

## Italian CCI at the crossroad between tradition and innovation: a toolkit for policies

Sabrina Pedrini  
Adjunct Professor in Cultural Economics  
Alma Mater Studiorum Bologna University  
e-mail: [sabrina.pedrini@unibo.it](mailto:sabrina.pedrini@unibo.it)

### Preliminary draft

In the last 10 years, the Italian regions have analyzed the cultural and creative sector through specific studies. Strengths and weaknesses clearly emerge and should be a starting point to get out of the rhetoric that accompanies the CCI and to give space to specific policies aimed to make its real development. In this work, which started from the analysis of all the Italian studies available on the sector from Piemonte, Lombardia, Triveneto, Emilia Romagna, Toscana, Lazio, Marche, Puglia regions, the objective is to understand the characteristics of the CCI, to delineate their boundaries and to understand their needs for growth.

The cultural sectors are already a great part of our economy and society. The benefits concern three areas in particular: the economic one, widely investigated and which mainly deals with measuring how much of the GDP comes from this sector and to what extent it affects the economic system; the social one, through which culture generates social benefits in terms of health, education and community cohesion; the intrinsic value of cultural activities, which highlights the quality of the cultural offer.

But every micro reality has its roots and it is difficult to define shareable standards in this sector.

The analysis showed a strong polarization toward the main industrial hubs and urban centers; a mature sector with a prevalence of creative activities compared to cultural production; modest juvenile entrepreneurship with difficulties to access to the credit system. There are difficulties in connecting with research centers and universities, insufficient connection between creative enterprises and public authorities, poor participation in available clusters and networks, difficulties in intercepting funding opportunities and innovation. This context is accompanied by some elements that characterize an *European "threat"*: population decreasing, economic and political crisis worsening, international global market in competition with local economy, funds and public funding for artistic and cultural activities decreasing.

Trying to identify the policies that can be suggested to make the sector more performative and more impacting on the territory, the long term ambitions could follow these key words:  
*dissemination, sustainability, impact.*

These must guide a series of actions that policy makers (with the help of private individuals and civil society) can put in place to encourage the greater development of the sector through a *continuous series of control and evaluation operations* through the provision of services and *a batteries of short and long term indicators.*

### Recommendations

The practice should integrate top-down land-use planning policies and make them communicate with companies' productive innovation policies. It would be useful to focus on activating local thematic work groups that can be based on a logical and operational path articulated in some macro-activities:

- periodic monitoring of the companies and population's needs;

- identification of intervention levers and sharing with companies possible innovative tools and solutions for the rationalization of activities;
- creation of Living Labs (operational laboratories) and implementation of pilot projects;
- dissemination and training: the solutions identified are generalized through the construction of tools and analytical methodologies suitable to be applied and transferred to other geographical contexts and to other companies;
- definition of public policy.

Using the bottom-up approach means making a multiplicity of actors interact with different sensitivities, interests and expectations. Collaboration and dialogue takes place at 3 levels:

- Public-Private, through collaboration and dialogue with the main entrepreneurial associations. Similarly, on the civil society side, adopt an approach that is aimed to the community's need in a view of social innovation, where the new cultural and creative entrepreneurship *becomes sustainable because respond to real and collective needs*.
- Private-Private, through the development of cooperation mechanisms between SMEs to strengthen the regional offer developed thanks to the collaboration between SMEs. This in order to *avoid the problem of activities' duplication and resources' dispersion*.
- Public-Public, through collaboration and dialogue between regional authorities and local public bodies for the development of policies coordinated to the service of citizens, businesses and the territory.

The elements that should characterize the experience can be:

- Concreteness and adherence to the needs of the local context.
- Sustainability.
- Results' scalability.
- High level of public-private cooperation.
- Cooperation between public bodies.
- Business cooperation.
- Ability to attract public and private resources from heterogeneous sources.

This approach that leads to the constant dialogue between private and public sectors and where the need of the territory is essential (and must emerge) to make the activities of the CCI sustainable leads me to develop medium-long term policy objectives that I call Ambitions.

#### Ambitions (medium-long time policies goals)

Good policy interventions must be able to act through instruments and indicators on between areas whose growth and impact are to be encouraged. These must be mainly linked to developing the quality of the cultural and creative contents' demand/supply; to the economic development of the different and marginal areas, with an emphasis on decentralization and to counteract the polarization effects typical of the Italian economy; to the human and social development of the communities. Starting from this last aspect, to get to the first one, the elements that should be implemented and objects for policies could be capabilities, skills, resilience, community success, wellbeing, reputation, soft power and people's living conditions' improvement, up to the increase in productivity of CCI, export capacity, quality of production and the internal demand for cultural products.

Indicators should be carefully selected and could be related to outputs (11 indicators were defined), outcomes and impact (15 indicators were defined).

The policies to support entrepreneurship can be improved through material support to the sustainability of the project through continuous monitoring and evaluation processes aimed at

verifying the effective business action straight in terms of economic, but also social and cultural impact.

So we have to think about:

- a) Realization and monitoring of a supply chain of the various essential services.
- b) Identify the necessary rebalancing solutions (for example the distribution of the plexuses in the different areas) and the incentive to operate (for example the interdependence between the national and the local perspective).

So, the indications for new policies to support Italian CCI can follow three guidelines:

1) *Business dissemination* to create growth and development through a place-based approach.

So policies action from policy maker could be:

- incentives for companies that set up in marginal areas and suburbs;
- incentives for the formation of community hubs;
- internationalization services for companies (support for participation in international fairs and meetings, study trips, financing of internships abroad);
- mobilization to organize events *in loco*;
- connection with local schools and universities;
- facilitation in creating networks with companies in other sectors, present in the area.

2) *Sustainability* of the projects. One of the problems is the lack of financial sustainability of many of these companies. BES (2017) data show a decline in the number of employer (with a greater incidence on women's work). Following the negative trend on Italy's ability to attract highly qualified employment or to favor employment prospects for Italian graduates.

So policies action from policy maker could be:

- to support female labor in the CCI;
- to improve social security coverage;
- to support the long-term recruitment of workers;
- to support the updating in the sector also for older workers;
- to monitor and evaluate periodically the impact of the activities;
- to monitor and evaluate the cultural quality of the activities;
- to encourage collaborative practices and hybrid enterprises (benefit corp.);
- to improve the eco-system of business services also with attention to defining models of growth and replicability;
- to define tools for the assignment of real estate assets considering the managers, the performed activities, the generated resources;
- strengthen the mix of donative resources for investment *venture* purposes, not intended to cover ordinary costs and expenses but to finance the business model on projects with transformational intent, to support cross-sectoral innovations.

Tools such as design thinking, lean project management, gamification, crowdsourcing, co-creation and open innovation could be valuable for developing the public sector and the policy-making process.

The cultural and creative sectors are pioneers in applying and developing all of these tools.

3) *Socio-Cultural impact*. One of the limits of current planning is to focus too much attention on the increase in cultural participation, on the creation of new audiences and on audience development. An innovative policy must therefore pay attention to the quality of the cultural offer. Assuming a model in which the offer creates its own demand, an improvement in the quality of the cultural proposal brings with it an increase in participation.

So policies action from policy maker could be:

- capacity building actions aimed at co-participation and co-management of spaces;
- to favor the reconstruction of the artists and civil society's linkage;
- to fulfill community involvement and bottom-up participation in project implementation;
- to overcome the concept of audience (in relation to the public) to better include the practitioner's one;

- to favor projects that stimulate co-participation and co-design in storytelling;
- to stimulate cultural crowdfunding initiatives;
- to increase the attention on the production side by encouraging participation;
- to favor projects that improve the cultural skills of operators and users through tools of open innovations and co-creation;
- to implement user-driver innovation instrument;
- to improve accessibility to copyright information;
- to improve qualitative measuring instruments for the wider impact;
- massive bottom-up capability building as a driver for creation of a innovation driven economy and society.