the purpose of this review was twofold: on the one hand, to support these organizations in resuming their activities, and on the other, to utilize the opportunity to undertake research analyzing the influence of the pandemic on their organizational structures. Despite the fact that various studies have been conducted on the pandemic and, in general, on the PAO sector,<sup>1</sup> there is a lack of empirical proof showing how the COVID-19 period induced a major alteration, both positive and negative, on the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), and in particular, on the PAOs. The most visible outcome of the research was the changes observed in the organizational structures of the PAOs under examination, specifically in their business model (BM).

The purpose of this paper is to describe the major findings of the research conducted on the PAOs examined, highlighting the substantial changes that happened in their various BMs during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most significant findings from the research is that PAOs are increasingly focusing on environmental sustainability issues.

Certainly, CCIs have always had a privileged relationship with issues related to social aspects, but this profound focus on green issues represents, in my opinion, an important turning point in the way PAOs carry out their activities. It changes the way they approach their territory and community, improves air quality, and raises awareness of social welfare issues.

From this standpoint, it is vital to investigate sustainable BMs as a new framework within which to interpret the phenomenon of PAOs and, subsequently, CCIs. This article will first look at the primary theoretical underpinning for sustainable BM, followed by an introduction to the broader topic of BMs within CCIs. The research methodology used will then be outlined, as well as the main alterations that allowed the analyzed PAOs to cope with the pandemic and remain in the market.

Finally, the results obtained using the BM Canvas will be compared to models specifically developed for CCIs, with the goal of defining a sustainable BM for PAOs that is recognizable from a non-industrial perspective while also adaptable to non-profit realities.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Sustainable BMs

A BM is a collection of features that indicate how an economic venture generates, transmits, and collects economic value for its benefit. As a consequence, it organically displays the contents of a company concept while also diving into the real capacity to produce value in a properly organized way. The BM Canvas tool<sup>2</sup> enables you to objectively define how a company generates and distributes value to a specified target market while collecting enough value to achieve profitability objectives. When considering CCIs, it is vital to conduct a BM study that considers both sustainability goals and the major societal effect they might have on the environment.

Recent research<sup>3</sup> has thoroughly reviewed the literature on sustainable BMs and highlighted their key qualities. In these models, sustainability principles drive the organization and its decision-making process, transforming rather than supplementing the company's dominant neoclassical model by integrating social and environmental considerations.<sup>4</sup> Sustainable BMs consider the global market, taking into consideration the growth of newly industrialized nations and the increasing demand for sustainable products and services.<sup>5</sup> They provide social and cultural value for clients by combining community, environmental, cultural, and commercial operations,<sup>6</sup> aiming to provide more than just economic value to a larger group of stakeholders.<sup>7</sup>

According to Boons and Lüdeke-Freund,<sup>8</sup> a sustainable BM differs from a conventional one in four ways: first, the value proposition provides measurable ecological and/or social value in addition to economic value; second, the supply chain involves providers who take responsibility for their stakeholders as well as those of the focal company; and third, the customer interface motivates clients to take responsibility for their consumption and that of the focal company. Based on these assumptions, the company's financial model represents a fair distribution of economic costs and reward among the BM's participants, as well as the ecological, social, and cultural repercussions on the area. It contributes to meeting sustainability objectives such as resource efficiency and social relevance.<sup>9</sup>

A (strongly) sustainable BM is defined as the process by which a company determines the appropriate inputs, resource flows, and value decisions, as well as its role in ecosystems, for sustainability measures, i.e., indicators that assess the outcomes and effects of BM decisions, to be considered successful.<sup>10</sup> It incorporates sustainability into the company's value proposition and value development processes, ultimately benefitting consumers, the environment, and society.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it is a simplified portrayal of

the elements, their interrelationships, and stakeholder interactions that an organizational unit employs to generate, deliver, collect, and exchange long-term value for and in partnership with a broad set of stakeholders.<sup>12</sup>

Evans *et al.*<sup>13</sup> describe sustainable BMs using five propositions: sustainable value incorporates economic, social, and environmental benefits as forms of value; it also establishes a system of sustainable value streams among multiple stakeholders, including the natural environment and society; and, finally, it is capable of generating a value network with new purpose, design, and governance. Finally, enhancing externality internalization through product-service systems has the potential to drive value chain innovation.

According to previous research,<sup>3</sup> sustainable BM innovation is defined as the development and execution of sustainable BM. This might entail developing entirely new BMs, expanding into other BMs, acquiring new BMs, or switching from one BM to another. According to the provided definitions, the sustainable BM is a variation of the standard BM idea with certain extra aims, such as adopting sustainability concepts and principles and integrating them into the notion of value (e.g., in value creation, value capture mechanisms, etc.).

The key hurdles for innovation toward sustainable BMs have been recognized,<sup>3</sup> especially in the following areas:

- (i) Triple bottom line: The co-creation of revenues, social and environmental benefits, and their balance is a test for shifting to sustainable BMs<sup>4,6,14</sup>
- (ii) Mindset: Corporate rules, standards, behavioral norms, and performance measurements trump organizational attitudes, impeding the adoption of innovative BMs<sup>8,15,16</sup>
- (iii) Resources: There is a reluctance to allocate and reconfigure resources and procedures for BM innovation<sup>17-19</sup>
- (iv) Technological innovation: Combining clean technology with BM innovation is multifaceted and difficult<sup>14,16,19</sup>
- (v) External relations: Significant contact with external stakeholders and the business environment requires more work<sup>4,8,20</sup>
- (vi) Methods and tools: Existing business modeling methods and tools, such as those established by Osterwalder and Pigneur,<sup>2,15</sup> are limited and seldom focused on sustainability.<sup>17,21,22</sup>

These research questions will be addressed in the development of this paper, with an emphasis on the dynamics underlying the transformation of sustainable BMs in the creative industries. The paper will highlight not only the stages of this evolution but also how the dissemination of cultural, social, and environmental value is at the heart of this innovative dynamic.

## 2.2. BMs in CCIs after the pandemic of COVID-19

The BMs of cultural and creative sectors reflect the influence of organizational transformation. As we will see, these transformations represent the desires and demands for a long-term organizational form, as a consequence of a focus on social and environmental concerns, as well as a special corporate structure geared toward having a beneficial influence on the outside world. Although there are relevant studies on BMs and the use of the BM Canvas as a tool to capture the essence of a company's value, there is a lack of specific research that can highlight the changes occurring in the BMs of CCIs, specifically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact and the subsequent transformations within these organizations. As a result, this study will concentrate on examining a few firms to better understand their status during the COVID-19 era and how the pandemic influenced their organizational decisions and business strategies.

## 3. Data and methods

### 3.1. The purpose and research tasks

The unique characteristics of the CCIs necessitate an adaptation of the traditional BM concept, as these sectors often appear poorly structured from a business organizational standpoint and are primarily composed of non-profit organizations with legal associative forms. As a result, a simple commercial logic cannot be used in this sector, just as no one BM can be applied to all categories within CCIs. This suggests that a typical BM is more commonly found in more commercial creative businesses (the profit sector), such as gaming, publishing, and film production. In recent times, the pandemic has accelerated changes in the BMs of CCIs, driven mostly by technological growth, which has led to strong connectivity between social, cultural, and digital difficulties. Digitalization is changing the way individuals engage with culture, creating new economic models and mandating the acquisition of new skills.<sup>23</sup>

The BMs of the cultural sector must enable companies to convey a coherent story about who their consumers are, what value and revenue they can generate from their activities, and what value they can collect for their organization. This permits BMs to be used as organizational thinking tools that clearly express what a certain organization plans to achieve, what it wishes to offer, and the connections that will arise from attaining the suggested objectives. BMs do not have to be focused solely on economic return, but rather on creating value (including financial, social, and environmental value). In the case of non-profit organizations, additional tools such as the balanced scorecard and the social returns-on-investment indicator are important examples.

The pandemic has heightened the need for the heritage and tourism industries to become more resilient, sustainable, and entrepreneurial, for example, by implementing new strategies, hybrid financial plans, and risk assessment and management techniques. In many circumstances, novel economic and financial models might help in this area. Reduced public financing, globalization problems, digital potential, and growing public empowerment have all driven the CCIs to try new techniques and BMs. Today, particularly in the European context, there is an ongoing need for innovation in heritage valorization, particularly in BM innovation, to develop a solid and transparent pipeline of economically and socially sustainable investment projects that demonstrate the sector’s attractiveness to private investors. These unique ideas have the potential to significantly boost cultural diversity, entrepreneurship, growth, employment, and social inclusion.

The following are key considerations in light of the pandemic:

- (i) The transition from analog to digital: New intermediates (e.g., iTunes, Facebook) and business platforms (e.g., streaming). As a result, to effectively capitalize on these prospects, the creative industries must develop both digital skills and the requisite technological infrastructure<sup>24</sup>
- (ii) Digitization and shifts in consumer behavior: Digitization has led to a shift in consumer behavior, with self-publishing and user-generated material becoming common (e.g., videos, blogs, forums, podcasts, social media, photography, e-books, etc.). This digitalization<sup>25</sup> has created chances to reshape the connection between producers and consumers in ways that may have an influence on the status of creativity and creative behavior in general (e.g., diluting the quality criteria of cultural goods)
- (iii) Financial sustainability in cultural organizations: Many governmental and non-profit organizations, as well as private projects, strive for financial sustainability (e.g., through crowdsourcing activities and online platforms). Many historical conservation programs are quite expensive and need substantial financing. As a result, several museums have launched internationalization methods (e.g., co-production, co-organization, exhibition export) to boost income by cutting production costs
- (iv) Co-working spaces and innovation laboratories: Examples include innovation laboratories, start-ups, incubators, and event-specific temporary laboratories. Innovation laboratories, for example, represent grassroots practices in urban settings, as well as architecture- and technology-based partnerships that offer novel ways of co-creating creative material.

These assumptions serve as the framework for the present study, which seeks to investigate the cultural and creative sectors, notably the performing arts, to better understand the changes in their economic models. To achieve this research goal, the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice analyzed and involved 12 theater and dance organizations operating in Italy’s Veneto region in two separate projects, the CAD Project and the APPRODI Project, in 2021, both dedicated to the relaunch of the performing arts sector following the pandemic.

**3.2. Research methodology**

The research methodology aimed to validate changes in the organizational structure and value chain of cultural organizations, as well as to assess their influence on different BMs. Finally, an attempt was made to uncover features that were shared by all firms to determine which components of the BMs had changed and transformed across all creative sectors examined. Obviously, not every organization reacted the same way. Thus, mapping variety was crucial in identifying sites of convergence in activities that contribute to the development of economic and cultural value. The following methodologies were used to determine the BMs of the firms involved:

- (i) In-depth interviews: Diverse members of the industry commented on important features of the organizational structure to define its current status
- (ii) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis: Corporations recognized internal strengths and problems, as well as suggested solutions to address them
- (iii) Analysis of firm statistics: This included examining production, turnover, balance sheet, and social balance sheets. The research project lasted about a year and attempted to involve all of the company’s staff (from top management to the artistic direction, actors, directors, and dancers).

In-depth interviews (Table 1) were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the companies in question. This technique was deemed the most effective for gathering

**Table 1. Semi-structured interviews**

In-depth interview	Analyzed aspects
Number of organizations: 12	1. Organization 2. Main stakeholders 3. Year of Foundation 4. Legal nature 5. Main activities 6. A brief history of the organization 7. Mission 8. Vision 9. Identity aspects and artistic poetics 10. Innovation and research

information on the organizational characteristics of PAOs. Interviews were conducted both online and on the premises of interviewees. Each PAO participated in multiple interviews (approximately three), each lasting 2 h. Purposive theoretical sampling was adopted in this study, as advised by qualitative research practice,<sup>26</sup> because the participants selected for the study were directly affected by the phenomenon under examination. In this scenario, the participants were perfectly competent to provide a detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

In this situation, the sample size was fixed: all 12 organizations involved in the two initiatives were questioned. Theoretical saturation (the moment at which no new categories, concepts, dimensions, or episodes develop during the research process) specifies when the study could be regarded as complete, as all researched categories had been saturated. In this scenario, saturation occurred after the second interview. The third interview served to validate concepts and classifications. The interviews were transcribed and categorized using the open bone coding technique, which identifies categories based on the study’s aims and interview protocol. The factors evaluated included the organization, its primary stakeholders, the year it was founded, its legal nature, its principal operations, a brief history of the organization, its purpose, vision, identity aspects, creative poetics, innovation, and research. In this scenario, all of the important corporate leaders were invited to participate, and they provided their insights and comments on the given themes. Every effort was made to ensure that all participants agreed on what was stated on the many themes covered by the open-ended questions.

To conduct the SWOT analysis, however, the resources delegated to respond to the specific aspects examined were called upon: for example, in terms of economic sustainability, those responsible for accounting and administration answered the questions and reflections, as did those responsible for production and distribution, as well as area managers, among others. The purpose was to gather detailed information on the issues being investigated, as indicated in Table 2. Clearly, the SWOT analysis, as a static analysis model, provides information

Table 2. SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis	Analyzed aspects
Number of organizations: 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic sustainability</li> <li>2. Production and distribution</li> <li>3. Innovation, research, and development</li> <li>4. Human resources</li> <li>5. Public relations</li> <li>6. Marketing and communication</li> <li>7. Social responsibility</li> </ol>

Abbreviation: SWOT: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

that is only valid at the moment of observation and must be updated on a regular basis. This is certainly one of the model’s significant shortcomings, as it only allowed us to grasp the organizations’ situations as “photographed” during the interviews.

The interview data were subsequently transcribed in a less discursive manner and summarized in a strategy document named “Revitalization Plan,” as the research’s objective was not just scientific but also to aid the PAOs surveyed in overcoming the pandemic. The SWOT analysis revealed important concerns and a plan was then suggested to solve them. This tool was tremendously useful in understanding the company’s structure and the modifications that were in effect at the time of the research. The findings of the semi-structured interviews and the SWOT analysis (one for each firm) were then compared to the quantitative data required (Table 3).

Some data on the organizational structure of the 12 PAOs are summarized in Table 4.

Table 3. Quantitative data required from organizations

Category	Detail
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productions per year</li> <li>• Number of performances per year</li> <li>• Costs of realization</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Receipts per show</li> <li>• Annual receipts</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other activities per year</li> <li>• Type of activity</li> <li>• Costs of realization</li> <li>• Members/participants</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Annual receipts and per activity</li> </ul>
Relation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spectators/clients/suppliers</li> <li>• Annual number</li> <li>• Type of customer</li> <li>• Type of supplier</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>
Revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turnover per year</li> <li>• Turnover from own productions</li> <li>• Turnover from other activities</li> <li>• Total turnover</li> </ul>
Other income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other income per year</li> <li>• Type of revenue</li> <li>• Type of activity carried out</li> <li>• Total revenue</li> </ul>
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs per year</li> <li>• Fixed costs</li> <li>• Variable costs</li> <li>• Main cost items</li> <li>• Monthly costs</li> <li>• Total annual costs</li> </ul>

Table 4. Main data about the 12 PAOs

PAO	Audience per year	Size (Number of employees)	Years of activity	Average number of performances per season
1	72,000	20	36	400
2	80	2	13	2
3	90	5	10	2
4	1,500	4	9	11
5	5,000	8	10	30
6	13,000	3	41	7
7	2,400	4	33	3
8	700	3	15	3
9	800	3	23	4
10	850	1	8	70
11	500	3	7	4
12	25,000	4	13	112

Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

As you can see, we are interacting with many varied organizations (all of them private). One of the factors that brought them together during the pandemic was the reduction in show production and attendance. Paradoxically, the longest-lived organizations suffered the most during the lockdown. Indeed, despite the partial reopening of Italian theaters and cinemas, these institutions were unable to reorganize and devise new ways to contact audiences and deliver their plays. In the following BM analysis, we will examine how these businesses attempted to re-enter the market and differentiate their activities (and earnings).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. BMs' overview

Each organization submitted internal data on production, other activities, reporting systems, revenues, other income, and costs. Externally relevant documents, such as financial statements, social reports, and sustainability reports, were also sought to corroborate and validate the data.

Pandemic-related measures did not replace others but rather augmented them by executing their consequences in some circumstances. As shown in Table 5, relationships with universities and creative industries were strengthened, school programming was expanded, co-production projects with other theater companies were initiated, variable costs were increased while fixed costs were reduced, and technological solutions for audience participation in open-air spaces were developed. Table 6 depicts how the dance organization under study tried to diversify its activities by growing its network of partners through participation in contemporary dance festivals. Furthermore, to fulfill

the pandemic's needs, it expanded its technological infrastructure, especially by acquiring high-tech gadgets for video shooting, editing, streaming, and amplification. It also attempted to improve its website by updating it with the most recent news.

The organization represented by the BM in Table 7 is involved in contemporary dance and has begun to collaborate with public administrations and universities—institutions that have been less affected by the various lockdowns—to deal with the pandemic's severe economic and financial crisis. Furthermore, it initiated more design work and participation in public financing contests and tenders, decreased fixed expenses, and worked to broaden chances for partnerships with other businesses.

The BM depicted in Table 8 indicates an increase in the organization's important partners, a rationalization of human resources (by hiring new people), a broadening of communication channels, and the use of external financing sources.

The business illustrated in Table 9 experienced a transformation that comprised an expanded network of partners and consumers, increased financial and technical resources, enhanced external communication, and new cultural design initiatives.

Table 10 illustrates how a theater company extended its partner network (including foundations, public agencies, and universities), enhanced its internal resources (especially human and technical), and implemented communication and planning strategies. Its website and social media presence are now necessary to reach a larger audience and effectively promote its activities, which include live concerts.

The theater and cinema organization included in Table 11 implemented a plan to expand its school-based activities and volunteer network. It also incorporated new external communication channels, such as newsletters, websites, and social media, which had not previously been used.

Table 12 indicates how a theater company's BM grew its network of partners and clients to include businesses, schools, government agencies, colleges, and festivals. Due to high fixed expenditures, the group was obliged to vacate its theatrical space and shift its operations to contractual facilities, gyms, schools, and creative residencies.

Table 13 summarizes a BM marked by the expansion of the organization's network of partnerships (especially with colleges) and the development of new types of performances in unusual places (parks, forests, historical sites) using new technology.

Table 5. PAO No. 1: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, schools, universities, theater companies, <b>creative industries</b> , clients and partners, and suppliers.	Production and distribution of theater performances, <b>programming of festivals for schools</b> , and training activities.	Intellectual resources, human resources, financial and technical resources.	The organization aims to generate an inclusive environment of theatrical and artistic creation, which is a place for the elaboration of the collective present, for training emotional depth of cultural production, education, and promotion of beauty with a focus on the younger generations, to build new ethical scenarios.	Network of contacts with public administrations, artists and patrons, schools, and universities.	<b>Co-productions</b> , theater reviews, training courses, media, and <b>website</b> .	<b>Clients and financiers</b> , public bodies, schools and universities, <b>partners</b> , and end-users (main target segments: 3 – 19-year-olds and families).	Value-oriented business with <b>high fixed costs</b> and <b>variable costs</b> related to production and distribution.	Public financing and selling shows on the market.	The projects implemented use theater research as a methodology for the education of the younger generations, the valorization of cultural heritage, urban regeneration, community development, theater production accessible to disabilities, social inclusion, and the <b>production of innovative theater devices</b> .

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold.  
Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 6. PAO No. 2: Dance sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Theater and dance companies, <b>festivals</b> , choreographers, and artists.	Theater production, short film and video production, and <b>technical resources</b> . workshops.	Intellectual resources, human resources, and <b>technical resources</b> .	The association aims to use art to talk about social issues in 360 degrees, developing a theater project that is the result of a human, relational, and social journey.	Network of personal contacts in the performance industry.	<b>Website</b> , training courses, word of mouth.	End-users, people with disabilities, linked to the progress of projects.	Value-oriented activity with variable costs linked to the progress of projects.	Fixed ticket price; external financing.	The organization has a high social impact in terms of involving spectators in disability-related issues. Art is used to communicate the emotionality linked to the body and the physical and psychological difficulties associated with situations of disadvantage and fragility. The work with disabled people demonstrates the company's great ability to be able to speak different languages and get involved. Technological experimentation in the field of video certainly offers the possibility of capturing a wider audience and making a sometimes-complex language more readable.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold.  
Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 7. PAO No. 3: Dance sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Dance schools, Choreographers and performers, Festivals, <b>public administrations</b> , and <b>universities</b> .	Dance education, workshops, and performances.	Intellectual, human, and technical resources.	The organization aims to create a network in continuous dialogue with contemporary dance realities and between schools operating in the same area.	Network of personal contacts, networks of relationships in the territory.	Dance schools, festivals, <b>projects</b> .	Festival, co-production partners, <b>universities and research centers</b> , <b>public bodies</b> , target audience: all ages (from 3 years to 70).	Value-oriented business with <b>many variable costs and few fixed costs</b> .	Participation in <b>projects</b> and organization of workshops.	The association has a strong impact on the territory of reference, contributing, through its performing actions, to the construction of a community that engages in dialogue on the same issues. The high degree of involvement offered by dance has, over time, created interactive spaces for sharing with local communities, which actively participate in the various workshops and laboratories organized, especially in green areas and city spaces.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 8. PAO No. 4: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, theater companies, <b>schools</b> , and <b>universities</b> .	Theater production, the artistic direction of the municipal theater, and cultural training activities.	Intellectual resources, <b>human resources</b> , and technical resources.	The organization aims to investigate the contamination between the arts with the need to create a pole that encompasses the conception, realization, and interaction of theatrical and video works. It, therefore, proposes to construct, through performance activities, an artistic and research pathway.	Network of contacts with municipalities, artists, and companies linked to direct festivals, and <b>relations with schools and universities</b> .	Festivals, training courses, media (radio and press), <b>website</b> .	Rassegna Belluno Miraggi: heterogeneous audience (from young to old). Festival Vertigini: target audience from 18 to 45 years. Productions: transversal audience but with a focus on those with specialist skills. Children's theater: audiences from 5 to 20 years of age.	Value-oriented activity with fixed structural costs and variable costs related to theatrical production and distribution.	Festival fees, fixed ticket prices, and <b>external funding</b> .	Development of cultural welfare actions linked to the enhancement of the territory. Facilitation of generational interchange realized through projects with communities. Urban regeneration actions linked to the recovery of Hangar11 where artistic and theatrical programming activities are carried out. Dialogue with citizenship through workshops and public debates. Construction of a community of reference thanks to the joint action of collaborators and volunteers who actively participate in the projects implemented by the company.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 9. PAO No. 5: Dance sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, <b>partners</b> , <b>co-producers</b> , and performing bodies and artistic festivals, <b>universities</b> , and <b>research centers</b> .	Production of contemporary dance performances and artistic projects.	Intellectual resources, human resources, <b>financial</b> and <b>technical resources</b> .	The organization aims to become a point of reference for the dissemination of emerging contemporary dance in the Veneto region. The main value offered lies in the creation of unity in diversity, i.e., the union of different poetics in a single structure.	Each artist has and cultivates his or her network of personal relationships built up through working contacts with producers, artistic directors, and companies.	Theater agents, <b>external communication</b> .	Principals and financiers Co-production partners, public bodies, Universities, research centers, and End users (Target groups of all ages, from 19-year-olds to those over 60 s).	Value-oriented business with many variable costs and few fixed costs.	Public financing, selling shows on the market, and <b>projects</b> .	The association has a strong impact in social terms on the local area and beyond, especially through its work with communities. Workshops and workshops are held with people of all ages, promoting intercultural and generational dialogue, acceptance of others and their differences, learning new languages, and respect for the environment and nature in general. The high cultural value promoted through the artistic language of dance makes it possible to recognize the acceptance of the self, respect for others, and awareness of one being in the world; universal values spread with simplicity and wisdom in the organization's development path.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold.  
Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 10. PAO No. 6: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Live performance networks, <b>foundations</b> , <b>public administrations</b> , theater companies, and <b>universities</b> .	Cultural training, organization of performances and festivals, theater production.	Intellectual resources, <b>human resources</b> , and <b>technical resources</b> .	The association aims to create convivial occasions to bring people closer to the theater, seen as an indispensable vehicle for personal and collective growth. It provides a physical space in which to do and see theater and an intellectual space for mutual growth and acceptance.	An extensive network of personal contacts in the theatrical and institutional sectors.	<b>Website</b> , <b>social media</b> , word of mouth, press, posters.	End users (over 40), children (3 – 8 years), <b>public administrations</b> , <b>schools</b>	Value-oriented business with many fixed structural costs.	Fixed price tickets; variable prices for <b>project-related activities</b> .	The organization has a high social impact in terms of involving citizens and carrying out activities related to civic welfare. Its strategic position in the context of the city of Padua also makes it a potential location for artistic and cultural-based regeneration. The work in prisons and with people with disabilities demonstrates the company's great ability to speak different languages and get involved. Technological experimentation in the field of streaming certainly offers the possibility of capturing a younger audience and making itself more easily accessible to different types of audiences.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold.  
Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 11. PAO No. 7: Cinema and theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Parish, public administrations, projection, suppliers, theater production companies, <b>schools</b> .	Film theater production (but not distribution), and music concerts.	Technical and physical resources, intellectual resources.	A unique experience of sharing, in a place conceived as a community space, capable of integrating cinema, theater, and music. The programming is aimed at enhancing the territory in a cultural key through artistic poetics accomplished reaching the public's sensitivity.	The main relationships are cultivated with the parish and its contacts, local associations, schools, and end users.	<b>A parish volunteer network</b> , word of mouth, <b>website</b> , <b>social channels</b> , and <b>newsletter</b> .	The audience is of all ages, thanks to a diverse program.	The costs are largely fixed structural costs (rent, utilities).	Revenues derive from cinema public tenders and ticketing.	One of the main added values is related to the building of a community of good practices around the parish and the cultural activities it provides. The sense of sociality that the Cinema Theater has been able to cultivate makes people aware of the cultural value of the facility and generates a sense of involvement and participation, which encourages citizens to spend themselves to carry out its main activities. The high technological contribution developed, especially in the theatrical field also makes the space open to experimentation and to an audience of all ages.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 12. PAO No. 8: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Schools, theater companies, <b>festivals</b> , <b>universities</b> , <b>companies</b> , <b>public administrations</b> , and <b>suppliers</b> .	Production of theater performances, training activities, and cultural projects for educational and social purposes.	Physical resources, intellectual resources, and human resources.	Producing artistic and educational content through the performing arts and active involvement of the territory and its people. Enhancement of social and political demands through art, which becomes a means of denunciation and empowerment concerning society's problems.	The main relationships are cultivated with schools, theater companies, <b>universities</b> , and <b>companies</b> .	Networking, institutional communication, social media, and web.	End users, schools, theater companies, and universities.	Value-oriented business, and <b>many fixed costs</b> , and few variable costs.	Educational activities and cultural projects.	The company is very attentive to social issues, which it addresses both in its theater performances and in its educational projects and activities, stimulating reflection and critical capacity, especially in younger age groups. Its activity is strongly oriented toward urban regeneration, as it can gather the instances of the territory and stimulate social cohesion. The use of different technological solutions allows it to increase the interactivity of its performances and stimulate the active participation of the spectator.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 13. PAO No. 9: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, schools, and universities.	Production of theater performances, <b>cultural projects in non-theater venues, and theater workshops for children and companies.</b>	Physical and <b>technological resources</b> , intellectual resources.	Doing theatrical research and experimentation on the intersection and synergy of expressive languages, ranging from music to performance to installation to video, outlines a poetic path that takes the form of theatrical productions aimed at both childhood and adult theater.	The main relationships are cultivated with schools, <b>public administrations, and universities.</b>	Reputation, press, media.	End-users, schools, Administrations, Theater organizations	Value-oriented business with many fixed costs and few variable costs.	Revenues from public funding and children's theater review.	Since its foundation, the organization has always been able to wisely disseminate artistic, cultural, and social values, which it has also disseminated through workshop activities. The company is attentive to major issues relating to the environment and society and is willing to take the lead in projects with high human value (activities in prisons, for example, or environmental awareness).

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

The organization that is the subject of the BM in Table 14 faced significant financial challenges due to COVID-19, which nearly drove it out of existence. Despite these difficulties, it was able to continue its operations by seeking new sponsors, strengthening relationships with its clients, and strategically utilizing the web for the management of show bookings combined with dinners at the restaurant (its core business), as well as for promoting shows and live activities. Due to the significant fixed structural expenses, the venues were nearly continually closed during the duration of the pandemic (2020 – 2021).

Table 15 demonstrates the streamlining of the BM of a theater company that, perhaps more than others, effectively avoided the challenges posed by COVID-19. It not only broadened its network but also developed beneficial working connections with museums and enterprises, bringing them into its network of partners, clients, and funders.

The final organization, as shown in Table 16, has a BM characterized by new partnerships, primarily with private companies, an expansion of business services (public speaking, team building, and corporate theater courses), a strengthening of online and offline communication, and the elimination of fixed structural costs by decentralizing all activities.

As can be observed, there are several parallels and analogies between the techniques used by the CCIs in question and the subsequent growth of their BMs. These characteristics are described in Table 17, which reflects a single BM that provides a thorough assessment of the major shifts that have impacted the individual firms studied.

The most significant aspects of the CCIs' sustainable BMs are the value proposition and the social, cultural, and environmental effects. As we can see, the creative sectors investigated base their value proposition on unconventionally conveying culturally relevant issues, developing new languages, and using locations other than traditional theaters. This great openness, certainly influenced by the pandemic period, brings the performing arts far closer to their audiences and the communities in which they live, breaking down the "fourth wall," which has been a focus of much experimental research in historical *avant-garde* theater. Furthermore, the social and environmental impact becomes more apparent, particularly when we consider organizations with roots in activities carried out in prisons, hospitals, or with a political background, in contact with vulnerable and sick people, and contexts permeated by strong social and racial concerns. Art, drama, and creativity may frequently be used to soothe and mend circumstances of severe anguish and disorientation. What should be emphasized

Table 14. PAO No. 10: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, theater companies, foundations, sponsors, and chefs/caterers.	Production of dinner theater shows musical performances, and corporate dinners.	Human resources, Intellectual resources.	To make the relationship between spectators and artists, between theater and people, special. Creating a bond that overcomes the current difficulties and makes the audience's presence constant, also thanks to research and experimentation with different languages.	Personal relations with end customers, theater companies, foundations, and sponsors. <b>Reservation support through the web, social media, and telephone.</b>	Word of mouth, <b>social media, website, newsletter.</b>	End users (Audience of all ages, especially 40 – 70 years old).	Value-driven business with <b>high fixed costs.</b>	Fixed prices for the theater+dinner formula.	The organization has implemented many social initiatives and promotes events and open-air festivals geared toward the dissemination of artistic and cultural values integrated with respect for the territory and the environment. It has initiated collaborations with organic product brands to promote physical well-being and environmental sustainability, especially with families and children (breakfasts at the theater).

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 15. PAO No. 11: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Public administrations, foundations, schools, universities, and companies.	Production of theater performances, <b>cultural projects in non-theater venues,</b> and theater workshops for children and companies.	Physical and technological resources, Intellectual resources.	Combining different artistic vocations to stimulate a kind of meta-narrative in different cultural venues in the area. Research on actor and space: the soul of the organization is the enhancement of the social and emotional aspects of the language of theater. The core business lies in the profound social vocation of the way of doing theater.	The main relationships are cultivated with schools, universities, and public administrations.	Website, reputation, and <b>communication-related to non-theater venues.</b>	End-users, schools, universities, and <b>companies.</b>	Value-oriented business with some fixed costs and many variable costs.	Revenues are dependent on funding budgets and/or individual cultural proposals offered.	The organization is very involved in projects on social issues concerning different areas (prison, racism, immigration, women's issues). The cultural activity takes place in non-theater venues (archeological sites, museums, historical centers), favoring the contamination of knowledge. The use of new technologies makes it possible to attract younger age groups and stimulate learning concerning cultural concepts that are not easy to assimilate.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 16. PAO No. 12: Theater sector

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Schools, universities, private companies, public institutions, associations and third sector entities, theater companies, and suppliers.	Performances, training, cultural events organization, business services.	Human resources, intellectual resources.	Cultural proposals are characterized by a dynamic, original, and exciting approach, based on reflection and the active involvement of the spectator in social and civil commitment issues.	Building networks and partnerships with stakeholders; dense web of relationships with institutional bodies.	<b>A dedicated website for each sector of activity and external communication.</b>	Theaters, theater companies, festivals, schools, private companies, institutions, universities, and end-users.	Value-oriented business with <b>low fixed costs</b> .	Variable price dependent on customer segment and product/service offered.	The cultural activity stimulates learning in the younger age group (school-age children) and reflection on social issues. The educational activity aims to engage the younger generation on topical issues with high-level content (road safety, sport, mythology, nature, art). The involvement of key stakeholders (such as research institutions and universities) makes it possible to create valuable networks in the area and to stimulate artistic research, especially in the area of higher education and related age groups.

Note: Pandemic-related measures are underlined in bold. Abbreviation: PAO: Performing arts organizations.

Table 17. Aggregated business models of performing arts organizations

Key partners	Key activities	Key resources	Value propositions	Customer relations	Channels	Customer segments	Cost structures	Revenue streams	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Schools, universities, private companies, foundations, public institutions, third-sector associations and entities, theater companies, and suppliers.	Shows, digital and interactive performances, education courses, organization of cultural events, business services, and theater.	Human resources, digital and technical resources, financial and intellectual resources.	Cultural proposals are characterized by a dynamic, original, and exciting approach, based on reflection and the active involvement of the audience in unconventional places (city centers, green areas, urban contexts, and museums).	Construction of networks and partnerships with stakeholders; a dense network of relationships with institutional bodies, creative industries, and end-users.	A dedicated website for each business sector, external communication, streaming and social media, and newsletter.	Theaters, clients and financiers, partners in coproduction, theater companies, festival schools, private companies, institutions, universities, and final users.	Value-oriented business with low fixed costs.	Variable price depending on the customer segment and the product/service offered.	Involvement of key stakeholders and young generations in projects related to environmental, social, and cultural issues. Dissemination of topics related to intergenerational and interracial respect, environmental sustainability, ecosystem, and arts-based knowledge exchange.

here is that sustainable BMs are inherent in the creative industries, which are established on a strong social and cultural connotation from the start and, by definition, manage to propagate their artistic values in the regions in which they operate.

## 5. Discussion

According to recent research,<sup>27</sup> one of the most notable short-term repercussions of COVID-19 was the inability of creative enterprises to attract audiences and visitors, both of which are critical components of their economic models. It was also suggested that huge segments of the industry would be unable to return to “business as usual” until the gap with the audience—who had ceased attending movies and theaters since the outbreak—was fully closed. Furthermore, the high fixed costs of rent have become unsustainable for most organizations, which can only pay them when attendance exceeds 60% of the venue’s entire capacity. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, cuts to theater and performing arts subsidies meant that even those who had managed to optimize their BMs would be impacted by the numerous lockdowns. The severity of the crisis, along with the uncertainty surrounding containment measures and social distance, meant that many cultural groups reliant on active public engagement faced existential issues without substantial government assistance. Many creative sectors invested in new technology, assuming that streaming would be the future of the performing arts, yet many ended up wasting money.

Simultaneously, new digital technologies (even the most experimental ones) have proven to be beneficial resources in many circumstances, allowing creative industries to turn their websites into digital publishing platforms with tailored content bundles, such as those for members and high-level sponsors. Many of them began to consider new ways to reach out to visitors, tourists, and school groups that did not require their physical presence. Risks have been highlighted<sup>22</sup> for the CCIs due to the distinctive structure of their BMs. For example, BMs span from public and non-profit institutions (e.g., museums, libraries, theater companies) to big for-profit operators (e.g., Netflix, Spotify). Economic development or profit is not usually the primary aim for a major section of creative professionals or micro-businesses in the industry, but rather a means to remain in the creative business, which is their core purpose. Many CCIs rely on intangible assets, such as highly specialized skills and competencies, social networks, or reputation and credit in certain creative communities. Obtaining financial assistance from credit institutions might be difficult due to the difficulty of pricing intangible assets. Similarly, many CCIs struggle to acquire funding for innovation, despite being innovators

themselves. As we have seen, the creative industries promote new methods of working, engaging audiences, and collaborating. They are also key sources of inspiration for other projects due to technical crossovers and business-to-business relationships (e.g., gamification of learning processes). Because innovation is often connected with technology, the CCIs are usually disregarded or omitted from programs aimed at promoting innovation in a limited sense.

According to recent research on sustainable CCI BMs in the post-pandemic era,<sup>28</sup> the potential key elements for a CCI BM proposed by previous studies—namely, cultural and creative value, market estimation, commercial advantage achievement, and marketing leverage—are hardly consistent when compared to the distinguishing characteristics of CCIs. These characteristics include a high level of risk connected with commercial operations, an emphasis on the balance of creativity and commerce, high production costs against cheap reproduction costs, and the semi-public nature of products, which needs the creation of scarcity. The intellectual property of the goods or services developed by these companies, in particular, can be attributed to the individual or group responsible for their creation; most of these products or services are difficult to duplicate; and the production of these goods or services is a means of conveying figurative messages to consumers, which undoubtedly requires some degree of creativity.

There are eight main considerations when building a business strategy for CCIs:<sup>28</sup> (i) Cultural value commitment: a commitment to cultural values; (ii) Added creativity value: an explanation of added creativity values for CCI products; (iii) Marketplace conjecture: marketplace conjecture for CCI products and services; (iv) Direct and indirect trading rivalry: analyses of direct and indirect trading rivalry; (v) Industrial profits: tactics for acquiring industrial profits; and (vi) Marketing strategies: marketing for CCI products and services. However, this idea on the BM for CCIs lacks consideration of sustainability. We may try to connect these past studies by transferring and redefining the important components of the BM Canvas developed in this study, as shown in [Table 18](#).

When attempting to design a BM for the creative industries, two additional areas may be defined to complement the eight already delineated: one for communication strategies and one for the social, cultural, and environmental effects unique to firms functioning in the CCI sector. These factors, aided by the COVID-19 pandemic, have become increasingly important not only for an organization’s economic and financial development but also for the redefinition of its identity characteristics,

Table 18. Aggregated business models of performing arts organizations—own elaboration from Lin<sup>28</sup>

Marketplace conjecture	Added creativity value	Requisite knowledge and skills	Cultural value commitment	Commerce development	Communication strategies	Marketing strategies	Direct and indirect trading rivalry	Industrial profits	Social, cultural, and environmental impact
Schools, universities, private companies, foundations, public institutions, third-sector associations and entities, theater companies, and suppliers.	Production of shows, digital and interactive performances, training courses for all age groups, organization of cultural events, business services, and corporate theater.	Human resources, digital and technical resources, financial resources, and intellectual resources. High creativity, transversal thinking, and specific technical skills in the field.	Cultural proposals are characterized by a dynamic, original, and exciting approach, based on reflection and the active involvement of the audience in unconventional places (city centers, green areas, urban contexts, and museums).	Building networks and partnerships with stakeholders; strong relationships with institutional bodies, creative industries, private companies, and end users.	A dedicated website for each business sector, external communication, streaming and interactivity, social media, and newsletter.	Marketing aimed at the commercial development of relationships with partners and customers: Theaters, principals and financiers, co-production companies, festivals, schools, private companies, institutions, universities, and end-users.	Identification of competitors for theater/television/cinema/performing arts in general/visual arts/literature and poetry; industries with creative content targeting a mass audience. Digital platforms for streaming.	Variable price depending on the customer segment and the product/service offered. Value-orientated business with low fixed costs. Development of national and international cultural projects.	Involvement of key stakeholders and young generations in projects related to environmental, social, and cultural issues. Dissemination of topics related to intergenerational and intracultural respect, environmental sustainability, ecosystem, and arts-based knowledge exchange.

the narration of its artistic poetics, and the dissemination of values in the territories where it operates. Li's<sup>25</sup> study provides another important foundation for establishing a business strategy for the creative industries that incorporates digital change. In the study, he proposes a “holistic” BM that attempts to synthesize insights from prior studies and empirical research, focusing on the business value proposition—including product offering, target market segment, and revenue model—to reflect the entire vision and strategy. The value proposition is underpinned by the value architecture, which encompasses value capture, creation, distribution, and acquisition. The functional architecture, which encompasses product creation and commercialization, manufacturing and distribution infrastructure, and customer relationship management, provides the necessary support for the value architecture.

When the two models are compared, the value contributed by creativity in Lin's<sup>28</sup> framework (Table 18) becomes the fundamental offer of the creative sector in Li's<sup>25</sup> framework (Table 19). CCIs add value by diversifying themselves from their major rivals, which are digital platforms and sectors that provide customizable content to a large audience. The main infrastructure for the production and, above all, the distribution of PAOs shows is the extensive network of relationships with partners and stakeholders. The added value of the production is constituted above all by the uniqueness of the proposal, which is always customized according to the target audience—consisting of schools, universities, foundations, social venues (prisons, hospices, refectories), private companies—and the goal to be achieved, as well. The management of its relationships with its customers and stakeholders is being expanded through the use of digital technologies, which, through the implementation of the website, social media, and streaming platforms, strengthen and consolidate the link with the audience and contribute to the greater dissemination and circulation of information on shows, new productions, initiatives, and events globally.

What was once considered part of the social, cultural, and environmental effects is now an endogenous aspect of the CCI BM. This is because they employ the surrounding reality, especially the environmental, social, and cultural context, to create value through creative sensibility. CCIs can create unique content and incorporate it into their value creation and distribution by analyzing and filtering stimuli provided by the external surroundings. In this sense, they inherently and organically embrace sustainability ideals as part of their mission, as industries built on respect for and improvement of the settings in which they exist and virtuously feed.

Table 19. The holistic business model of the creative industries—own elaboration from Li<sup>25</sup>

Financial sustainability	Value proposition			Stakeholder Credibility
	Product offering	Target segment	Revenue model	
	Production of shows, digital and interactive performances, training courses for all age groups, organization of cultural events, business services, and corporate theater.	Theaters, principals and financiers, co-production partners, theater companies, festivals, schools, private companies, institutions, universities, and end-users.	Variable price depending on the customer segment and the product/service offered. Value-orientated business with low fixed costs. Development of national and international cultural projects.	
	Value architecture			
	Value sensing	Value creation	Value distribution	Value capture
	Involvement of key stakeholders and young generations in projects related to environmental, social, and cultural issues. Dissemination of topics related to intergenerational and interracial respect, environmental sustainability, ecosystem, and arts-based knowledge exchange.	Cultural proposals are characterized by a dynamic, original, and exciting approach, based on reflection and the active involvement of the audience in unconventional places (city centers, green areas, urban contexts, and museums).	Human resources, digital and technical resources, financial resources, and intellectual resources. High creativity, transversal thinking, and specific technical skills in the field.	Diversification of the artistic and cultural offer proposed concerning the main competitors for theater/television/cinema/performing arts in general/visual arts/literature and poetry: industries with creative content targeting a mass audience. Digital platforms for streaming.
	Functional architecture			
	Product innovation and commercialization	Infrastructure for production and distribution	Customer relations management	
	Creation of unique and customized products and services. Partnership with: schools, universities, private companies, foundations, public institutions, third-sector associations and entities, theater companies, and suppliers.	Building networks and partnerships with stakeholders; strong relationships with institutional bodies, creative industries, private companies, and end users.	A dedicated website for each business sector, external communication, Streaming and interactivity, social media, and newsletter.	

## 6. Conclusion

The current study begins with an examination of the BMs of 12 Italian PAOs that participated in a qualitative and quantitative research process to determine whether and how the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on their transformation, and in what ways.

A BM was established using semi-structured interviews and internal data requests, and it used the BM Canvas framework to identify the primary factors that would determine how these organizations produce and distribute value. This outcome was then corroborated by the organizations themselves, who reflected on the changes that had happened and continue to occur as a result of the epidemic. The current analysis also aimed to improve components of the socioeconomic structure and, more specifically, sustainability, based on the findings that the research progressively presented and revealed.

What emerged, in the end, is that the organizational structure of PAOs has changed profoundly:<sup>29</sup> they have had to equip themselves with resources and skills that were not particularly necessary previously to cope with the profound crisis that has seen them play a leading role as a result of the closure of theaters and cinemas throughout Italy. Furthermore, the closing of performance venues has had a significant impact on their BMs: the hunt for alternative sites to hold their performances has driven PAOs to increasingly employ outside outdoor venues, park areas, and museums. The hunt for new forms of financing has also increased their capacity to network and access new initiatives, incorporating new clients, such as small- and medium-sized enterprises, and new contexts, such as jails, schools, and universities, into their relationship systems, thereby opening up additional opportunities for European collaboration.

As a result, their BMs have grown more sustainable over time, with a focus on green concerns related to

sustainable development and the creation of new virtuous practices that promote new forms of sociality and collective wellbeing.

The frameworks presented, which are related to the definition of a new BM for the creative industries, demonstrate how the process of transformation occurring in the CCIs is increasingly in need of redefinition. This redefinition better illustrates the main values underlying the good practices triggered by the pandemic and consolidates that openness to new green, digital, and social values. Moreover, as has been shown, there is a positive relationship between learning orientation and innovation in the BM, a sign that PAOs have embarked on a transformative journey with the intention of learning different ways and training themselves to get back on the market.<sup>30</sup>

This paper summarizes the outcomes of research on the CCI sector, which, using empirical methodologies, aims to create a BM that captures the fundamental organizational alterations caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. It highlights the study's major findings and contrasts them with recent scientific studies on BMs, allowing for discussion and debate on the significant themes that have developed (new technologies and social and environmental impact). The uniqueness of this approach lies in recognizing these features, notably sustainability challenges, as being crucial in the production of value for CCIs. However, one of the limitations of the present work is the small sample size compared to the total creative business. In actuality, only performing arts groups were studied, with no attention paid to visual arts, literature, cinema, and other areas of interest. Future research in the field might widen the analysis to include different sorts of organizations (both profit and non-profit) in the cultural sector, improving the accuracy of the model presented here.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest.

### Author contributions

This is a single-authored article.

### Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

### Consent for publication

Not applicable.

### Availability of data

Requests to access the data should be directed to all the organizations that take part in this study and to the corresponding author that can only partially provide anonymized data.

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