



On January 9th 2015, 12 musicians from 7 Nile Basin countries arrived to New York for the beginning of an historic US tour. Never before had such a diverse group of East African musicians come to the US to engage university students and audiences through performance and workshops surrounding issues of sustainability in the Nile Basin and beyond. It was an ambitious undertaking. Much more than just a band, the New York Times called them “a committed, euphoric international coalition.”

Across four months, the Nile Project travelled over 20,000 miles back and forth across 20 states visiting 25 universities, plus stops at the Lincoln Center and the United Nations. We engaged over 30,000 people, working with a diverse array of partners including student and community leaders, entrepreneurs, professors, representatives, university deans, scientists, lawyers, as well as everyday people—the change-makers of tomorrow. We led over 120 workshops, lecture-demonstrations, and panel discussions about topics such as civic engagement, resource management, gender and African identity in the region, the role of musicians in social movements, and leadership solutions. Through music workshops, master classes, and over 60 concerts, we demonstrated that our musical process can be a sort of blueprint for a new way to organize the Nile.

Collaboration requires empathy and creativity as we get to know the unfamiliar. For the Nile Project, it means listening. We learn each other’s languages and musical systems. We make our unique voices and instruments stretch to meet one another in ways they never have before. Following our final show at Princeton University, Afropop’s Banning Eyre pointed out “the spirit of love, respect, camaraderie and just plain good fun that has developed [...] it never hurts to feel that the artists you are watching perform are having the time of their lives, while delivering seductive and beautiful music at the same time.” Could it be that culture is the link to environmental sustainability?

So as we close this chapter, the Nile Project wishes to thank you for your support over the last four months. What a crazy journey! We’d like to give a special shout out to SRO Artists, Rock Paper Scissors, New England Foundation for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Foreign Cultural Cooperation, and all of our presenting partners for their support. We never could have done this without you.

But we still have a lot of work ahead.

We recorded the soundtrack to this epic journey at studios across the Midwest, New England, and East Coast, in hotel rooms, and at our live concerts. We’ll continue working on Jinja, the album, over the summer and into the fall. If you missed our campaign, you can still support this project via donation on our website.

As always, stay tuned. We have some exciting things coming up that we’ll share soon