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Business Models for Creative Tourism

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Abstract: Creative tourism has grown and diversified in recent years, but little attention has been paid to changing business models. We use the Business Model Canvas to compare creative tourism business models linked to the evolution of creative tourism from basic arts and crafts learning experiences to the incorporation of creative experiences in global platforms such as Airbnb and TripAdvisor. We identify a shift in focus from individual learning to destination platforms, the integration of the creative economy and tourism to models based on placemaking. These developments also imply the integration of a growing range of stakeholders into the creative tourism ecosystem and more focus on collective, place-based creativity rather than individual creative skill development. These different business models are also linked to different types of value creation, with intrinsic value for the consumers and instrumental value for the producer increasingly being joined by institutional and integrative value creation processes.

Keywords: Creative Tourism, Business Models, Business Model Canvas, Tourism Experiences, Placemaking, Value Creation.

Introduction

Creative tourism has emerged as an important niche in the tourism market in recent years, with a growing number of destinations and internet platforms offering creative experiences to visitors. This growth is arguably a result of consumers seeking more active and fulfilling ways of engaging with the cultural of destinations, as well as destinations looking for more distinctive offerings. This growth has also been linked to the general growth of the 'experience economy'.

Creative tourism was first identified as a distinctive form of tourism in 2000, when it was defined by Richards and Raymond (2000: 18) as:

> *Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken.*

The most important aspects of this original definition relate to the need to involve tourists in some form of creative activity, and the fact that these activities should also be linked to the culture of the destination in some way. In the 20 years following the initial conceptualisation of creative tourism, however, the concept has grown and changed considerably. We can identify an evolution of creative tourism over a number of different phases (Duxbury and Richards, 2019).

Firstly, under 'creative tourism 1.0' we saw the development of small-scale creative experiences and learning activities, provided mainly by creative entrepreneurs as a supplement to other creative production. Typically, these would be provided through small-scale workshops and courses, giving tourists hands-on experience of local creativity (Richards & Wilson, 2006). The subsequent emergence of creative tourism 2.0 introduced a more consumption-related perspective, with creative activities used to attract tourists to a destination, and the emergence of destination-based networks, such as Creative Tourism Barcelona (Couret, 2012) and Creative Tourism Austria (Paschinger, 2016). Creative Tourism 3.0 saw a broadening integration of tourism and the creative economy, leading to the development of a wider range of creative experiences, as well as more passive forms of creative consumption by tourists. In particular, this phase saw a strengthening of the links between the creative industries and tourism (OECD, 2014). The most recent Creative Tourism 4.0 iteration saw a shift towards 'relational tourism' (Richards, 2014) based on the co-creation of experiences facilitated through peer-to-peer networks. Examples of this include the growing availability of creative tourism experiences on Airbnb and TripAdvisor (Carvalho, da Costa & Ferreira, 2018).

Some studies have emerged that have tried to chart the growth and development of creative tourism models, although their coverage tends to be partial (e.g. Remoaldo, Matos, Gôja, Alves & Duxbury, 2020). Richards (2017) also identified several different models of creative tourism development worldwide. Duxbury, Carvalho, Vinagre de Castro, Bakas and Silva (2018) provide a useful overview of the different models of creative tourism emerging from the CREATOUR project in Portugal. This shows that most projects are small scale and rely on attracting individual visitors to courses or events, or to stay in a specific location where they can undertake creative activities (Table 1). The main forms of income are therefore individual participant fees, although larger projects can also attract public sector funding and sponsorship.

Duxbury, Carvalho, Vinagre de Castro, Bakas and Silva (2018), also underline the importance of Artisan-mediators in a number of projects. These 'switchers' are often people from outside the local area who provide important links to knowledge and resources from elsewhere. By linking the location to other places, they extend the range of the local social and knowledge network, allowing resources to be gathered on a larger scale, for example by attracting tourists and external grants and sponsorship. Bakas, Duxbury, Remoaldo and Matos (2019) also argue that events and festivals organised within creative tourism programmes facilitate the interaction between different groups of people who don't usually mix, such as artists, local residents, children and elderly people. Creative tourism activities embedded in small-scale art festivals also create social value by increasing the host community's pride in place and reinforcing the bonding and bridging social capital of the location. The features of these projects emphasise the importance of factors such as social capital and networks in generating value for creative tourism producers.

Table 1: Models of creative tourism development in the CREATOUR Project (adapted after Duxbury, Carvalho, Vinagre de Castro, Bakas & Silva, 2018)

Model	Project	Focus
Stand-alone offers	Vagar Walking Tours	Creative routes in Evora, Alentejo.
Repeated offers; series of creative activities	Nova Tradição (New Tradition)	Workshops relating to sustainable dying and cloth-making in Alentejo.
Localized networks	Loulé Criativo	Network related to traditional techniques and crafts in the Algarve.
Small-scale festivals	Artistic Residencies Amares	Contemporary art and traditional heritage based around a festival in the North of Portugal.
Creative accommodation	Mondego Art Valley	Artist residencies and festival in Central Portugal.

Although there have been some studies describing the growth of creative tourism and the development of different creative tourism forms, there has been relatively little comparative analysis of the architecture of creative tourism businesses or the ways in which they generate value. The aim of this exploratory paper is therefore to analyse the business models related to different types of creative tourism. Particular attention is paid to the value creation processes related to these models and the opportunities that these offers for creative tourism development.

Business Models and Value Creation

Ovens (2015) reviews the concept of business models and shows that ideas about how businesses organise themselves to create value have changed over time. In the past, the focus of business model analysis used to be on 'how businesses generate money', but more recently the focus has shifted to a broader concept of value creation, describing the assumptions about not only key resources and activities of the business, but also value propositions, customer relationships and customer segments. The most widely used tool for describing these broader business model concepts is the business model canvas developed by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), which "describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value". Chesbrough (2007) outlined the functions of the business model as:

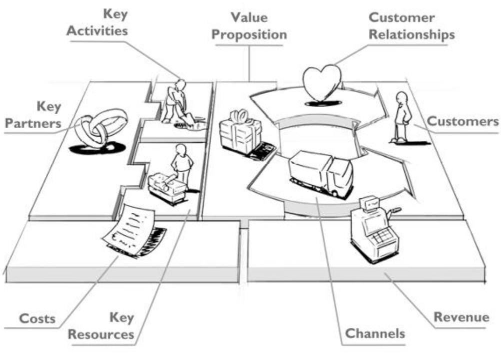
- Stating the value proposition and the value created for customers
- Identifying market segments – who the offering is for
- Defining the value chain needed to create and distribute products

- Presenting mechanisms of revenue generation, presenting the cost structure and profit potential

A business model deals with the architecture needed to create value, which is different from organisational strategy, which relates to overall business planning. The focal point of strategy lies with the overall positioning of the organisation, whereas the business model is concerned with creating customer value. Strategy outlines how the organization can function better than competitors, and business models describe how all the important pieces of the business synergize (Magretta, 2002) in value creation. As Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) argue, analysing the elements of the business model for different organisations allows you to identify the different strategies adopted by those organisations. In the context of creative tourism, therefore, we should be able to relate different business to different strategies of developing creative tourism, which according to the evolutionary view taken by Duxbury and Richards (2019), should also relate to the different phases of creative tourism development.

The standardised Business Model Canvas (BMC) developed by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) provides us with a means of analysing and comparing value creation processes across different organisations. The BMC consists of nine elements that describe the whole process of value creation, but the key component is the value proposition: the benefits that people can expect from your products and services. To develop the value proposition, we need to think about the nature of value, and the people we are trying to reach. What value are we trying to create? for whom, and how do we create it?

Figure 1: The Business Model Canvas



Source: http://www.innovationclub.it/approfondimenti/business-model-canvas/ (Creative Commons Licence).

One of the limitations of the BMC is its foundation in Goods-Dominant Logic. It was originally based in economic models of physical goods moving to customers in different geographical locations. In the service economy, or more recently the experience economy, however, it is often the customer who moves to the location of experience production. This is clearly the case in tourism.

Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2018) argue that Service-Dominant Logic has a more advanced view of customer relationships, as it is based on co-creation between businesses and customers (Schlager & Maas, 2012). However, even the basic notion of co-creation, which is usually seen from a producer perspective, often provides an incomplete view of what the service means to the customer (or, arguably, to the producer). The solution to this problem is to shift to a customer-centred view of value creation, in which the service is embedded in the context, activities, practices and experiences of the customer. Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2018) therefore argue the challenge is "how to highlight the customer's active role and add the notion of the customer as a value creator and the company supporting that value creation" (p. 82). They present a new version of the BMC, the Service Logic Business Model Canvas, in which the view of the customer as well as the producer is presented. Most importantly, they emphasise that the value proposition "goes beyond the actual business that the business model is describing, and here the customer's life is analysed in depth. Before moving to the value proposition and other blocks of a business model, it is very important to get a deep insight and holistic understanding of the customer's world" (p. 83).

However, the Service Logic Business Model Canvas also has its limitations in the context of creative tourism. Most notably, it continues to view the production of value through services purely as an economic transaction. However, many of the activities surrounding creative tourism also generate other forms of value beyond the economic. To encapsulate a broader view of value creation we turn to Holden's (2006) concept of cultural value, which considers the value of culture as a form of public value. Holden argues that "value is located in the encounter or interaction between individuals (who will have all sorts of preexisting attitudes, beliefs and levels of knowledge) on the one hand, and an object or experience on the other" (2006, p. 15). Creative tourism fits such a model of value very closely: participants usually travel to encounter a specific cultural object and/or have a specific creative experience. Holden (2006) identifies three types of value generated by culture:

- Intrinsic value, or the capacity of culture to affect people.
- Instrumental value, or the ancillary effects of culture, where culture is used to achieve a social or economic purpose.
- Institutional value, or the processes, techniques and practices that organisations adopt in working to create value for the public.

We can usefully apply all three types of value to creative tourism, as it involves the personal benefits of the creative activity for participants, such as learning (intrinsic value), the economic and social value derived by the indirect stakeholders in the destination (instrumental value), and the value derived by makers and public institutions from the expansion of creative opportunities and know-how (institutional value).

Public value has recently been applied to the events sector by Richards (2021a), who highlights the different roles played by events as value creation configurations that can deliver different forms of value to a wide range of stakeholders. One important step in Richards' analysis of event value creation is the division between the function of events as platforms and their role in networks. Events can act as platforms that showcase the value provided by an event (or a creative tourism experience), and events can act as hubs and nodes in networks that help to maintain network functions. In this sense, an event can be a tool to promote flows (of money, information, resources) in networks, and it can act to draw attention to particular locations, places or times through its platform function. We see similar network and platform functions of value creation operating in the field of creative tourism, with the development of local, national and international creative tourism networks, and the growing propensity of platforms such as Airbnb and TripAdvisor to curate and highlight creative tourism content. The value created by the network and platform functions in the creative tourism arena go far beyond the economic to include network value (Richards and Colombo, 2017), social value and of course intrinsic, instrumental and institutional value.

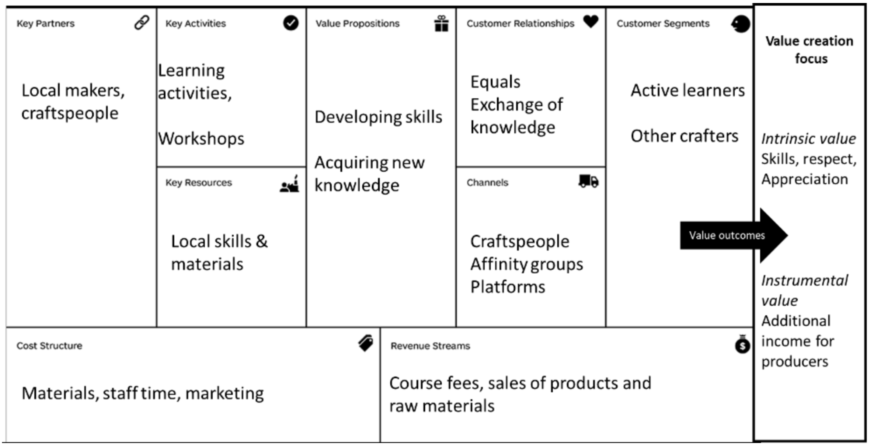
We can link these different types of value to specific value propositions and show how these are incorporated into the different phases of creative tourism development described by Duxbury and Richards (2019). The following analysis extends the basic Business Model Canvas by considering the type of value generated by each configuration of creative tourism. Because we are dealing with destinations, or places, we are also dealing with much more complex relationships than customer-producer links. We are dealing with the whole range of stakeholder relationships that make a place, and which make places attractive to visitors. This type of 'integrative value' (Crowther & Donlan, 2011) places even more emphasis on the relational aspects of the places that tourists visit. This is also important because it reflects the relational turn in tourism (Richards, 2021c) and the need of many tourists to integrate themselves into local places to give themselves a feeling of belonging and authenticity (Russo & Richards, 2016).

The evolution of creative tourism business models

In early Creative Tourism 1.0 experiences, the emphasis was often on individual creative producers developing workshops for tourists. The basic type of value being developed for the tourist is intrinsic (learning, skills development), and for the creative producer the basic value generated is economic, through course fees. One of the important elements of value creation was the idea that increased involvement of the tourist would increase their awareness of the value of the creative experience, and therefore their willingness to pay. In these early Creative Tourism 1.0 experiences, such as Creative Tourism New Zealand (Raymond, 2007), individual crafts producers would share their skills and knowledge with visitors, which helped to increase their understanding of the context of craft production (Richards, 2021b). One important outcome was the sharing of creative skills between producers and consumers, because the consumers were themselves often engaged in creative activities. This also generated a more equal relationship between 'host' and 'guest' than is normally the case in tourism encounters.

Creative tourism 1.0 experiences usually generate intrinsic value for the participants, who acquire creative skills and come to appreciate the skills of producers more. For the producers, as well as the intrinsic benefit of gaining respect for their creativity, there is an increase in instrumental value through sales of experiences and products related to these.

Figure 2: Creative workshops as business model in Creative Tourism 1.0

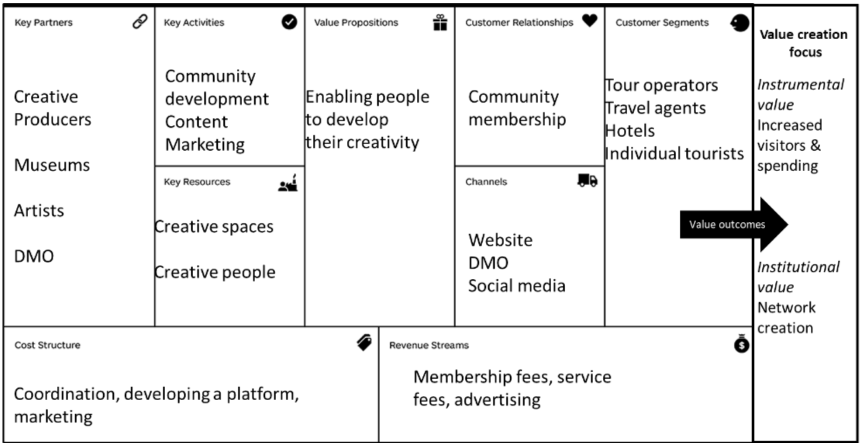


Adapted from "Strategyzer | Business Model Canvas (n.d.). Used under a Creative Commons Attributions 1.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/1.0/)

In Creative Tourism 2.0, the growing scale of creative tourism enabled local networks to emerge that would collaborate to provide more complex creative offers, such as concerts, festivals or workshop programmes. In addition to the instrumental value being generated by tourist spending, there were also benefits in terms of increased local collaboration, building the potential for institutional value creation. This saw the development of dedicated creative tourism platforms, such as Creative Tourism Barcelona, Creative Tourism Loulé and CREATOUR. The aim of these platforms is usually to generate income for members, and to increase the flow of visitors through collaborative marketing of creative experiences. The emphasis of value creation shifts towards the instrumental value developed by creating economies of scale in branding and marketing.

Creative tourism 3.0 provides new opportunities through the integration of tourism and the creative economy. By opening up different creative sectors to tourism, such as the film industry, architecture or design, the potential to tap new tourism markets is increased. At the same time, the tourism sector can benefit from the re-valorization of tourism experiences offered by adding creative content (OECD, 2014). In many cases these developments have been stimulated by top-down programmes led by government, based on the synergies to be gained from integrating the creative economy and tourism.

Figure 3: Creative tourism platforms as business model in Creative Tourism 2.0



This has often involved the creation of specific programmes and organisations designed to support the growth of this new model of creative tourism, such as the Creative Economy Action Plan in South Korea (UNCTAD, 2017), which aimed to support the development of a 'creative economic ecosystem', including forms of creative tourism (Richards, 2017a). The Korean Tourist Office estimated that creative content-related (Hallyu) tourist spend was USD 1.1 billion and that Hallyu-related tourism was linked to over half the inbound tourist arrivals in 2019. The Korean Culture and Information Service has developed 32 Korean Cultural Centres in 28 countries to promote Hallyu and creative experiences (Roll, 2020). In Thailand, government efforts to grow the creative economy included the development of creative tourism programmes by the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA). This included the development of creative tourism experiences in 20 villages nationwide, designed to showcase different aspects of Thai culture and creativity (Richards, 2020). The institutional value created by the development of customised organisations to stimulate the links between the creative economy and tourism also helped to develop instrumental value in the form of increased business turnover and creative exports.

Creative Tourism 4.0 also provides new opportunities through global networking. The placement of creative experiences on global platforms such as Airbnb or TripAdvisor exposes them to a global audience, significantly increasing the potential for new business. In contrast to the tourism concentration effects found for Airbnb accommodation (e.g. Arias Sans & Domínguez, 2016), Capineri and Romano (2021) found that Airbnb Experiences seem to counter the spatial concentration of accommodation listings in the city centre of Florence.

They attribute this to the different nature of the resources utilized in the Experiences, which emphasise experiential content and which also allow entrepreneurs in non-central locations to offer experiences such as food tasting and cooking classes.

Figure 4: Integration of tourism and the creative economy in Creative Tourism 3.0

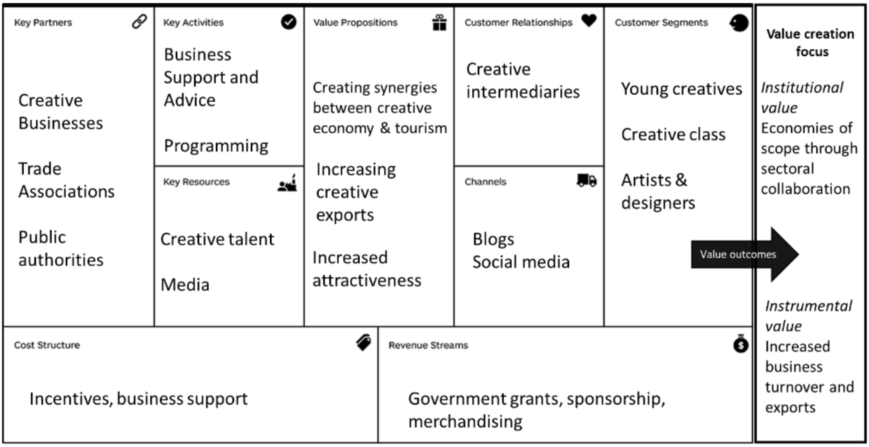
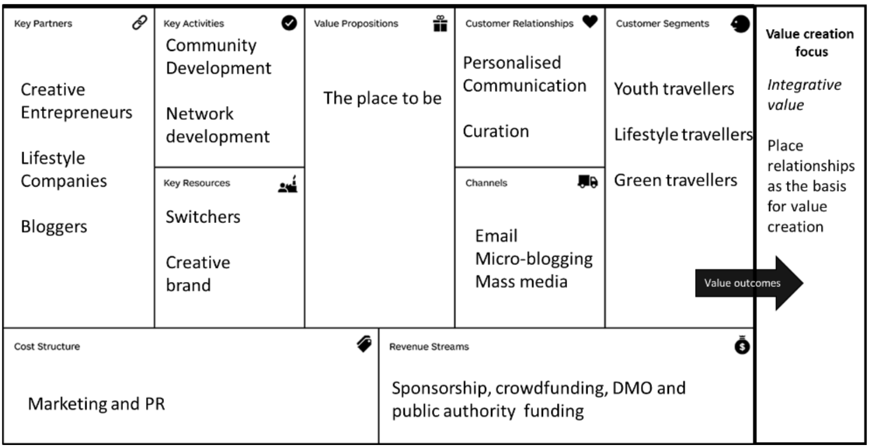


Figure 5: Placemaking as an integrative approach to creative tourism



The expanded networking and peer-to-peer interaction supported by Creative Tourism 4.0 enables a wider range of stakeholders to become involved in creative tourism, opening up the ecosystem to actors outside the tourism or creative sectors. The essential asset that these forms of creative tourism have in common is the place they are located in. The central value proposition of the business model becomes ‘the place to be’. This also stimulates a more holistic approach to 'placemaking' through creative tourism (Richards and Duif, 2019). Creativity becomes a means of giving meaning to resources that can subsequently enable creative activities by residents and visitors. In essence the focus of value creation moves to the development of 'integrative value' (Crowther & Donlan, 2011), with creativity becoming an integral element of the experience of place rather than a separate sector of activity. This is a more complex value creation system, which involves a growing flow of information about creative experiences and events in the destination. This has stimulated more 'curatorial' approaches to the selection of creative experiences for consumers overwhelmed with a wealth of creative choice (Richards, 2021c).

At the same time, however, the growth of creative tourism stakeholders can increase the potential for competition, not only between experiences in the same destination, but across different global destinations as well. A cursory examination of Airbnb experiences in different cities shows that many of the creative experiences offered by local hosts are fairly similar, including art walks, bike tours, cooking classes and gastronomic experiences. One effect of the 'airbnbization' of creative tourism (as with other forms of tourism) is a levelling up of prices, with pricing being adjusted to what the international tourist market will bear, rather than local cost levels. Increased competition in Creative Tourism 4.0 also focuses attention on the need for positioning – why should visitors come to undertake creative activities in your destination, rather than a similar place elsewhere? As Richards and Raymond (2000) originally suggested, this means destinations should pay more attention to the characteristic, original elements of creativity they are able to offer.

The development of Creative Tourism 4.0 business models has also been given a boost by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unable to offer face-to-face experiences, many creative tourism suppliers have been offering experiences online. Richards and Duxbury (2021: 53) note that during the COVID-19 pandemic, vacation with an Artist developed online workshops and classes delivered by artists, and they expect to continue this after the pandemic. New target groups have also been addressed by creative tourism programmes during the pandemic, including domestic tourists and people who want to be 'tourists in their own city' (Richards, 2017). Digital nomads have also become more important targets for destinations worldwide, particularly as they often want to undertake creative experiences as a break from their normal digital work environment. Norum and Poulsen (2021) also note that in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, Airbnb pivoted their experiences to online offerings for those unable to travel.

After the pandemic there will also be more opportunities for hybrid creative tourism experiences, which offer a mix of online and offline elements. Online contact with visitors before arrival can help to orient them to local culture and creativity, or to develop some mastery of basic skills before getting hands-on experience of more complex creative activities. Digital experiences can also be offered after the physical experience as a means of staying in touch with visitors, helping to ensure continued interest in creative activities and increasing the potential for repeat visits. As Duxbury and Richards (2019) note, there is a growing societal Zeitgeist in which ‘analogue arts’ (hands-on creation) and other forms of personal participation in creative activity and aesthetic self-expression are viewed as an integral dimension of personal self-development and well-being, which suggests there may be future potential for hybrid creative experiences as well. As Norum and Poulsen (2021) suggest, these may become part of digital placemaking strategies, which are based on the affective labour of locals to ignite the interest of (potential) visitors and help embed them in place.

Discussion and conclusions

Creative tourism has undergone considerable development over the past twenty years. From a casual observation by Richards and Raymond (2000) of the potential of creative workshops and learning experiences, the concept has evolved in many different directions, enfolding an increasingly eclectic range of stakeholders. Whereas the early Creative Tourism 1.0 model was based on a fairly simple exchange of knowledge for economic gain by creative producers, Creative Tourism 4.0 presents a much more complex system of placemaking and integrative value creation, supported by technology platforms and peer-to-peer interaction.

The development of creative tourism has also produced a succession of new business models. A comparison of the models related to the phases of creative tourism identified by Duxbury and Richards (2019) indicates significant changes in terms of all elements of the Business Model Canvas. The relatively limited range of partners and activities evident in Creative Tourism 1.0 models has gradually expanded to include actors from different sectors, who have also introduced new value propositions that have expanded from personal learning encounters between producers and consumers to networks offering increased creative opportunities and links between different economic sectors and place actors. The growing range of stakeholders has also supported different forms of value creation, introducing increased opportunities to develop institutional and integrative value on top of the basic intrinsic value usually desired by the consumer and the instrumental (primarily economic) value desired by many creative producers.

These new value creation opportunities have led to an increasingly complex creative tourism ecosystem, which offers growing synergies between economic sectors. In the early phases of creative tourism development, many creative tourism organisations were lifestyle businesses (Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013), lacking a carefully designed business model or value creation strategy. With the entry of a wider range of actors into the creative tourism system, including networks, (local) governments and technology platforms, there is more attention to the design of business models and the creation of growth strategies. The incorporation of more actors into creative tourism also means that business models are likely to shift away from ‘lifestyle entrepreneurship’ to ‘placestyle entrepreneurship' in which the relationships and meaning forged by place are important to the production of value in creative tourism experiences, as well as place being an important attraction for the consumer. What traditional 'producers' of creative experiences should realise is that the consumer is becoming increasingly involved in the co-creation and curation of their own experiences. For creative tourism development, this means focussing increasingly on the meaning of creativity for the consumer, instead of just assuming that creativity emanates from the destination.

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