Strengthening Cultural Financing Reform in Ethiopia – A Contribution Analysis of the CfCA Programme



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CA	Contribution Analysis
CCIs	Cultural and Creative Industries
CfCA	Connect for Culture Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EFY	Ethiopian Fiscal Year (based on the Ethiopian calendar)
EIPA	Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MoCS	Ministry of Culture and Sport
NALA	National Archives and Library Agency
NWG	National Working Group
PFM	Public Financial Management
ToC	Theory of Change
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) programme in Ethiopia contributed to strengthening the foundations for cultural financing reform by building a more connected, evidence informed, and advocacy oriented cultural sector ecosystem. Its contribution is best understood as catalytic and system oriented rather than as direct policy or budget reform. CfCA strengthened the evidence, relationships, institutional linkages, professional networks, and engagement mechanisms through which longer term reform can advance.

The contribution unfolded through six closely connected pathways. Evidence generation addressed information gaps through federal cultural budget tracking, stakeholder mapping, and assessment of the contribution of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) to GDP, employment, and the informal economy. Stakeholder coordination translated evidence and shared concerns into collective engagement through the National Working Group (NWG), Africa Day engagements, and sector discussions. Policy dialogue created channels through which evidence and stakeholder perspectives could reach duty bearers, contributing to greater recognition of cultural financing as a development issue. Advocacy and public communication broadened the visibility of cultural financing and the wider value of culture through campaigns, public events, digital engagement, cultural initiatives, and coordinated messages.

Research policy linkages strengthened connections between knowledge production and policy



practice, particularly through the partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies. Professional and sector networks broadened the constituency and capacity engaged in cultural development and financing through capacity development, residencies, music recording, archiving and heritage activities, and other creative sector initiatives. Together, these pathways strengthened the knowledge, relationships, capacities, and platforms available for continued sector engagement.

Several institutional and ecosystem level changes were observed. Cultural financing gained greater visibility in policy and sector discourse; evidence became a stronger basis for financing discussions and advocacy; stakeholder coordination became more structured; research policy connections and professional networks were strengthened; and public narratives around the value of culture gained greater prominence. Progress was also observed in institutional collaboration and intellectual property engagement.

However, these changes remain partial and uneven. Cultural financing has not yet been fully integrated into routine public financial management (PFM) systems, formal financing mechanisms, or permanent institutional arrangements. Public financing for culture remains structurally low, while coordination and evidence generation require further institutional consolidation. These limitations reflect the wider governance, fiscal, institutional, and data environment within which CfCA operated and indicate that its contribution has primarily been to strengthen enabling conditions rather than deliver systemic financing reform directly.

Overall, CfCA helped create a stronger foundation for future cultural financing reform by connecting evidence, relationships, dialogue, advocacy, research, professional networks, and public communication. Sustaining these gains will depend on their continued use and progressive integration into government planning, budgeting, PFM systems, and nationally owned institutional arrangements.



2. COUNTRY CONTEXT OVERVIEW

Ethiopia's cultural sector is governed by constitutional provisions, national policies, sector specific legislation, and regional and international commitments. The Constitution recognizes the rights of nations, nationalities, and peoples to preserve and promote their cultural heritage, languages, and identities. This framework is complemented by the Cultural Policy, National Language Policy, National Film Policy, and legislation covering heritage conservation, copyright, archival and library services, and cultural institutions. At the continental level, Ethiopia is committed to the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the aspiration for Member States to allocate at least one percent of national budgets to arts, culture, and heritage by 2030. Ethiopia is also a State Party to key UNESCO cultural conventions, including the 1972, 2003, and 2005 Conventions. However, these frameworks do not establish binding expenditure targets, leaving cultural financing subject to broader national planning and budgeting processes.

The sector operates within a complex institutional environment involving federal and regional institutions, city administrations, universities, cultural associations, civil society organizations (CSOs), professional bodies, and creative practitioners. The Ministry of Culture and Sport (MoCS) provides overall policy leadership and coordination, institutions such as the Ethiopian Heritage Authority, National Archives and Library Agency (NALA), Ethiopian National Theatre, and Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority oversee heritage, documentary heritage, performing arts, and natural heritage management. The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA) supports the sector through administration of copyright and other intellectual property rights. Regional culture bureaus and city administrations implement cultural policies within their jurisdictions, while universities, CSOs, professional associations, and practitioners contribute to research, advocacy, capacity development, and creative production. This diversity provides substantial expertise and capacity but also distributes responsibilities across multiple institutional pathways, creating challenges in coordination, policy coherence, information sharing, and financing.

Cultural financing is determined within the broader PFM environment, where allocations reflect national development priorities, fiscal conditions, and competing demands. Public expenditure has traditionally prioritized areas such as infrastructure, education, agriculture, health, security, and economic and humanitarian responses. Within this context, culture has faced challenges in demonstrating its contribution to broader development objectives and securing a stronger position in national financing priorities. CfCA-supported budget





tracking showed that federal cultural expenditure remained significantly below the AU one percent aspiration, although utilization performance was relatively strong. Between 2020/2021 and 2024/2025, the culture sector received an average of 0.11% of the federal budget (Yeshanew et al., 2024; Yeshanew, 2025).

Before CfCA implementation, financing discussions were constrained by fragmented information and limited consolidated analysis of financing trends, stakeholder relationships, and the sector's economic contribution. CfCA addressed these gaps through budget tracking, stakeholder mapping, and assessment of the socio-economic contribution of CCIs. The latter estimated that CCIs may contribute more than 4.73% of Ethiopia's GDP, while documenting 9,702 enterprises and 70,792 workers across six regions: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Sidama, Southwest, Gambela, and Oromia (Moges et al., 2026). Together, these studies consolidated evidence on the sector's scale, economic significance, financing patterns, and structural constraints, providing a stronger basis for cultural financing advocacy.

Stakeholder engagement was similarly fragmented. Government institutions, cultural associations, researchers, and practitioners were active in their respective areas, but interaction was often concentrated around specific initiatives, events, or institutional relationships rather than sustained mechanisms for collective engagement on financing and policy issues. Academic institutions had significant potential to contribute research and knowledge, but their links with financing discussions and policy processes remained limited. At the same time, Ethiopia possessed important foundations for cultural financing reform, including extensive cultural resources, established institutions, experienced practitioners, growing creative communities, and increasing recognition of culture's contribution to tourism, employment, social cohesion, identity, and economic development. The central challenge was therefore not simply the absence of actors or capacity, but the limited connection between existing resources, evidence, relationships, and policy processes.

CfCA entered this context with an emphasis on strengthening these connections through evidence generation, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, advocacy, and capacity development. Key mechanisms included the NWG, professional residency programmes, institutional partnerships, and strategic communication initiatives. The programme therefore focused on strengthening the enabling environment for reform by improving evidence generation, facilitating coordination, strengthening professional networks, and enhancing policy dialogue and advocacy capacity.

Overall, the pre-CfCA context combined substantial cultural sector assets with persistent systemic constraints. Ethiopia had active institutions, practitioners, and cultural networks, but lacked sufficiently connected mechanisms for evidence-based financing dialogue, coordinated advocacy, and sustained engagement across institutional boundaries. This provided the rationale for a systems-oriented intervention focused on strengthening the foundations for longer term cultural financing reform.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Design

This National Impact Story employed Contribution Analysis (CA) to examine changes associated with the implementation of the CfCA initiative in Ethiopia between 2023 and 2026.

The study focused on institutional and systems-level change rather than programme outputs alone. Given the multiple actors, evolving context, and longer-term nature of cultural financing reform, CA was used to assess how CfCA plausibly contributed to observed changes within the broader cultural financing ecosystem rather than attributing outcomes solely to the programme.

Guided by the CfCA Theory of Change (ToC), the analysis examined how evidence generation, stakeholder coordination, policy dialogue, advocacy, institutional partnerships, and network strengthening contributed to observed changes. It also assessed the strength of supporting evidence and considered alternative explanations and contextual factors.

3.2. Data Sources

The assessment drew on multiple sources of evidence to support triangulation and strengthen the credibility of the findings, including documentary review, key informant interviews, programme records, policy documents, budget analyses, and stakeholder consultations. This was particularly important because institutional and systems-level changes are complex and cannot be adequately assessed through a single source of evidence.

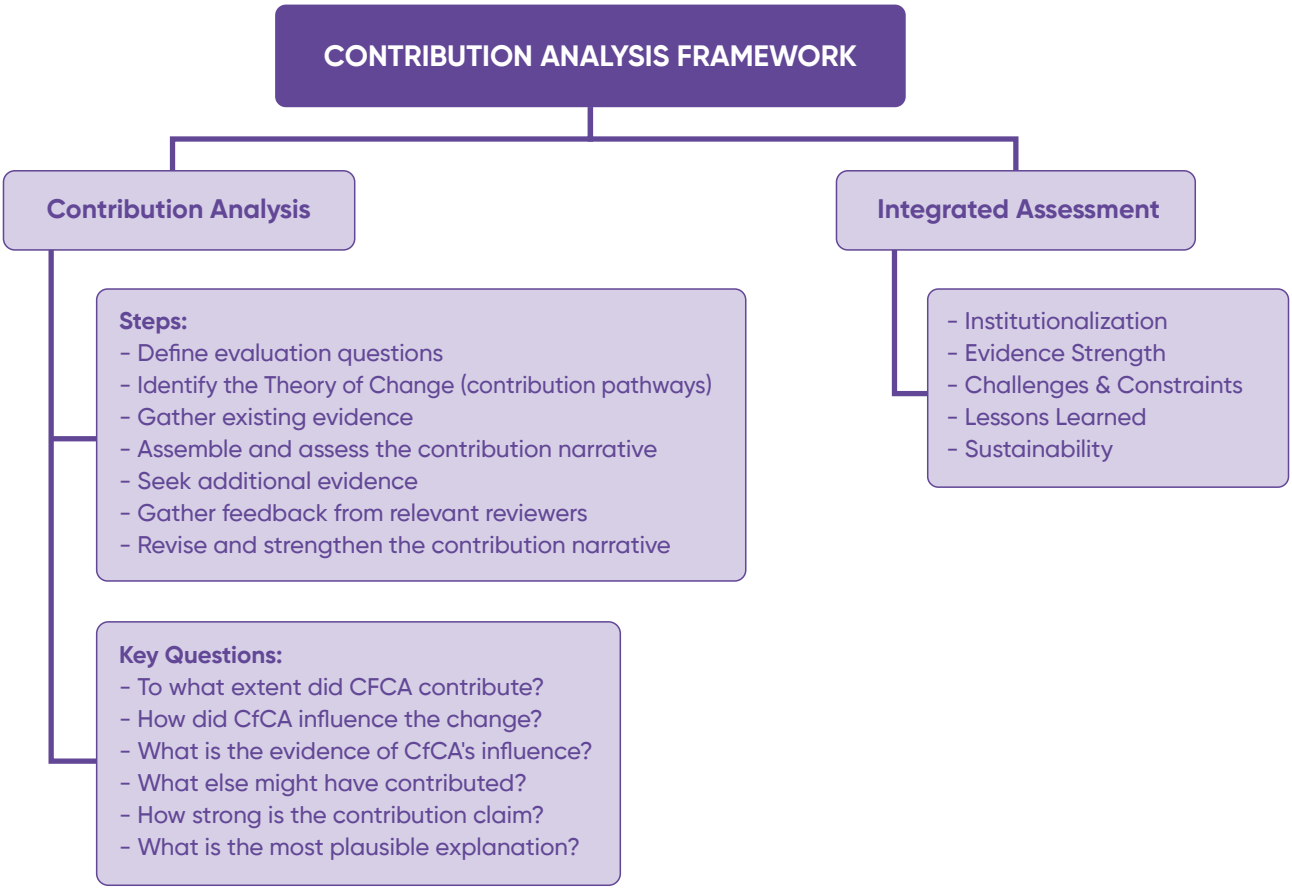


Figure 1. Contribution Analysis Framework Applied in the Study.



Table 1. Evidence Sources and Validation Approach

Source	Description
Documentary review	Reviewed CfCA studies, programme documentation, policy documents, and budget analyses. Particular emphasis was placed on the annual cultural financing studies, which provided longitudinal evidence on budget allocation, expenditure, stakeholder dynamics, and financing challenges.
Key informant interviews	Conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with representatives of culture and finance institutions, national cultural organisations, and other stakeholders. Interviews explored observed changes, their significance, CfCA's contribution, other influencing factors, and supporting evidence.
Stakeholder consultations	Validation meetings and dialogue sessions were used to verify findings, explore alternative interpretations, and identify lessons and future priorities. Insights from the final validation workshop were incorporated into the study where relevant.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework was derived from the CfCA Impact Story Framework and ToC and guided data collection and analysis. It examined change across policies, institutions, governance arrangements, financing systems, evidence generation, and stakeholder relationships.

The assessment considered the significance and strength of observed changes, supporting evidence, degree of institutionalization, sustainability, and plausibility of CfCA's contribution. It also examined the pathways through which CfCA was expected to influence change, as well as contextual factors and alternative explanations. This enabled a distinction between programme-supported enabling conditions and broader institutional changes beyond CfCA's direct influence.

3.4. Limitations

Many of the policy and institutional changes examined remain ongoing and extend beyond the assessment period. Cultural financing reform is also shaped by broader political, economic, institutional, and PFM contexts, making exclusive attribution to a single intervention neither feasible nor appropriate.

The assessment therefore focused on the plausibility and strength of CfCA's contribution based on available evidence. Triangulation of documentary evidence, stakeholder interviews, programme records, and validation consultations helped assess this contribution while recognizing the role of other actors, contextual factors, and ongoing processes in shaping observed results.

4. CFCA IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW



The CfCA programme in Ethiopia used a systems-oriented approach to strengthen the enabling environment for cultural financing reform. Rather than focusing on a single policy intervention or financing mechanism, it worked through interconnected functions of evidence generation, stakeholder coordination, policy dialogue, advocacy, institutional partnership, and capacity strengthening.

The programme's implementation logic recognized that increased public investment in culture requires credible evidence on financing patterns, stronger relationships among sector actors, engagement with decision-makers, and greater recognition of culture's contribution to national development priorities. Accordingly, CfCA supported evidence generation on cultural financing, stakeholder mapping, and the economic contribution of the cultural sector; facilitated dialogue among government and non-government stakeholders; promoted collective advocacy; strengthened research-policy linkages; and supported professional development and networking among cultural actors.

This implementation approach was broadly consistent with CfCA's ToC, which envisaged change through three interconnected pathways, networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; dialogue and coordination with AU and national governments; and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases. These were supported by strategies including collective action, capacity development, evidence generation, engagement with key actors, advocacy targeting decision-makers, public awareness raising, culture production, and learning and experience sharing. Evidence from Ethiopia indicates that several intended pathways were activated, particularly through linkages among evidence generation, stakeholder coordination, policy dialogue, and advocacy, while downstream changes in PFM and public financing remained limited.

4.1. Evolution of CfCA Engagement in Ethiopia

CfCA engagement in Ethiopia developed progressively from understanding the cultural financing environment and mapping stakeholders to evidence generation, stakeholder coordination, structured dialogue, advocacy, professional development and networking, and institutional collaboration.

An important early step was the establishment of the NWG, which provided a platform for continued stakeholder engagement. This was complemented by the baseline study, stakeholder mapping, and subsequent budget tracking and economic contribution studies, which strengthened the evidence base on cultural financing, sector relationships, and the economic significance of culture. This evidence provided a shared basis for subsequent dialogue and advocacy.

Building on these foundations, CfCA facilitated more structured interaction among government institutions, cultural organizations, academic institutions, CSOs, and practitioners through policy dialogues, NWG consultations, sector forums, and other engagement platforms. Engagement subsequently expanded through institutional partnerships, communication initiatives, and professional development activities. The partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies strengthened research-policy linkages, while creative residency initiatives supported professional development, networking, and cross-border collaboration among cultural actors.

Overall, the implementation trajectory reflects a mutually reinforcing process in which evidence generation created a basis for dialogue and advocacy, while coordination, institutional partnerships, and capacity strengthening expanded the relationships and capacities needed to sustain engagement. This contributed to a more connected ecosystem for cultural financing reform, although downstream changes in financing and institutional systems remained limited.

Table 2. Chronological Synthesis of Principal CfCA Ethiopia Milestones and Their Contribution to Emerging Institutional Developments (2023-2026)

Date	Milestone	Contribution Pathway(s)
May 2023	CfCA regional launch and stakeholder dialogue.	Advocacy and Public Communication; Stakeholder Coordination
Since May 2023	Ongoing stakeholder coordination around programme priorities	Stakeholder Coordination
May 2024	Public campaign launch and cultural concert.	Advocacy and Public Communication
May 2024	NWG officially established.	Stakeholder Coordination
November 2024	Baseline Study and Actor Mapping launched.	Evidence Generation
December 2024	Music Record Archiving and Heritage Residency.	Professional and Cultural Actor Networks
December 2024	Cartoonist Residency Programme.	Professional and Cultural Actor Networks
December 2024	'Visual Activism' public art exhibition.	Advocacy and Public Communication
November 2025	Follow-up survey on public funding in Ethiopia's culture sector.	Evidence Generation
Apr 2025 - Jan 2026	Fourteen CfCA Ethiopia podcast episodes.	Advocacy and Public Communication
May 2025	Africa Day high level policy dialogue.	Advocacy and Policy Dialogue
June 2025	Partnership agreement between Selam Ethiopia and the Addis Ababa University Institute of Ethiopian Studies.	Research-Policy Links
April - May 2026	High level closed door ministerial session.	Policy Dialogue
May 2026	Study on the economic contribution of CCIs	Evidence Generation
June 2026	National policy dialogue on strengthening CCIs as a strategic investment in Ethiopia.	Policy Dialogue
July 2026	Documentary film screening and multi stakeholder dialogue on arts, culture, democracy, and cultural financing.	Advocacy and Policy Dialogue
Cumulative Institutional Developments		
2025/2026 onward	Integration of cultural financing into PFM processes.	Emerging from the cumulative contribution of the six pathways
Beyond the CfCA timeframe	Progress toward institutionalized cultural financing reform.	Emerging from the cumulative contribution of the six pathways

4.2. Institutional Entry Points and Engagement Architecture

CfCA's engagement reflected the multi-institutional nature of cultural governance in Ethiopia. Cultural financing decisions involve not only cultural institutions but also actors responsible for budgeting and planning, within a broader context shaped by fiscal pressures and national priorities.

The MoCS served as the primary government counterpart for cultural policy and financing discussions, providing an institutional pathway for connecting evidence, stakeholder perspectives, and advocacy priorities with government processes. CfCA also engaged relevant ministries, EIPA, regional and municipal cultural bodies, academic institutions, cultural associations, CSOs, and creative sector stakeholders based on their mandates and relevance to cultural development.

This engagement architecture recognized that cultural financing reform requires coordination across institutional boundaries. Although no comprehensive financing reform mechanism was established during the programme period, CfCA strengthened relationships among actors whose collective engagement is important for future reform.

4.3. National Working Group Development and Role

The NWG was a key mechanism through which CfCA supported stakeholder coordination and collective engagement. It brought together representatives from government institutions, cultural organizations, CSOs, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to exchange information, discuss sector challenges, review evidence, and identify shared advocacy priorities.



Its significance extended beyond individual meetings to strengthening interaction among actors who had previously engaged through more fragmented channels. Repeated engagement increased familiarity with each other's roles and helped build shared understanding of sector-wide challenges, financing issues, and potential reform pathways.

The NWG was a programme-supported coordination platform rather than a formally government-established mechanism. Its contribution therefore lies primarily in strengthening collaborative practice, communication channels, and collective understanding within the cultural financing ecosystem. Sustaining this function beyond programme support would require appropriate institutionalization, such as formal recognition by MoCS or integration into an appropriate multistakeholder coordination mechanism, with clear ownership, roles, and accountability.



4.4. Key Interventions Implemented Through CfCA

CfCA implementation in Ethiopia reflected the original programme ToC through three interconnected pathways, namely networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; dialogue and coordination; and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases. Across these pathways, implementation in Ethiopia involved evidence generation, capacity development, stakeholder engagement, advocacy and public communication, institutional partnerships, and learning and knowledge exchange.

4.4.1. Networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates

CfCA strengthened networks, capacities, and connections among culture actors to support collective advocacy and engagement. Creative residency initiatives, including the Music Record Archiving and Heritage Residency and Cartoonist Residency Programme, provided spaces for young cultural actors to develop skills, exchange knowledge, build professional relationships, and connect across sub-sectors. Communication among participants continued beyond the residencies, with participants remaining engaged and advocating within their respective sub-sectors. These activities contributed to a broader and more connected constituency of culture advocates with greater capacity for collective engagement.

4.4.2. Dialogue and coordination

CfCA strengthened stakeholder coordination through the NWG, sector meetings, institutional partnerships, and other engagement platforms. Stakeholder mapping helped identify relevant actors and relationships and informed these coordination efforts. The platforms created more regular opportunities for interaction, information exchange, and discussion of sector priorities. The partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies also strengthened research-policy linkages, including through dialogue on public funding for cultural and creative industries. Evidence generated through CfCA provided a structured basis for these discussions, including findings that culture received an average of 0.11% of the federal budget during 2020/21–2024/25 (EFY 2013–2017) (Yeshanew et al., 2024; Yeshanew, 2025). These mechanisms contributed to more regular and evidence-informed dialogue among sector stakeholders and policy actors.

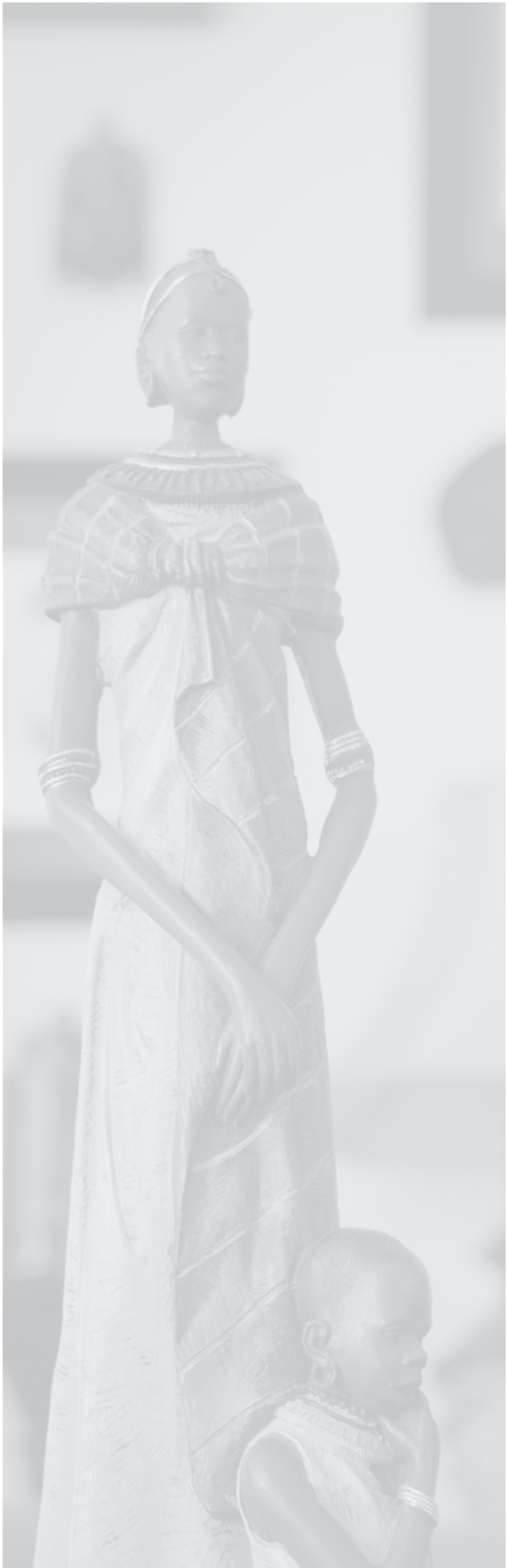
4.4.3. Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases

CfCA supported advocacy campaigns and public communication to increase recognition of culture as a development issue and promote discussion of increased public investment. Advocacy was supported by evidence on cultural financing and the economic contribution of the CCIs, including the indication that CCIs may contribute more than 4.73% of GDP (Moges et al., 2026). These findings provided concrete messages for articulating sector concerns and communicating the wider development significance of culture. Public communication and digital outreach further expanded these efforts. The CfCA Ethiopia Podcast produced 14 episodes and reached more than 1.5 million views by the time of this assessment, providing a platform for cultural leaders and institutional representatives to discuss cultural financing and sector development. Together, these activities strengthened advocacy messages and extended engagement with wider audiences and decision-makers.

4.5. Stakeholder Engagement Architecture

CfCA's stakeholder engagement approach brought together actors with complementary roles. Government institutions provided policy entry points and institutional authority; cultural associations and practitioners contributed sector knowledge and advocacy perspectives; academic institutions supported research and knowledge generation; and CSOs contributed to mobilization, communication, and collective action.

Through these relationships, CfCA helped move cultural financing discussions from relatively isolated sector concerns toward a more connected ecosystem, providing a stronger basis for evidence-informed dialogue and collective advocacy. The sustainability of this engagement architecture, however, depends on continued institutional ownership and the extent to which relationships and coordination practices are maintained through national mechanisms beyond programme-supported facilitation.



5. KEY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OBSERVED

CfCA contributed to several institutional and ecosystem-level changes in Ethiopia's cultural financing environment, particularly in evidence generation and use, stakeholder coordination, policy dialogue, research-policy interaction, and professional networks.

The depth of change varied. Evidence generation, stakeholder engagement, and research-policy interaction show clearer changes in practice, while formal financing mechanisms, integration into public financial management (PFM) systems, and permanent governance arrangements remain limited. These differences reflect the influence of broader institutional, fiscal, and political processes beyond CfCA's direct control.

The changes are therefore best understood as differentiated forms of institutional strengthening rather than a uniform reform process. The assessment below examines their extent, institutionalization, and sustainability, and considers how they relate to the pathways envisaged in the CfCA ToC.

5.1. Increased Recognition of Cultural Financing as a Policy Issue

One important institutional change associated with CfCA implementation is the increased recognition of cultural financing as an issue requiring evidence, dialogue, and coordinated action.

Before CfCA engagement, advocacy for cultural investment relied largely on broad arguments about the importance of culture, with limited consolidated financing evidence. Budget tracking introduced systematic information on allocation trends, expenditure patterns, and utilization performance, enabling stakeholders to engage more specifically with financing realities, including the low share of public expenditure allocated to culture and the capacity of cultural institutions to utilize available resources.

The AU aspiration for member states to allocate at least one percent of national budgets to arts, culture, and heritage also became more visible in national advocacy and policy discussions. This should not be interpreted as a national financing

Table 3. Summary of Key Institutional Changes Observed Through CfCA Implementation

Area of change	Institutional change observed	Assessment
Cultural financing policy discourse	Cultural financing became more visible as a policy and development issue, supported by evidence and advocacy around increased public investment in culture	Strengthened
Evidence generation and use	Cultural financing discussions increasingly relied on systematic evidence on budget allocations, expenditure, utilization, and the economic contribution of the cultural and creative sectors.	Strengthened
Stakeholder coordination	Interaction among government institutions, cultural organizations, academia, and civil society became more structured through recurring engagement platforms	Partially consolidated
Research-policy linkage	Connections between academic knowledge, cultural research, and policy dialogue were strengthened through institutional partnerships	Strengthened but developing
Professional and sector networks	Young cultural actors and practitioners gained opportunities for skills development, networking, and participation in advocacy-related platforms	Strengthened
Advocacy and public communication	Public, policy, and digital communication expanded the visibility of culture as a development issue and strengthened advocacy for increased public investment in culture.	Strengthened
Public financial management integration	Cultural financing analysis has not yet been integrated into routine PFM systems or sector-wide financing mechanisms	Limited
Increased public financing for culture	Public financing for culture has not yet demonstrated a substantial shift toward the intended increase in allocation	Limited

commitment or policy obligation. The institutional change lies primarily in the increased recognition, framing, and discussion of cultural financing as a development issue.

This represents progress along the CfCA ToC from evidence generation and stakeholder engagement toward greater policy recognition and political awareness.

Assessment: Strengthened policy discourse.
Cultural financing has gained greater visibility and legitimacy within sector discussions, although formal policy reform remains limited.

5.2. Evidence Generation and Use in Cultural Financing Dialogue

A significant institutional contribution of CfCA has been strengthening the evidence base for discussions on cultural financing and the economic contribution of the cultural sector.

Before the programme-supported studies, cultural financing information was fragmented across institutions and lacked a consistent analytical basis. The baseline study, subsequent budget tracking, and the study on the economic contribution of the CCIs generated a comprehensive evidence base, combining longitudinal analysis of public financing with estimates of the sector's economic contribution, employment, enterprise distribution, and structural characteristics. Together, these studies strengthened the empirical foundation for policy dialogue and advocacy (Moges et al., 2026; Yeshanew, 2025; Yeshanew et al., 2024).

The contribution extends beyond report production. The evidence became a reference point for policy dialogue, stakeholder discussions, and advocacy, helping shift financing conversations toward empirical analysis rather than general sector arguments.

However, evidence generation has not yet developed into a permanent national cultural financing information system. Comprehensive analysis remains dependent on periodic studies and institutional initiatives rather than an established government mechanism. This corresponds to the CfCA ToC strategy of collecting evidence as a basis for dialogue with key actors and advocacy targeting decision-makers. The evidence therefore indicates progress along the intended upstream pathway, while permanent institutionalization of the evidence function remains limited.

Assessment: Strengthened institutional practice, with incomplete system integration.
Evidence generation and evidence-informed dialogue represent one of CfCA's strongest areas of institutional change, although permanent data systems remain underdeveloped.





5.3. Strengthened Stakeholder Coordination and Collaborative Practices

CfCA contributed to strengthening coordination among actors involved in cultural financing and governance. Prior to implementation, stakeholders often operated through separate institutional channels, with limited mechanisms for sustained collective discussion. Through the NWG, policy dialogues, consultations, and institutional engagements, CfCA created more regular interaction among government institutions, cultural associations, CSOs, academic institutions, and creative practitioners.

This contributed to stronger relationships, shared understanding, and greater alignment around advocacy messages and cultural financing priorities. However, coordination remains primarily a collaborative practice rather than a permanent institutional arrangement. The NWG and related platforms do not yet constitute formal government-led mechanisms with established mandates and resources.

This reflects the networking and dialogue and coordination pathways in the CfCA ToC, which were activated through repeated convening and relationship-building but remain only partially institutionalized.

Assessment: Partially consolidated collaborative practice.

Coordination has moved beyond isolated engagement, but further institutionalization is required for long-term sustainability.

5.4. Strengthened Research-Policy Linkages and Knowledge Exchange

CfCA contributed to strengthening connections between research institutions and cultural policy processes. The partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies created a platform linking academic knowledge, cultural research, and policy dialogue, bringing research-based perspectives more directly into discussions involving government and sector stakeholders.

However, this linkage remains at an early stage. No permanent mechanism has yet been established to systematically integrate academic research into cultural financing policy processes, leaving collaboration dependent on individual partnerships and programme-supported engagement.

This reflects the CfCA ToC, which links evidence generation and learning with stakeholder engagement and policy dialogue. The Ethiopia experience therefore indicates progress in this pathway, but limited institutionalization.

Assessment: Strengthened linkage with developing institutionalization.

Long-term sustainability depends on continued institutional commitment.

5.5. Strengthened Professional and Regional Networks Among Cultural Actors

Beyond financing dialogue, CfCA strengthened professional networks among cultural practitioners through creative residencies and capacity development initiatives. Participants in national and regional residencies gained opportunities for skills development, professional networking, cultural showcases, and sector engagement. Relationships established through these activities continued beyond the residencies, with participants networking when opportunities arose, sharing information, and continuing to advocate within their respective sub-sectors.

This contribution strengthened the human and relational foundations of the cultural ecosystem and actors' capacity for policy dialogue, advocacy, and sector development. However, the continued networks remain largely relationship-based rather than formally institutionalized.

This reflects the networking pathway of the CfCA ToC, particularly its emphasis on collective action and capacity development. The observed change is primarily at the level of actor capacity, professional relationships, and continued participation rather than institutionalized networks.

Assessment: Strengthened sector capacity and networks.

The contribution is evident in professional development, sustained relationships, and continued sub-sector engagement, while long-term sustainability depends on continued opportunities for networking.

5.6. Advocacy and Public Communication

CfCA complemented evidence generation and policy dialogue with advocacy and public communication that increased the visibility of cultural

financing within public and professional discourse. Strategic communication, public events, media engagement, podcasts, and awareness-raising activities helped translate technical evidence into accessible messages and broaden engagement with the economic and developmental significance of the CCIs.

Public events, including the Africa Day Celebration, provided platforms for disseminating programme-supported evidence and engaging stakeholders around financing priorities and culture's role in national development. The CfCA Ethiopia podcast further extended public outreach, with 14 episodes receiving 1,524,377 views as of 1 August 2026.

However, these efforts primarily strengthened awareness and agenda setting rather than producing direct policy or budgetary change. Their principal contribution was to broaden the constituency engaged in cultural financing discussions and sustain attention through continued evidence dissemination and dialogue.

This corresponds to the advocacy campaigns and pilot cases pathway of the CfCA ToC, particularly advocacy targeting decision-makers and public awareness raising. Progress is therefore strongest in communication and agenda setting, while downstream policy and financing effects remain limited.

Assessment: Strengthened advocacy and public engagement.

Cultural financing has gained visibility and evidence-informed advocacy has expanded, but sustained institutional commitments and significant policy reform remain limited.

5.7. Limited Change in Formal Financing and Public Financial Management Systems

Despite improved evidence and dialogue, CfCA has not yet produced major structural changes in cultural financing systems. Cultural expenditure remains embedded within existing institutional budgets, with no dedicated sector-wide financing framework or routine mechanism for aggregating cultural investment across institutions. Although financing analysis has improved, it is not yet integrated into standard PFM processes.

The persistence of low cultural budget shares also indicates that improved evidence and advocacy have not translated into significant fiscal reprioritization. Such changes depend on broader government decisions, fiscal conditions, competing priorities, and institutional commitment.

This represents the downstream end of the CfCA ToC, where evidence, networking, dialogue, and advocacy are expected to contribute to changes in budget processes and increased public investment. The Ethiopia evidence does not yet demonstrate substantial progress at this level.

Assessment: Limited structural change.

The main contribution of CfCA in this area has been strengthening the evidence and advocacy environment rather than directly changing financing systems.

5.8. Overall Assessment of Institutional Change

The institutional changes associated with CfCA demonstrate an uneven but meaningful pattern of system strengthening. Strongest progress is evident in areas dependent on knowledge, relationships, and collective practice, including evidence generation and use, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, research-policy linkages, advocacy, public communication, and professional networks. These changes have influenced how stakeholders understand, discuss, and engage with cultural financing.

Progress is weaker where change requires formal authority, fiscal decisions, or administrative restructuring. Cultural financing is not yet embedded in routine PFM systems, and permanent mechanisms for financing analysis and coordination remain limited.

Viewed against the CfCA ToC, the evidence therefore indicates stronger progress along upstream and intermediate pathways than toward longer-term institutional and financing outcomes. The Ethiopia experience demonstrates progress in networking, evidence generation, dialogue and coordination, and advocacy, but limited translation into formal PFM integration and increased public financing.

Table 4 maps the observed Ethiopia changes against the relevant CfCA pathways and

Table 4. Overall Assessment of Institutional Change Dimensions

Ethiopia CA change area	Relevant CfCA original pathway	Relevant CfCA original strategy	Evidence of progress
Cultural financing policy discourse	Dialogue and coordination; Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases	Engagement with key actors; Advocacy targeting decision-makers; Awareness raising targeting the general public	Cultural financing gained visibility in policy and advocacy discussions, with the AU 1% aspiration becoming a more visible reference point.
Evidence generation and use in financing dialogue	Networking and building a critical mass; Dialogue and coordination; Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases	Collecting evidence; Engagement with key actors; Advocacy targeting decision-makers	Budget tracking and CCIs evidence increasingly informed dialogue, advocacy, and discussion of financing priorities.
Stakeholder coordination and collaboration	Networking and building a critical mass; Dialogue and coordination	Collective action; Engagement with key actors	NWG, sector meetings, policy dialogues, and institutional engagements created more regular interaction among stakeholders.
Research-policy interaction	Networking and building a critical mass; Dialogue and coordination	Collecting evidence; Engagement with key actors; Learning and sharing experiences	Partnerships with knowledge institutions created stronger links between research, evidence, and policy discussion.
Professional and cultural actor networks	Networking and building a critical mass	Collective action; Capacity development of culture actors; Learning and sharing experiences	Residencies and related activities strengthened skills, professional connections, participation, and networking among cultural actors.
Advocacy and public communication	Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases	Advocacy targeting decision-makers; Awareness raising targeting the general public; Development of key messages through culture production; Learning and sharing experiences	Advocacy activities, public events, digital communication, and the CfCA Ethiopia podcast broadened awareness and engagement around cultural financing.
Public financial management integration	Dialogue and coordination; Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases	Engagement with key actors; Advocacy targeting decision-makers	Evidence and advocacy have strengthened the enabling environment, but cultural financing has not yet become integrated into routine PFM systems.
Increased public financing for culture	Long-term change across the three pathways	Collective action; Engagement with key actors; Advocacy targeting decision-makers	The intended downstream change has not yet been substantially realized; cultural financing remains below the programme's longer-term ambition.

strategies and summarizes the evidence of progress along each pathway.

Overall, CfCA's contribution is most evident in strengthening the institutional foundations required for longer-term cultural financing reform. The programme has helped build a stronger evidence base, more connected stakeholder relationships, and improved dialogue mechanisms. However, converting these foundations into formal financing reforms and permanent institutional arrangements remains dependent on broader government processes and sustained national ownership.

6. CFCA CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

CfCA's contribution to cultural financing reform in Ethiopia is best understood as catalytic, facilitative, and system-oriented. Rather than directly determining budget allocations, establishing financing mechanisms, or introducing formal government reforms, the programme strengthened the evidence, relationships, professional networks, and communication and advocacy capacities through which reform could advance.

CfCA influenced change by addressing interconnected constraints in the cultural financing ecosystem. Through financing evidence, stakeholder platforms, research-policy linkages, public communication and advocacy, and capacity and network development, it contributed to a more informed, connected, and coordinated environment for cultural financing dialogue.

The evidence does not support attributing changes in cultural financing policy or institutional arrangements to CfCA alone. These were also shaped by government priorities, fiscal conditions, institutional mandates, continental commitments, and other sector actors. CfCA's contribution therefore lies primarily in strengthening enabling conditions and influencing processes through which longer-term reform may emerge.

6.1. CfCA's Main Contribution Roles

Throughout implementation, CfCA played several complementary roles that together shaped its contribution to cultural financing reform. These roles operated across the three pathways of CfCA's original ToC, namely networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; dialogue and coordination with AU and national governments; and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases. The roles played by CfCA, together with the relevant pathways and strategies from the original ToC, are presented below to show how the programme's original design informed its observed contribution.

Table 5. CfCA Contribution Roles and Pathways of Influence

CfCA contribution role	Relevant CfCA original pathway and strategy	Contribution mechanism	Illustrative examples
Evidence generator and knowledge facilitator	Networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; Collecting evidence	Produced credible evidence that strengthened the basis for financing discussions and advocacy.	Baseline study, stakeholder mapping, federal budget tracking analyses, and study on the economic contribution of CCIs
Convenor and relationship builder	Networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; Collective action; Dialogue and coordination; Engagement with key actors	Created opportunities for repeated interaction among stakeholders who previously engaged through fragmented channels.	NWG, policy dialogues, sector consultations, and institutional engagements
Policy dialogue facilitator	Dialogue and coordination; Engagement with key actors	Connected evidence, stakeholders, and duty bearers around cultural financing issues.	Engagement with government institutions and sector stakeholders
Advocacy enabler	Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases; Advocacy targeting decision-makers; Awareness raising targeting the general public	Strengthened collective messaging and visibility around cultural investment priorities.	Advocacy around the AU 1% commitment, communication initiatives, public events, and digital platforms, including the CfCA Ethiopia Podcast
Research-policy linkage facilitator	Dialogue and coordination; Engagement with key actors; Learning and sharing experiences	Connected knowledge institutions with cultural governance discussions.	Partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies
Capacity and network strengthening partner	Networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; Capacity development of culture actors; Learning and sharing experiences	Strengthened professional capabilities, participation, and networks among cultural actors.	Creative residency programmes and cultural actor engagement platforms

The roles were mutually reinforcing rather than independent. Evidence generation strengthened the content of dialogue and advocacy; convening and relationship-building created channels through which evidence could circulate; advocacy and public communication broadened the visibility of cultural financing issues; and capacity and network strengthening expanded the pool of actors able to participate in these processes.

6.1.1. Evidence generator and knowledge facilitator

One of CfCA's strongest contributions was strengthening the evidence base for cultural financing discussions. The baseline, stakeholder mapping, budget tracking, and CCIs economic contribution studies brought together previously fragmented evidence on financing patterns, institutional relationships, utilization, and the sector's economic significance.

The contribution extended beyond producing research outputs. Evidence became a shared reference point in policy dialogue, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement, enabling discussion based more on empirical information than general arguments. However, evidence did not directly produce financing decisions; its influence was mediated through dialogue, relationships, and advocacy.

This role aligns with the evidence generation pathway and the strategy of collecting evidence in the original CfCA ToC, providing an important input to the dialogue and coordination and advocacy pathways.

6.1.2. Convenor and relationship builder

CfCA strengthened connections among actors within a fragmented cultural governance environment. Through the NWG, policy dialogues, workshops, and institutional engagements, it created recurring spaces for government institutions, cultural organizations, CSOs, academic institutions, and practitioners to exchange perspectives and discuss shared priorities.

Repeated interaction helped build familiarity, trust, and greater alignment, reducing some of the fragmentation that constrained collective engagement around cultural financing. Although these mechanisms have not become permanent institutional structures, they represent a meaningful change in stakeholder interaction.



This role is linked to the networking and dialogue and coordination pathways, particularly the strategies of collective action and engagement with key actors in the original CfCA ToC.

6.1.3. Policy dialogue facilitator

CfCA contributed by creating pathways through which evidence and stakeholder perspectives could enter policy discussions.

Rather than operating as an external advocacy actor seeking to influence government processes independently, CfCA facilitated engagement between cultural stakeholders and relevant institutions. These engagements allowed financing evidence, sector concerns, and reform ideas to be discussed within broader cultural governance conversations.

The contribution was therefore not direct policy influence but improved connectivity between researchers and other evidence-generating institutions, sector actors, and decision-making spaces. This role is associated with the dialogue and coordination pathway, particularly the strategy of engagement with key actors in the original CfCA ToC.

6.1.4. Advocacy enabler

CfCA strengthened advocacy around cultural financing by supporting more coordinated messages and broader awareness of the importance of investment in culture.

The programme contributed to positioning cultural financing not only as a sectoral concern but also as an issue connected to economic opportunity, creative industries, employment, social cohesion, and national development. The AU aspiration on increasing public investment in culture provided an important reference point for advocacy processes.

Public communication initiatives, Africa Day activities, and digital engagement expanded visibility beyond technical discussions. They also contributed to broader recognition of both cultural financing challenges and the sector's socio-economic potential, strengthening the case for increased public attention and investment. This role relates to the advocacy campaigns and pilot cases pathway, particularly advocacy targeting decision-makers and awareness raising targeting the general public.



6.1.5. Research-policy linkage facilitator

CfCA contributed to strengthening connections between knowledge institutions and cultural policy processes.

The partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies created a platform for knowledge exchange and strengthened the relationship between cultural research and policy dialogue. This contribution is important because sustainable reform requires not only advocacy but also continuous production and use of knowledge.

Although the partnership represents progress, longer-term impact depends on whether such research-policy relationships become sustained institutional practices. Within the CfCA ToC, this role reinforces the links between collecting evidence, engagement with key actors, and learning and sharing experiences.

6.1.6. Capacity and network strengthening partner

CfCA also contributed to strengthening the broader cultural ecosystem through professional development and networking opportunities.

Creative residency programmes supported young women and men cultural actors through skills development, professional exchange, and participation in national and regional creative platforms. These initiatives contributed to stronger professional networks and increased participation of cultural actors in broader cultural development and advocacy processes.

These contributions were not direct drivers of financing reform, but they strengthened the human and relational capacity of the sector, which is an important foundation for sustained collective action. This role corresponds to the networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates pathway in the original CfCA ToC, particularly its strategies of capacity development for culture actors and learning and sharing experiences.

6.2. Mechanisms Through Which CfCA Influenced Change

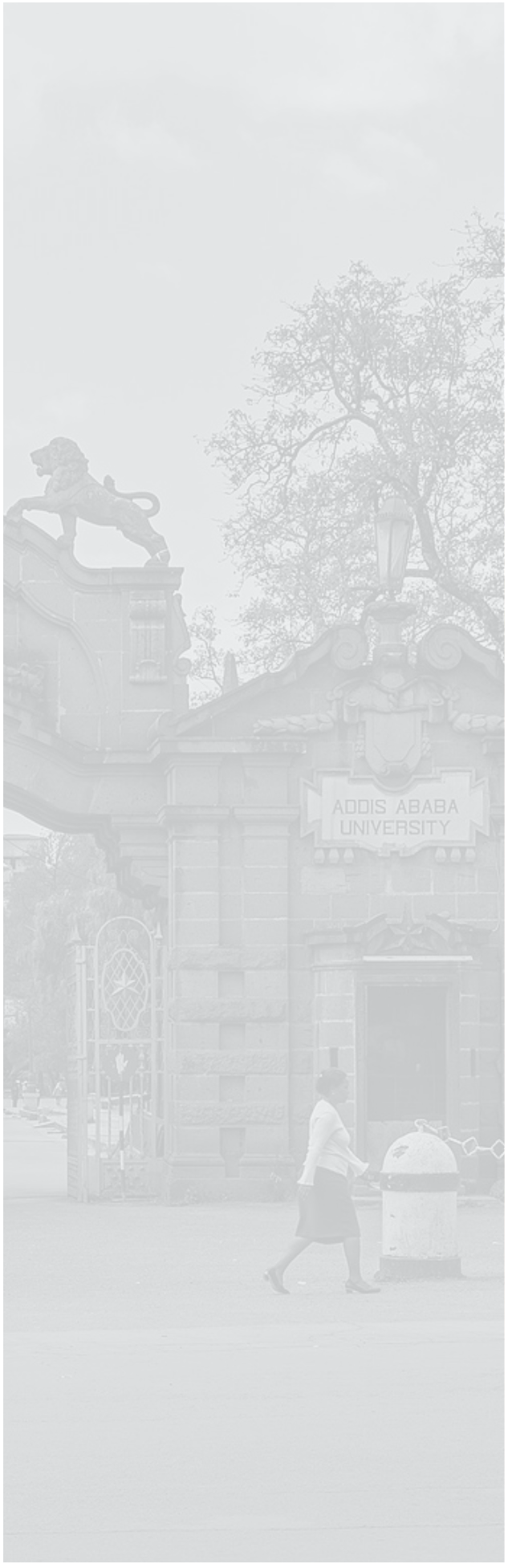
The programme deliberately combined multiple intervention streams that reinforced one another rather than implementing isolated activities. The contribution of CfCA was shaped not only by the individual interventions it supported, but also by the way these interventions interacted to create reinforcing pathways for change. Several mechanisms explain how CfCA influenced observed outcomes.

6.2.1. Evidence-to-dialogue mechanism

The strongest contribution pathway involved translating evidence on cultural financing, stakeholder relationships, and the sector's socio-economic potential into meaningful dialogue and advocacy processes.

Together, the baseline survey, budget tracking study, stakeholder mapping exercise, and cultural sector's economic contribution study helped establish a shared analytical foundation.





This enabled stakeholders to better understand financing trends, institutional relationships, and the broader development relevance of the cultural sector. However, the contribution of these evidence products depended not simply on their availability, but on how findings were interpreted, discussed, and connected to dialogue platforms. Through these processes, stakeholders could examine financing challenges, identify opportunities, and formulate advocacy messages around the role of culture in development.

Through this mechanism, CfCA strengthened the credibility, coherence, and evidence base of financing discussions. While the evidence did not directly determine policy decisions or budget outcomes, it helped create the analytical conditions necessary for more informed engagement with cultural financing issues.

This mechanism corresponds most directly to the original CfCA strategy of collecting evidence and illustrates how that strategy fed into the dialogue and coordination and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases pathways.

6.2.2. Convening and relationship-building mechanism

CfCA's repeated engagement platforms created opportunities for stakeholders to move from isolated interaction toward more sustained collaboration. These platforms helped actors transcend institutional and sectoral boundaries by creating spaces for shared learning, exchange of perspectives, and collective engagement around cultural financing challenges.

In a context where cultural responsibilities are distributed among multiple institutions, relationship-building was a necessary condition for collective action. The NWG and other dialogue platforms contributed by creating channels through which stakeholders could maintain communication and develop shared perspectives.

This was one of the stronger mechanisms through which CfCA contributed to observed change, particularly in stakeholder coordination and collaborative practice. It corresponds to the CfCA strategies of collective action and engagement with key actors.

6.2.3. Agenda alignment mechanism

CfCA contributed to aligning diverse stakeholder perspectives around common priorities, particularly the recognition of cultural financing as a



development issue, the use of evidence to advocate for increased investment, alignment with the AU cultural financing aspiration, and improved coordination among cultural sector actors.

By creating greater convergence around these priorities, CfCA helped reduce fragmentation and strengthen the coherence of sector advocacy. This mechanism operated across the networking, dialogue and coordination, and advocacy pathways, rather than representing a separate CfCA pathway.

6.2.4. Institutional bridging mechanism

CfCA helped connect institutions that traditionally operate through different roles and mandates, including government bodies, academic institutions, cultural organizations, and civil society actors.

The partnership with Addis Ababa University illustrates this mechanism by linking research capacity with cultural policy discussions. More broadly, the mechanism supported the CfCA strategy of engagement with key actors by creating connections through which evidence, sector perspectives, and institutional knowledge could enter policy discussions.

6.2.5. Capacity and network strengthening mechanism

Through professional development and networking initiatives, CfCA strengthened the ability of cultural actors to participate more effectively in sector discussions and advocacy processes.

This mechanism contributed to ecosystem development by increasing the confidence, skills, and connectivity of cultural practitioners, particularly emerging actors. Its contribution was primarily enabling rather than a direct driver of financing reform, corresponding to the CfCA strategies of capacity development for culture actors and learning and sharing experiences.

6.3. Interaction with Government and Other Actors

CfCA's contribution emerged through interaction with existing institutions rather than through parallel structures. Government institutions remained responsible for cultural policy, budgeting, and institutional decisions, while CfCA strengthened engagement among these institutions and other

stakeholders through evidence generation, dialogue, and coordinated advocacy.

Cultural associations and creative practitioners contributed sector perspectives and advocacy; researchers and academic institutions strengthened knowledge generation and research-policy linkages; and CSOs supported mobilization, communication, and broader engagement. CfCA also operated alongside wider policy and institutional developments, including efforts to formulate a national arts policy, MoCS-led reforms, and initiatives related to cultural governance and the creative industries.

Several mechanisms connected CfCA's work with government processes. These included research validation involving the MoCS, MoCS participation through the NWG chairperson role, and formal presentation of study outputs to the Ministry. Together, these provided channels for evidence and policy discussions to interact within existing institutional processes.

Overall, CfCA strengthened connections among actors, improved access to evidence, and created platforms for more informed engagement on cultural financing. These contributions did not directly change financing structures but strengthened the conditions for more effective advocacy, policy dialogue, and cultural financing governance.

6.4. Other Contributing Factors and Alternative Explanations

The observed changes in Ethiopia's cultural financing ecosystem conditions cannot be explained by CfCA alone. Multiple actors, institutional processes, and broader policy developments influenced the environment in which CfCA operated.

These factors indicate that strengthening the conditions for cultural financing reform is the result of multiple interacting influences. Within this broader ecosystem, CfCA's distinctive contribution was its focus on connecting evidence, stakeholders, dialogue platforms, and advocacy processes around cultural financing.

6.5. Attribution Boundaries

A credible contribution analysis requires clear recognition of where CfCA's influence is well supported and where attribution is not warranted.

The strongest evidence of CfCA's contribution relates to strengthening the availability and use of cultural financing evidence, improving stakeholder connectivity and coordination, creating platforms for evidence informed dialogue, strengthening research policy relationships, expanding professional networks among cultural actors, and supporting more coordinated advocacy around cultural investment.

By contrast, the available evidence does not support direct attribution for increases in national cultural budget allocations, integration of culture into PFM systems, the establishment of permanent government financing mechanisms, or formal legislative and institutional reforms. These areas depend primarily on broader government decisions, fiscal conditions, institutional authority, and political processes that extend beyond the scope and influence of the CfCA programme.

The evidence therefore supports a distinction between CfCA's stronger contribution to upstream and intermediate changes and its more

Table 6. Other Factors Influencing Cultural Financing Ecosystem Conditions

Factor	Contribution to observed ecosystem conditions	Relationship with CfCA
Government institutions	Provided authority, institutional platforms, and decision-making processes	Created the institutional environment in which CfCA engagement operated
African Union cultural financing agenda	Provided continental policy direction and advocacy reference point	Reinforced the relevance of CfCA-supported advocacy
Academic institutions	Contributed research capacity and knowledge exchange	Complemented CfCA evidence and partnership approaches
Cultural associations and practitioners	Provided sector perspectives and participated in advocacy	Strengthened and benefited from coordination platforms
Broader government reforms and priorities	Influenced policy space and resource allocation decisions	Shaped the context within which cultural financing discussions occurred

limited influence on downstream institutional and financing outcomes. This is consistent with the CfCA ToC, in which the programme could exercise greater influence over evidence generation, networking, dialogue, coordination, and advocacy than over government budget decisions and formal PFM reform.

6.6. Overall Contribution Assessment

Overall, CfCA's contribution in Ethiopia can be characterized as catalytic and system-strengthening. Its strongest contribution was to the conditions for reform, namely strengthening evidence, stakeholder coordination, structured dialogue, research-policy interaction, and cultural actor networks.

In relation to the original CfCA ToC, the strategies did not contribute equally. Collecting evidence, collective action, and engagement with key actors made the strongest contributions, providing the main mechanisms connecting evidence, stakeholders, and policy dialogue. Other strategies, including advocacy targeting decision-makers, public awareness, capacity development, and learning and experience sharing, played important reinforcing roles but contributed less directly to formal institutional and financing change.

These contributions helped move cultural financing discussions from fragmented advocacy toward a more coordinated and evidence-informed process. Key milestones included stronger stakeholder coordination, more regular engagement with government, the establishment and functioning of the NWG, research-policy linkages, and increased visibility of cultural financing issues. However, these advances have not yet translated into major formal financing reforms, such as integration into PFM processes or sustained institutional commitments.

The significance of CfCA therefore lies less in direct control over reform outcomes than in strengthening the pathways and relationships through which cultural financing reform can advance, with further progress dependent on sustained national ownership and broader institutional processes.

7. EVIDENCE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION ASSESSMENT

This section assesses the extent to which changes associated with CfCA implementation have become embedded within Ethiopia's cultural financing ecosystem. The assessment considers five dimensions of institutionalization, including formalization, integration into existing systems, ownership by relevant actors, strength of evidence supporting observed changes, and prospects for continuation beyond programme support.

Institutionalization in this context should not be understood only as the creation of formal policies, regulations, or administrative structures. In complex governance environments, institutional change often develops first through changes in practices, relationships, norms, and decision-making processes before becoming formally embedded in systems or administrative arrangements.

The evidence indicates that CfCA has contributed to meaningful institutional strengthening, particularly in evidence-informed cultural financing dialogue, stakeholder relationships and coordination, research-policy interaction, professional networks, and advocacy and public communication. However, the extent of institutionalization remains uneven. Changes based on knowledge exchange, relationships, and collaborative practice have developed more strongly than reforms requiring formal integration into government systems, fiscal restructuring, or permanent administrative arrangements.

7.1. Nature of Institutionalization: Practice-Based and Formal Change

The institutional changes associated with CfCA demonstrate different levels of embedding.

The strongest institutionalization has occurred through changes in practice and patterns of interaction. Cultural financing discussions increasingly draw on evidence generated through budget tracking and related analysis. Stakeholders have developed stronger patterns of interaction through dialogue platforms and coordination mechanisms. Research institutions and cultural actors have established stronger connections with policy discussions. Cultural financing has also become more visible in policy discourse, while advocacy and public communication have developed as more evidence-informed practices.

Table 7. Forms and Level of Institutional Embedding

Change area	Evidence of institutional embedding	Current status
Evidence generation and use	Cultural financing discussions increasingly draw on consolidated evidence on allocations, expenditure, utilization, and sector contribution.	Strengthened practice
Stakeholder coordination and collaboration	Recurring engagement has strengthened interaction among government, cultural actors, academia, and civil society.	Partially consolidated
Research-policy interaction	Institutional relationships between knowledge producers and policy actors have strengthened.	Strengthened but developing
Cultural financing policy discourse	Cultural financing is increasingly incorporated into policy discussions and sector dialogue.	Strengthened practice
Advocacy and public communication	Evidence-informed advocacy and communication have expanded across stakeholder, public, and digital platforms.	Strengthened practice
Professional and cultural actor networks	Programme-supported platforms have strengthened skills, participation, peer exchange, and professional connections.	Strengthened practice
Public financial management integration	Cultural financing analysis has not yet entered routine PFM systems.	Limited
Formal financing and governance mechanisms	Permanent sector-wide financing or coordination mechanisms have not yet been established.	Limited



These changes represent meaningful institutional shifts because they affect how actors engage with one another, how evidence is used, and how cultural financing issues are framed and discussed.

Formal institutionalization, however, remains limited in several areas. Cultural financing analysis has not yet become part of routine PFM processes, existing coordination mechanisms have not been transformed into permanent government structures, and no dedicated sector-wide financing framework has been established.

The overall pattern therefore suggests that CfCA has contributed more strongly to practice-based and relational institutionalization than to formal system integration.

7.2. Integration into National Planning and PFM Systems

Cultural financing operates within Ethiopia's broader public planning and financial management framework. However, culture remains distributed across multiple institutional budgets, and there is no routine mechanism for consolidating cultural expenditure into a comprehensive sector-wide financing framework.

CfCA's main contribution in this area was analytical rather than structural. Budget tracking studies improved understanding of cultural financing patterns by bringing together information on allocations, expenditure, and utilization performance. This strengthened the basis for discussions

Table 8. Assessment of Cultural Financing Integration Within National Systems

System dimension	Current situation	Assessment
Budget management of individual cultural institutions	Cultural institutions operate through established government budgeting procedures	Established
Consolidation of cultural expenditure across institutions	No routine sector-wide aggregation mechanism exists	Limited
Use of financing evidence in advocacy and dialogue	Evidence is increasingly used to support discussions and arguments	Strengthened
Integration of cultural financing analysis into PFM systems	No dedicated mechanism currently exists	Limited
Alignment of cultural priorities with development planning	Recognition exists, but systematic integration remains constrained	Developing

on financing needs and provided evidence that could be used in policy dialogue and advocacy.

However, the evidence does not indicate that CfCA-generated analysis has been integrated into standard government financial management procedures. Cultural financing analysis is not yet a routine component of budget formulation, expenditure monitoring, or sector-wide planning mechanisms.

The evidence therefore suggests that CfCA strengthened the information environment around cultural financing without yet changing the underlying financial management architecture.

7.3. Government Ownership and Institutional Dependency

Ownership of CfCA-supported changes varies across institutions and types of change. It is strongest among cultural institutions, sector organizations, academic partners, and practitioners directly engaged in cultural governance, research, advocacy, and coordination. The continued use of financing evidence in discussions suggests that evidence-informed dialogue and collaborative engagement have gained value among these actors.

Ownership is less developed where change requires integration into broader government systems. Financing analysis, coordination platforms, and evidence-generation processes remain partly dependent on external facilitation and programme-supported mechanisms. The NWG represents progress toward more sustained stakeholder interaction, but its long-term continuation depends on participating institutions assuming greater responsibility for its coordination functions.

Overall, ownership is stronger where change depends on relationships and shared practice, and weaker where it requires formal mandates, dedicated resources, or administrative integration.

7.4. Strength and Reliability of the Evidence Base

The assessment of institutional change draws on multiple sources of evidence, including financing studies, stakeholder consultations, programme documentation, and observations from policy dialogue processes. The strongest evidence relates to improved availability and use of cultural financing information and strengthened stakeholder interaction. The evidence also indicates progress in research-policy relationships, professional and sector networks, cultural financing policy discourse, and advocacy and public communication, although these areas are supported by a more moderate evidence base.

Important evidence gaps remain. Ethiopia does not yet have a permanent cultural financing information system or comprehensive cultural statistics framework capable of continuously tracking

Table 9. Evidence Base Supporting Institutionalization Assessment

Area of change	Main evidence sources	Strength of evidence for institutionalization
Cultural financing policy discourse	Policy dialogue records, stakeholder consultations, advocacy documentation	Moderate
Evidence generation and use	Baseline study, stakeholder mapping, federal budget tracking analyses, CCIs economic contribution study	Strong
Stakeholder coordination	NWG records, consultation records, programme documentation	Strong
Research-policy interaction	Institutional partnership records, AAU collaboration, research outputs	Moderate
Professional and sector networks	Residency documentation, participant records, cultural actor engagement platforms	Moderate
Advocacy and public communication	Advocacy materials, public events, communication outputs, CfCA Ethiopia Podcast records	Moderate
Public financial management integration	Budget analysis, financing dialogue records, stakeholder perspectives	Weak

sector-wide financing and performance. Therefore, the evidence base is strongest for programme-related processes, practices, and stakeholder experiences, and weaker for assessing long-term system-level transformation.

7.5. Sustainability and Institutional Embedding Across Change Areas

Institutional embedding varies according to the type of change achieved.

Changes based on knowledge, relationships, and collaborative practice have stronger prospects for continuation because they have generated value among participating actors. Evidence-informed dialogue, stakeholder relationships, and research-policy connections are supported by shared interests and demonstrated usefulness. Cultural financing policy discourse and advocacy and public communication have also become more established, although their continued embedding depends on sustained policy attention, stakeholder engagement, advocacy capacity, and communication resources.

By contrast, changes requiring formal government action face greater uncertainty. Integration into PFM systems, establishment of permanent coordination mechanisms, and increased budget allocations require decisions beyond the programme's direct influence.

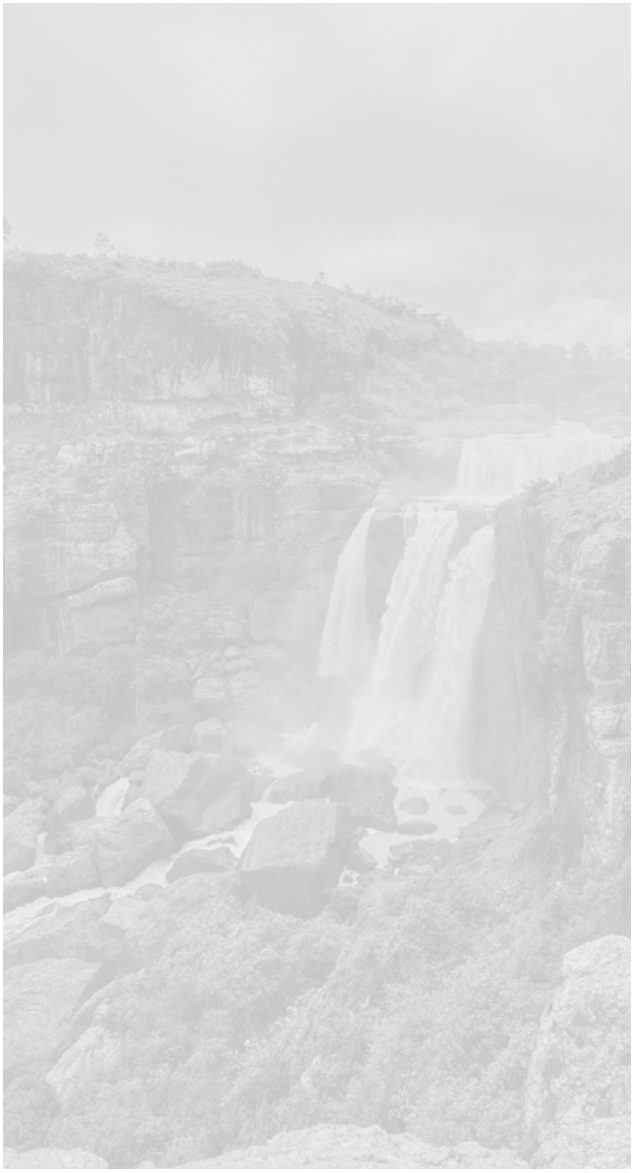


Table 10. Sustainability and Institutional Embedding Across Change Areas

Change area	Current level of embedding	Sustainability outlook
Evidence generation and use	Strong practice	Relatively strong, provided evidence use continues beyond programme-supported activities
Stakeholder coordination and collaboration	Partially consolidated	Moderate; stronger institutional ownership is needed
Research-policy interaction	Strengthened but developing	Moderate; depends on continued institutional collaboration
Professional and cultural actor networks	Strengthened practice	Moderate; continuation depends on sustained platforms and resources
Cultural financing policy discourse	Strengthened practice	Moderate; depends on continued policy attention
Advocacy and public communication	Strengthened practice	Moderate; depends on sustained engagement and communication capacity
Public financial management integration	Limited	Low until formal system integration occurs
Formal financing and governance mechanisms	Limited	Low until institutional mandates and ownership are established

7.6. Overall Institutionalization Assessment

The institutionalization trajectory associated with CfCA is best characterized as uneven but meaningful system strengthening.

The programme has contributed to changes that are already visible in institutional behaviour, including stakeholders use stronger evidence, engage through more structured channels, and increasingly frame cultural financing as a development issue rather than only a sector concern. Policy dialogue and advocacy practices have also become more evidence-informed, while public and digital communication have expanded the visibility of cultural financing issues.

These changes represent more than temporary project outputs because they have influenced relationships, practices, and patterns of engagement among actors.

At the same time, deeper institutional embedding remains incomplete. Cultural financing has not yet been incorporated into routine PFM systems, permanent coordination arrangements remain limited, and continuous cultural financing analysis requires further institutional development.

Table 11. Overall Assessment of Institutionalization Progress

Dimension	Assessment
Evidence generation and use	Strong institutional practice
Stakeholder coordination and collaboration	Strengthened practice with partial consolidation
Research-policy interaction	Strengthened
Professional and cultural actor networks	Strengthened
Cultural financing policy dialogue	Strengthened
Advocacy and public communication	Strengthened
Government system integration	Limited
Formal financing reform mechanisms	Limited

Overall, CfCA has strengthened the institutional foundations necessary for longer-term cultural financing reform, even though full institutionalization has not yet been achieved. Its most significant contribution has been the creation of a more evidence-informed, connected, and coordinated ecosystem. Whether these gains translate into sustained financing reform will depend on their progressive integration into national institutions, planning processes, and permanent governance mechanisms.



8. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Despite important progress in strengthening evidence generation, stakeholder coordination, and policy dialogue, cultural financing reform in Ethiopia continues to face significant structural and institutional constraints. These constraints help explain why improvements in evidence use, advocacy capacity, and stakeholder engagement have not yet translated into substantial increases in public cultural financing or comprehensive institutional reform.

The constraints discussed in this section are not interpreted as shortcomings of CfCA implementation. Rather, they reflect characteristics of the broader cultural governance, public financing, and policy environment within which CfCA operated. Understanding these constraints is important for assessing both the significance of CfCA's contribution and the limits of what a programme of this nature could reasonably influence.

8.1. Institutional fragmentation and coordination constraints

Ethiopia's cultural governance system involves multiple institutions operating at federal, regional, and local levels. Responsibilities for cultural policy, heritage management, creative industries, intellectual property, research, and cultural administration are distributed across institutions with distinct but complementary mandates.

This diversity reflects the broad and cross-cutting nature of the cultural sector, but also creates challenges for coordinated planning, financing analysis, and collective advocacy. Cultural expenditure is dispersed across institutions, making it difficult to develop a consolidated picture of public investment in culture and present a unified financing case within broader government planning and budgeting processes.

Table 12. Institutional Constraints Affecting Cultural Financing Reform

Constraint	Implication for reform
Fragmented institutional mandates	Limits coordinated planning and consolidated understanding of cultural investment
Weak cross institutional coordination mechanisms	Reduces collective prioritization and sustained advocacy
Uneven institutional capacity for analysis and planning	Constrains evidence generation and policy engagement
Limited integration of cultural priorities across government systems	Reduces visibility of culture within wider development planning



Prior to CfCA engagement, interaction among many cultural stakeholders was often based on individual initiatives or specific events rather than sustained coordination mechanisms. CfCA strengthened communication and collaboration among stakeholders, but institutional fragmentation remains a structural constraint on consolidating and sustaining these changes.

8.2. Financing constraints and competing public priorities

The most significant constraint affecting cultural financing reform remains the limited fiscal prioritization of culture within national budgeting processes.

CfCA-supported evidence indicates relatively strong cultural budget utilization, suggesting that limited investment cannot be explained primarily by weak implementation capacity. However, increasing public investment in culture requires broader fiscal reprioritization amid competing demands for infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, security, and humanitarian needs. Within this context, culture must be recognized as a development investment rather than primarily as a sectoral or discretionary expenditure.

The fragmented nature of cultural financing further complicates this challenge. Cultural activities are supported through multiple institutions and administrative levels, with no comprehensive financing framework showing the overall scale, distribution, and development contribution of public cultural investment.

The financing challenge therefore concerns not only how much is allocated to culture, but also how cultural investment is identified, measured, presented, and connected to national development priorities.

8.3. Limited integration with PFM systems

Although CfCA improved the availability and use of cultural financing evidence, the broader PFM system has not yet integrated culture-specific financing analysis into routine functions.

Budget tracking studies generated evidence on allocation trends, expenditure patterns, and utilization, strengthening policy discussions and providing a more credible basis for advocacy and dialogue. However, this evidence system remains dependent on periodic analytical efforts rather than permanent government mechanisms for monitoring cultural expenditure.

The absence of a consolidated cultural financing framework also limits the ability to track investment across institutions, assess long-term trends, and systematically integrate cultural priorities into national planning and budgeting.

This highlights the gap between stronger evidence-informed advocacy and deeper institutional reform. CfCA strengthened the analytical environment around cultural financing, but the underlying financial management architecture remains largely unchanged.





8.4. Sustainability of coordination mechanisms

CfCA contributed to more structured engagement among government institutions, cultural organizations, academic actors, CSOs, and creative sector stakeholders. Platforms such as the NWG and policy dialogue forums created opportunities for regular interaction, information exchange, and collective discussion around cultural financing issues.

However, sustaining these mechanisms beyond programme support remains a challenge. Some coordination processes continue to depend on active facilitation, convening resources, and external support rather than being fully embedded within permanent institutional structures. The challenge is therefore not the absence of collaboration, but the transition from programme-supported coordination to nationally owned and sustained mechanisms.

The relationships and collaborative practices established through CfCA may continue to generate value, but their durability will depend on whether participating institutions maintain the platforms, relationships, and functions developed during implementation.

8.5. Data and evidence limitations

CfCA significantly improved the availability of evidence on cultural financing, stakeholder dynamics, and the economic contribution of the CCIs. The baseline study and budget tracking exercises established a stronger analytical foundation for understanding budget allocation levels, expenditure trends, and budget utilization performance. Stakeholder mapping and the study on the economic contribution of the CCIs also generated information that helped illuminate the structure,

Table 13. Remaining Evidence Gaps and Their Policy Implications

Evidence gap	Policy implication
Absence of routine sector-wide cultural expenditure aggregation	Limits visibility of total public investment in culture
Limited cultural statistics infrastructure	Restricts long-term planning, monitoring, and assessment
Insufficient and irregular economic contribution data	Weakens the ability to demonstrate links between culture and development outcomes
Dependence on periodic studies	Creates uncertainty regarding continuity and comparability of evidence generation

scale, employment, and development potential of the sector.

Nevertheless, important data limitations remain. Ethiopia does not yet have a comprehensive cultural statistics system capable of routinely generating and integrating information on cultural financing, employment, the economic contribution and performance of the CCIs, and other indicators required for long-term policy planning.

The continuation and expansion of evidence-informed dialogue on cultural financing will therefore depend partly on whether these analytical functions become increasingly integrated into institutional systems rather than remaining dependent on periodic programme-supported studies.

8.6. Political economy and contextual constraints

Cultural financing reform is influenced by wider political and economic conditions beyond the cultural sector. Government budgeting takes place amid fiscal pressure, competing priorities, and changing national circumstances, affecting the extent to which cultural financing can gain institutional recognition and additional public resources.

Institutional changes, leadership transitions, and evolving mandates can also affect the continuity of reform processes. Sustaining progress therefore requires not only technical evidence and stakeholder coordination, but continued institutional commitment and alignment with broader national development priorities.

The cultural sector itself is diverse, comprising actors with different capacities, interests, mandates, and levels of engagement. While CfCA strengthened collective interaction, maintaining common priorities across this ecosystem remains an ongoing challenge.

These factors help explain why improvements in evidence, advocacy, and coordination do not necessarily translate directly into government financing decisions. Such decisions are shaped by a wider political economy in which cultural financing competes with national priorities and remains subject to institutional and fiscal considerations beyond the influence of individual programmes.

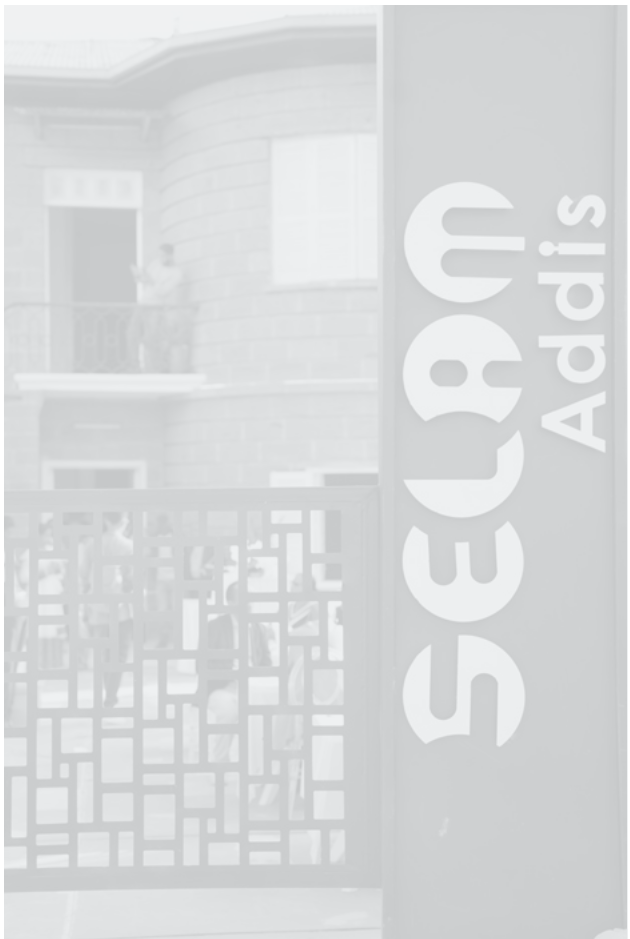
8.7. Interaction among constraints

The constraints affecting cultural financing reform are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Institutional fragmentation contributes to weak coordination and fragmented financing information, which limits the ability of stakeholders to develop unified advocacy positions and demonstrate the scale, impact, and development contribution of cultural investment. Fiscal constraints reinforce these challenges by limiting opportunities to establish permanent analytical systems, strengthen institutional capacity, and sustain coordination mechanisms.

These interactions help explain the pattern of change observed through CfCA implementation. Progress has been stronger where change depends on knowledge, relationships, communication, and collective action, and more limited where it requires formal fiscal restructuring, administrative integration, and government-wide system reform.

The constraints therefore help explain CfCA's differentiated contribution. Its influence was stronger on evidence generation, stakeholder connectivity,





dialogue, and advocacy than on formal PFM integration or public financing decisions.

8.8. Summary of key constraints

The constraints identified across the assessment, which operate at multiple levels and affect both the pace and prospects of cultural financing reform, are summarized below.

Overall, the evidence indicates that the principal barriers to cultural financing reform are systemic rather than programme-specific. CfCA strengthened important enabling conditions, particularly evidence availability, stakeholder coordination, policy dialogue, and advocacy. However, translating these gains into sustained financing reform requires stronger institutional ownership, greater integration with government systems, and gradual development of the wider governance and financing architecture.

These constraints also reinforce the earlier contribution assessment. CfCA's strongest influence was on the upstream and intermediate conditions for reform through evidence, relationships, dialogue, coordination, and advocacy. More limited progress in PFM integration and public financing reflects broader institutional, fiscal, and political economy factors beyond the programme's direct sphere of influence.

Table 14. Summary of Core Constraints Affecting Cultural Financing Reform

Constraint area	Main constraint	Effect on reform
Institutional architecture	Fragmented mandates and dispersed responsibilities	Limits coherent sector wide planning and coordination
Financing environment	Low prioritization of culture within national expenditure decisions	Restricts growth of public investment
Public financial management	Limited integration of cultural financing analysis	Reduces institutional visibility of cultural investment
Data systems	Absence of routine cultural statistics and financing information mechanisms	Weakens continuous evidence-based decision making
Coordination mechanisms	Dependence on facilitated platforms and programme-supported engagement	Creates sustainability and institutional ownership challenges
Political and economic context	Competing priorities, fiscal pressures, and changing circumstances	Influences the pace and direction of institutional reform

9. LESSONS LEARNED

The implementation experience of CfCA in Ethiopia demonstrates that cultural financing reform is a gradual institutional process requiring more than advocacy for increased resources. Strengthening public investment in culture depends on interconnected foundations that make reform discussions more credible, coordinated, and actionable through reliable evidence, sustained stakeholder relationships, institutional dialogue, advocacy, and alignment with broader development agendas.

The lessons below are derived from the observed contribution pathways and mechanisms and reflect both areas of progress and areas requiring further institutional development. They also reflect the differentiated nature of observed change, with stronger progress where CfCA could influence evidence, relationships, dialogue, coordination, and advocacy, and more limited progress where change required formal government decisions, PFM integration, and fiscal reprioritization.

9.1. Evidence becomes influential when connected to dialogue and advocacy

One of the central lessons from the Ethiopia experience is that evidence generates influence when actively connected to policy dialogue, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy processes.

The baseline study and subsequent cultural budget tracking exercises were valuable not only as analytical products but also as shared resources for discussions on cultural financing, including budget allocation, expenditure trends, and utilization. The stakeholder mapping analysis supported coordination by providing a reference on sector actors and relationships, helping stakeholders identify potential partners, understand the broader cultural ecosystem, and strengthen collaboration beyond individual programme activities. The study on the economic contribution of the CCIs added a broader quantitative perspective on the sector's economic significance, strengthening the case for increased investment in culture.

The experience demonstrates that evidence alone does not automatically produce policy change. Its influence depends on several enabling conditions:

Table 15. Enabling Conditions for Evidence to Influence Policy Change

Key enabling condition	How it supports influence
Relevance to current policy issues	Evidence is more likely to be used when it addresses questions that matter to decision-makers and stakeholders
Translation into accessible messages	Technical findings can reach wider audiences when they are converted into clear advocacy and communication messages
Platforms for stakeholder engagement	Dialogue mechanisms create opportunities for evidence to reach relevant actors and inform discussion
Institutional capacity to use evidence	Evidence has greater influence when institutions and advocates can interpret and apply findings strategically

In the Ethiopian context, financing evidence strengthened sector dialogue by moving discussions beyond general calls for greater support toward more specific consideration of investment levels, resource utilization, and financing priorities. The study on the economic contribution of the CCIs further strengthened this case by highlighting the sector's contribution to GDP and employment and its relevance to wider development priorities.

The lesson is therefore not simply that evidence is important, but that it becomes influential when connected to relationships, dialogue platforms, and advocacy processes. This reflects the interaction between the original CfCA strategy of collecting evidence and the dialogue and coordination and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases pathways.

9.2. Convening and relationship building are essential for ecosystem change

A second major lesson is that cultural financing reform requires sustained relationships among actors operating across different institutional spaces.

Before CfCA, cultural stakeholders, government institutions, researchers, and practitioners often engaged through separate channels. CfCA demonstrated that repeated interaction through

coordination platforms, policy dialogues, and institutional partnerships can gradually strengthen trust, shared understanding, and collective action.

The value of convening lies not simply in organizing events, but in creating the relational infrastructure through which actors with different mandates and perspectives can identify common priorities, exchange information, and engage more effectively. The NWG, policy dialogues, sector consultations, and institutional engagements provided repeated opportunities for such interaction and helped move engagement beyond isolated events toward more regular collaborative practice.

At the same time, programme-supported coordination mechanisms require deliberate transition strategies to become sustained institutional practices. Relationship building can create a foundation for collective action, but its sustainability depends on institutional ownership and continued opportunities for interaction.

The lesson is that networking and dialogue are not secondary to technical reform. They are part of the institutional infrastructure through which evidence, priorities, and advocacy can be translated into collective action.

9.3. Complementary pathways are more effective than isolated interventions

CfCA's experience shows that the three CfCA pathways were mutually reinforcing rather than independent:

Networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates strengthened evidence access, professional networks, collective capacity, and sector connectivity.

Dialogue and coordination created channels through which evidence and stakeholder perspectives could be exchanged and connected to policy discussions.

Advocacy campaigns and pilot cases translated evidence and stakeholder priorities into advocacy, public communication, and broader awareness.

The experience demonstrates that no single component would have been sufficient on its own. Evidence generation strengthened the credibility of advocacy, but evidence required dialogue platforms and stakeholder relationships to reach relevant actors. Coordination improved collective engagement, but depended on shared evidence and common priorities. Public communication expanded awareness, while its effectiveness

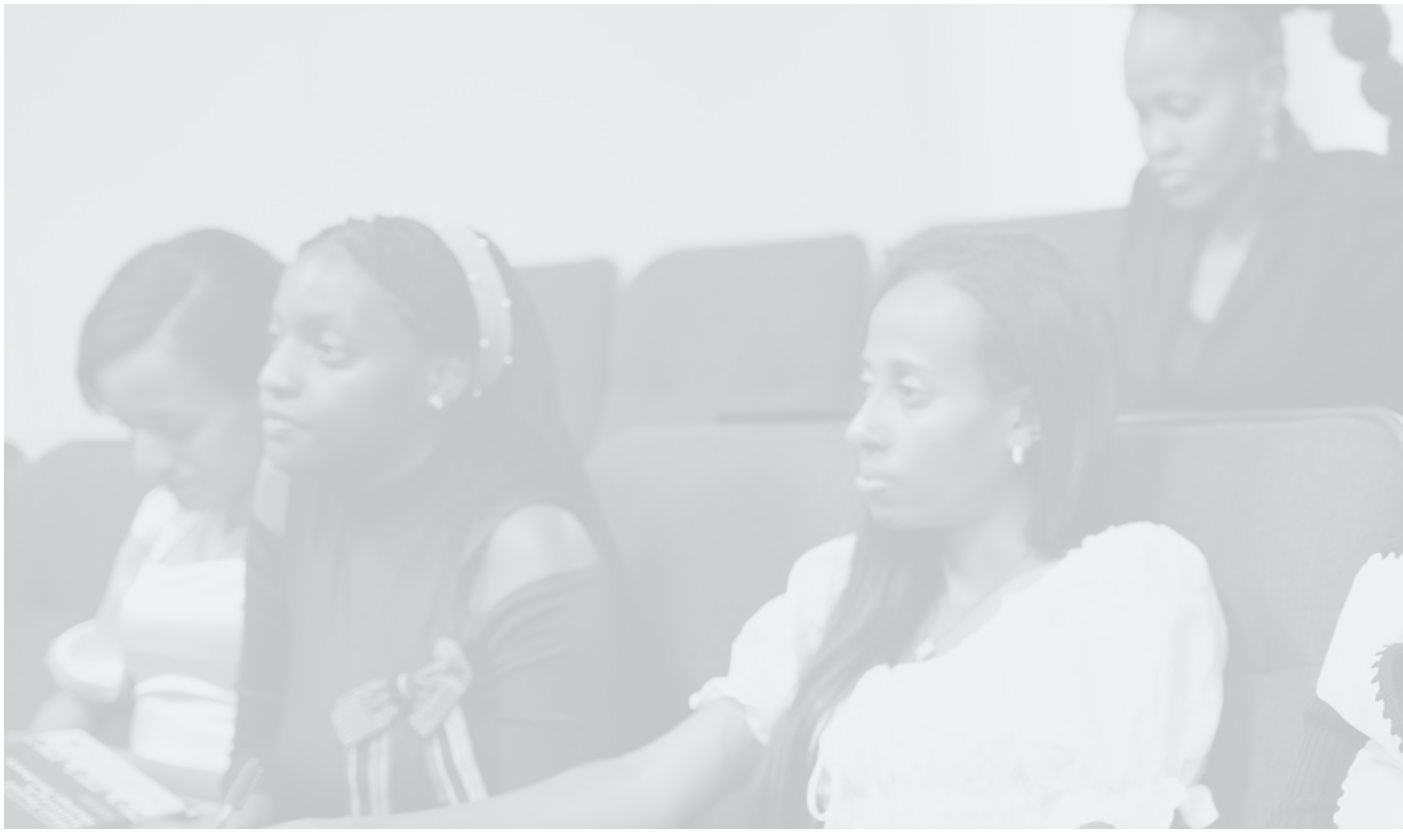


Table 16. Key Approaches Contributing to Progress

Approach	Contribution to change	Conditions supporting effectiveness
Evidence generation	Created a credible foundation for dialogue, coordination, and advocacy	Findings were integrated into stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, and advocacy processes.
Multi-stakeholder coordination	Reduced fragmentation and strengthened collective action	Repeated interaction among relevant actors
Institutional partnerships	Strengthened links between knowledge and policy processes	Shared interest and institutional commitment
Advocacy and communication	Increased recognition of cultural financing and the socio-economic potential of CCIs	Consistent, evidence-informed messages reinforced through stakeholder engagement and dialogue
Professional and regional network strengthening	Expanded the capacity, confidence, and connectivity of cultural actors, strengthening the broader constituency engaged in cultural development and advocacy processes	Opportunities for skills development, regional exposure, and participation in sector platforms

depended on credible and accessible messages. Institutional partnerships strengthened these processes by connecting knowledge institutions with cultural policy discussions.

The stakeholder mapping analysis also contributed to this interaction by providing information that supported subsequent engagement and coordination. Similarly, the study on the economic contribution of the CCIs added an economic dimension to cultural financing advocacy, complementing the budget evidence already available.



Table 16 demonstrates how CfCA combined complementary approaches across its pathways, connecting evidence, relationships, policy dialogue, advocacy, and cultural actor capacity. The lesson for future cultural financing reform is that system-level change requires a combination of analytical, relational, advocacy, and institutional approaches rather than reliance on a single intervention.

9.4. Improved evidence and advocacy do not automatically produce fiscal reform

An important lesson from CfCA is that stronger evidence and improved advocacy capacity are necessary but not sufficient conditions for increased public financing.

The programme contributed to a stronger understanding of the cultural sector and financing challenges and improved the quality of sector dialogue. However, budget decisions continue to be shaped by wider fiscal conditions, national priorities, institutional incentives, and PFM processes beyond the programme's direct influence.

For future interventions, strengthening the enabling environment should therefore be accompanied by engagement with broader fiscal planning systems, resource allocation processes, and relevant institutional actors. The Ethiopia experience also highlights the importance of maintaining realistic expectations about the pathway from evidence and advocacy to financing outcomes.

Upstream and intermediate institutional strengthening should be recognized as meaningful results even when downstream fiscal reform has not yet occurred.

9.5. Institutional partnerships strengthen continuity and sustainability

The experience highlights the importance of partnerships that extend beyond individual project activities.

The collaboration with academic institutions, particularly Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies, demonstrated the value of linking research capacity with cultural policy discussions. Such partnerships can support continuity in evidence generation, knowledge exchange, and longer-term research-policy relationships. Engagement with cultural associations, creative practitioners, and professional networks similarly broadened sector participation and strengthened the constituency supporting cultural development.

However, partnerships alone do not guarantee sustainability. Their longer-term value depends on continued institutional commitment, shared interests, and the capacity of participating institutions to maintain relationships beyond programme-supported activities.

The lesson is that sustainability is strengthened when programmes invest in institutional relationships that retain value beyond the programme itself.

9.6. Capacity strengthening contributes to wider ecosystem development

CfCA implementation also demonstrates that strengthening individual and institutional capacities can contribute to wider ecosystem development.

Creative residency programmes and related initiatives supported young cultural actors through skills development, professional exposure, knowledge exchange, and participation in national and regional cultural platforms. Beyond these direct benefits, they strengthened professional networks and expanded the pool of actors able to participate in cultural advocacy and sector dialogue.

The significance of this contribution extends beyond individual beneficiaries. A more connected and capable cultural community provides a stronger constituency for collective action, advocacy, and continued engagement with cultural policy and financing processes.

At the same time, these networks depend partly on continued opportunities for engagement and professional development. Capacity strengthening should therefore be understood as an ongoing ecosystem function rather than a one-time training activity.

The lesson is that networking and capacity development can strengthen the wider constituency needed to sustain cultural reform, even when they do not directly produce financing decisions.

9.7. Future reform needs to move from programme-supported practices toward institutional systems

The Ethiopia experience suggests several priorities for future efforts to advance cultural financing reform.

First, evidence generation should move gradually from project-supported studies toward more institutionalized cultural financing information systems. Reliable and continuous data remain essential for planning, advocacy, monitoring, and accountability.

Second, stakeholder coordination mechanisms should move toward more sustainable arrangements owned by relevant institutions rather than dependent on external facilitation.

Third, cultural financing arguments should continue to connect investment in culture with wider national priorities, including economic development, employment, tourism, social cohesion, and innovation. Evidence on the economic contribution of the CCIs provides an important basis for this broader framing.

Fourth, future interventions should engage more directly with PFM actors and planning processes to strengthen the connection between cultural priorities and national resource allocation systems.

Finally, these transitions require sustained national ownership. Programme-supported evidence, dialogue, advocacy, and capacity development can create important foundations, but their



institutionalization depends on relevant national institutions adopting, maintaining, and integrating these functions into their own systems.

9.8. Overall lessons

The overall lesson from CfCA implementation in Ethiopia is that cultural financing reform is built through cumulative institutional strengthening rather than a single policy intervention.

CfCA's contribution demonstrates that improving evidence, strengthening relationships, creating dialogue mechanisms, supporting advocacy, and developing the capacity and networks of cultural actors are important foundations for longer-term reform. These foundations do not replace government decision-making processes, but improve the conditions under which reform can occur.

The Ethiopian experience suggests that successful cultural financing initiatives should therefore combine the three CfCA pathways, namely networking and building a critical mass of culture advocates; dialogue and coordination; and advocacy campaigns and pilot cases. Within these pathways, evidence generation, collective action, engagement with key actors, advocacy, capacity development, public awareness, and learning and knowledge exchange should function as complementary strategies rather than isolated interventions.

At the same time, the experience highlights the boundary between strengthening the conditions for reform and directly producing fiscal or institutional outcomes. Deeper changes in PFM systems, formal financing mechanisms, and public resource allocation require sustained national ownership, institutional authority, and engagement with broader fiscal and political processes.

The central lesson is that cultural financing reform requires both ecosystem strengthening and progressive institutionalization. CfCA strengthened important foundations for reform, while sustaining and translating these gains into deeper financing and governance changes will depend on their continued uptake within national institutions and systems.

10. SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of changes associated with CfCA implementation in Ethiopia varies across the cultural financing ecosystem. Prospects for continuation are strongest where the programme contributed to relatively durable assets, including knowledge, evidence resources, stakeholder relationships, and patterns of engagement. Changes requiring formal government decisions, institutional mandates, fiscal commitments, or integration into national systems remain less consolidated.

Overall, CfCA has contributed important foundations for longer-term cultural financing reform. Evidence from budget tracking, stakeholder mapping, and studies on the economic contribution of the CCIs, together with strengthened stakeholder relationships, research-policy connections, and professional networks, can continue to generate value beyond the programme period. Sustaining and translating these gains into deeper institutional reform, however, will require continued national ownership, stronger integration into government systems, and sustained commitment from relevant sector actors.

10.1. Likelihood of continuation of key changes

The likelihood of continuation differs according to the nature and degree of institutionalization of change. Changes embedded primarily in knowledge and relationships have relatively stronger prospects than those requiring formal mandates, government-wide systems, or fiscal decisions, although the continuation of professional networks depends on sustained opportunities for interaction and collaboration.

Evidence-informed cultural financing dialogue has relatively strong prospects for continuation because CfCA addressed previously existing information gaps. Budget tracking studies and analysis of the economic contribution of the CCIs established reference points for understanding allocation trends, expenditure performance, financing challenges, and the sector's economic significance. Their continued value will depend on whether relevant institutions and stakeholders maintain the use of financing information in policy discussions.

Stakeholder relationships and professional networks also demonstrate positive but conditional sustainability prospects. CfCA strengthened interaction among government institutions, cultural associations, academic institutions, CSOs, and creative practitioners through policy dialogues, NWG processes, institutional partnerships, and creative sector initiatives, providing a foundation for continued collaboration. The longer-term continuity of professional networks, however, will depend on sustained platforms, resources, and opportunities for interaction.

Cultural financing policy dialogue has moderate prospects for continuation, depending on sustained policy attention and continued use of evidence in financing discussions. Advocacy and public communication also have moderate prospects, with continuity depending on sustained advocacy capacity, stakeholder engagement, and communication resources.

The sustainability of formal reform processes is more uncertain. Increased public financing for culture, integration of cultural financing into PFM systems, and permanent coordination mechanisms require decisions beyond programme-supported processes and depend on government priorities, institutional leadership, fiscal conditions, and broader policy developments.

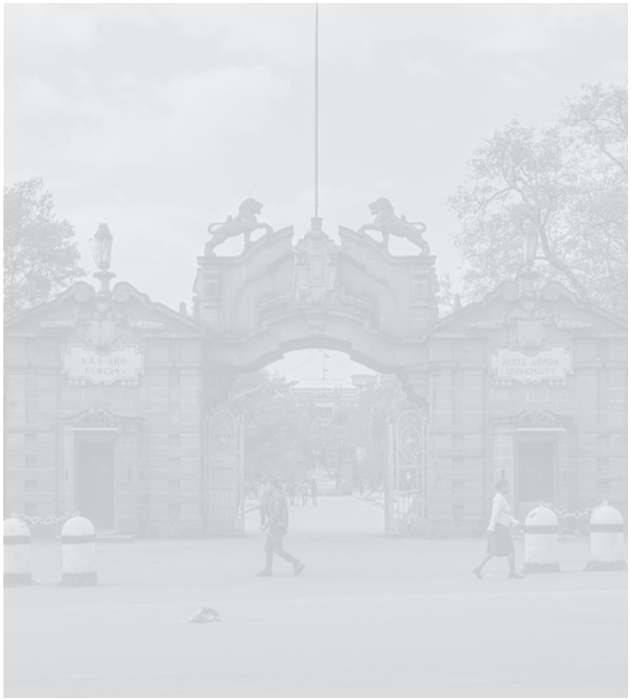


Table 17. Sustainability Outlook Across Key Change Areas

Change area	Sustainability outlook	Main determining factors
Evidence use in cultural financing dialogue	Relatively strong	Continued use of evidence by stakeholders and policy actors
Stakeholder relationships and coordination practices	Moderate to strong	Continued engagement and institutional ownership
Professional and regional cultural networks	Moderate to strong	Continued opportunities for collaboration and sector participation
Research-policy linkages	Moderate	Continuation of institutional partnerships and knowledge exchange
Cultural financing policy dialogue	Moderate	Continued policy attention and use of evidence in cultural financing discussions
Advocacy and public communication	Moderate	Continued advocacy capacity, stakeholder engagement, and communication resources
Public financial management integration	Limited to moderate	Government-led institutional reforms and planning processes
Increased public financing for culture	Uncertain	National priorities, fiscal space, and political commitment

10.2. Institutional ownership and dependency

Ownership of CfCA-supported changes is emerging across the cultural ecosystem, but remains uneven according to the type of change.

Among cultural sector institutions, associations, academic partners, and creative practitioners, there is evidence of increased recognition of the value of evidence-informed dialogue, collaboration, and collective engagement. The institutional relationships developed through CfCA provide a basis for continued interaction beyond the programme period.

The partnership with Addis Ababa University's Institute of Ethiopian Studies provides an example of emerging institutional ownership through strengthened links between research and cultural policy discussions. Similarly, professional networks among cultural actors provide a broader constituency for continued engagement around cultural development priorities.

However, some functions remain dependent on external facilitation. Regular evidence generation, coordination platforms, and structured advocacy require continued institutional commitment and resources if they are to become routine practices.

The main sustainability challenge is therefore whether relevant institutions and sector actors can assume sufficient responsibility, resources, and organizational capacity to maintain these processes independently.

10.3. Key risks affecting sustainability

Several factors may influence whether CfCA-supported gains become durable institutional changes.

Table 18 Key Risks Affecting Sustainability

Risk area	Description and implication
Institutional risk	Coordination mechanisms and evidence-generation processes may weaken if participating institutions do not assume stronger ownership.
Financing risk	Continued low prioritization of culture within public expenditure decisions may limit translation of advocacy into increased investment.
Data and technical risk	Absence of routine cultural financing and statistics systems may create continued dependence on periodic studies.
Political and administrative risk	Institutional changes, leadership transitions, and shifting priorities may affect continuity of reform processes.
Sector capacity risk	Uneven capacity among cultural actors may affect sustained participation and collective advocacy.

These risks are interconnected. Weak institutional integration can increase dependence on external support, while limited data systems can reduce the ability to sustain evidence-informed advocacy over time. Together, these factors can limit the transition from programme-supported processes to nationally owned institutional practices.

10.4. Opportunities for further consolidation

The period beyond CfCA implementation provides opportunities to consolidate the foundations established through the programme.

A key opportunity is to institutionalize cultural financing analysis within existing government and sector systems, moving from periodic project-supported studies toward routine production and use of financing information. This would strengthen sustainability and improve long-term accountability.

A second opportunity is to consolidate coordination mechanisms linking cultural institutions, finance and planning actors, academic institutions, CSOs, and creative sector representatives. Existing relationships provide a foundation for more sustainable arrangements.

A third opportunity is to continue strengthening professional and sector networks. Networks developed through capacity strengthening, creative initiatives, and regional engagement can support broader participation, knowledge exchange, and advocacy capacity.

Finally, stronger links between cultural institutions and research organizations can help sustain evidence generation, policy learning, and the translation of research into policy dialogue.

10.5. Priority actions for strengthening sustainability

Sustaining the institutional changes emerging from CfCA will depend on moving from project-supported activities toward more routine, nationally owned mechanisms. The priority actions below therefore focus on consolidating the foundations established during implementation and creating conditions for these changes to endure beyond the programme period.

10.6. Overall sustainability assessment

Overall, the sustainability of CfCA-supported changes can be assessed as moderate but differentiated across change areas.

The strongest sustainability foundations are found in areas where CfCA contributed to relatively durable assets, including evidence resources, stakeholder relationships, and research-policy connections. Professional networks also provide a basis for continued engagement, although their longer-term continuity depends on sustained platforms, resources, and opportunities for interaction. These assets have created value among participating actors and provide a basis for continued engagement.

More challenging are changes requiring formal institutional integration, including routine cultural financing analysis within government systems, permanent coordination arrangements, and significant changes in public expenditure patterns.

The Ethiopian experience therefore suggests that sustainability will depend on the transition from programme-enabled processes toward nationally owned systems and practices. CfCA has strengthened important foundations for reform, but the durability and further expansion of these gains will depend on continued institutional commitment, resource allocation, and progressive integration into broader governance, planning, and budgeting frameworks.

Table 19 Priority Actions for Consolidating Institutional Change

Priority action	Intended sustainability contribution
Institutionalize cultural financing data and analysis	Move from project-supported evidence generation toward routine information systems
Strengthen stakeholder coordination mechanisms	Increase continuity of dialogue and collective action
Integrate cultural priorities into planning and budgeting processes	Strengthen the connection between cultural objectives and resource allocation decisions
Strengthen research-policy partnerships	Maintain analytical capacity and knowledge exchange
Support professional and sector networks	Sustain participation, advocacy capacity, and broader ecosystem development
Increase government ownership of coordination and evidence functions	Reduce dependency on external facilitation

11. CONCLUSION

The implementation of CfCA in Ethiopia has strengthened important foundations for cultural financing reform through improved evidence generation, stronger stakeholder relationships, expanded professional networks, more structured policy dialogue, and greater recognition of culture as a development issue.

CfCA's contribution is best understood as catalytic and system-oriented. The programme did not directly determine public budget decisions, establish new financing mechanisms, or produce formal institutional reforms. Rather, it strengthened the conditions for reform by generating and promoting the use of evidence, connecting actors across the cultural ecosystem, facilitating engagement among stakeholders and duty bearers, and supporting collective advocacy for greater investment in culture.

The contribution analysis indicates that these changes emerged through interconnected pathways. Evidence generation strengthened the basis for financing discussions, while analysis of the economic contribution of the CCIs broadened recognition of their development potential. Stakeholder coordination and policy dialogue supported more sustained interaction across previously fragmented institutional spaces, while institutional partnerships and professional networks strengthened knowledge exchange and advocacy. Together, these contributions improved the enabling environment for cultural financing reform.

Important gaps remain. Cultural financing is not yet well integrated into broader PFM systems, routine sector-wide financing analysis remains insufficiently institutionalized, and public budget allocation continues to be shaped largely by wider fiscal pressures and national priorities. Coordination and evidence-generation mechanisms also require further consolidation to reduce dependence on programme-supported facilitation.

The Ethiopian experience demonstrates that cultural financing reform is a long-term institutional process. Evidence, relationships, networks, and dialogue provide important foundations, but deeper change will depend on embedding these capacities within government planning, budgeting, and governance systems. At the continental level, the case reinforces that African Union commitments to increased public investment in culture require not only political commitment, but also country-level evidence, organized stakeholder constituencies, sustained policy dialogue, and institutional mechanisms capable of translating commitments into national processes.

Overall, CfCA has helped create a stronger ecosystem for cultural financing reform in Ethiopia. While it has not yet transformed financing systems, it has strengthened conditions that make future reform more achievable. Sustaining these gains will depend on continued national ownership, stronger institutional integration, and sustained recognition of culture as a contributor to economic development, social cohesion, and national development.

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