



Sustainability Report 2019

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# Basecamp Explorer Kenya

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# Coming Together

## Vision

To demonstrate how to conserve key global ecosystems through co-existence between wildlife and humans

## Mission

To lead in social and environmental impact, using profitable tourism as the commercial instrument (triple bottom line approach)











As we publish this report highlighting our significant contributions to Kenya's Maasai Mara ecosystem in 2019, an uncertain future looms. With much of the world's population sheltering in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it can sometimes seem difficult to look beyond our immediate horizons. We worry for the health, safety, and economic security of those closest to us — parents, grandparents, friends, colleagues, and members of our home community.

But when you stay with us at Basecamp Explorer, you also become part of our Maasai family in this small but critical corner of the planet. Now more than ever, we are grateful for the unwavering support that made these impacts possible.

When things return to normal, we look forward to welcoming you back in the Mara. It is our belief that travel will become even more cherished, and we plan to provide additional opportunities to connect through our shared humanity.

We hope to count on your continued support to ensure these vital initiatives — which impact the survival of our staff, broader community, and beloved wildlife — can continue while you are away.

## **Ashe Oleng!** **(Thank you)**

Svein Wilhelmsen  
Founder, Basecamp Explorer Kenya



# 2019: At A Glance



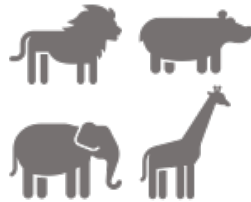
**82,000 trees** Planted

**14,775 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>** sequestered annually

**15,000 acres of new land** secured for wildlife

Naboisho's **lion density** among highest in Africa

**Return of wild dog** after 30 years in extinction



613 Naboisho and 196 PCA landowners receiving lease payments, directly benefiting **5,660 Maasai**

**7,000 additional Maasai** benefiting from our livelihood improvement projects, including **158 Maasai women** through the Basecamp Maasai Brand collective

**Employ 172** Kenyans, mostly all Maasai

## Awards



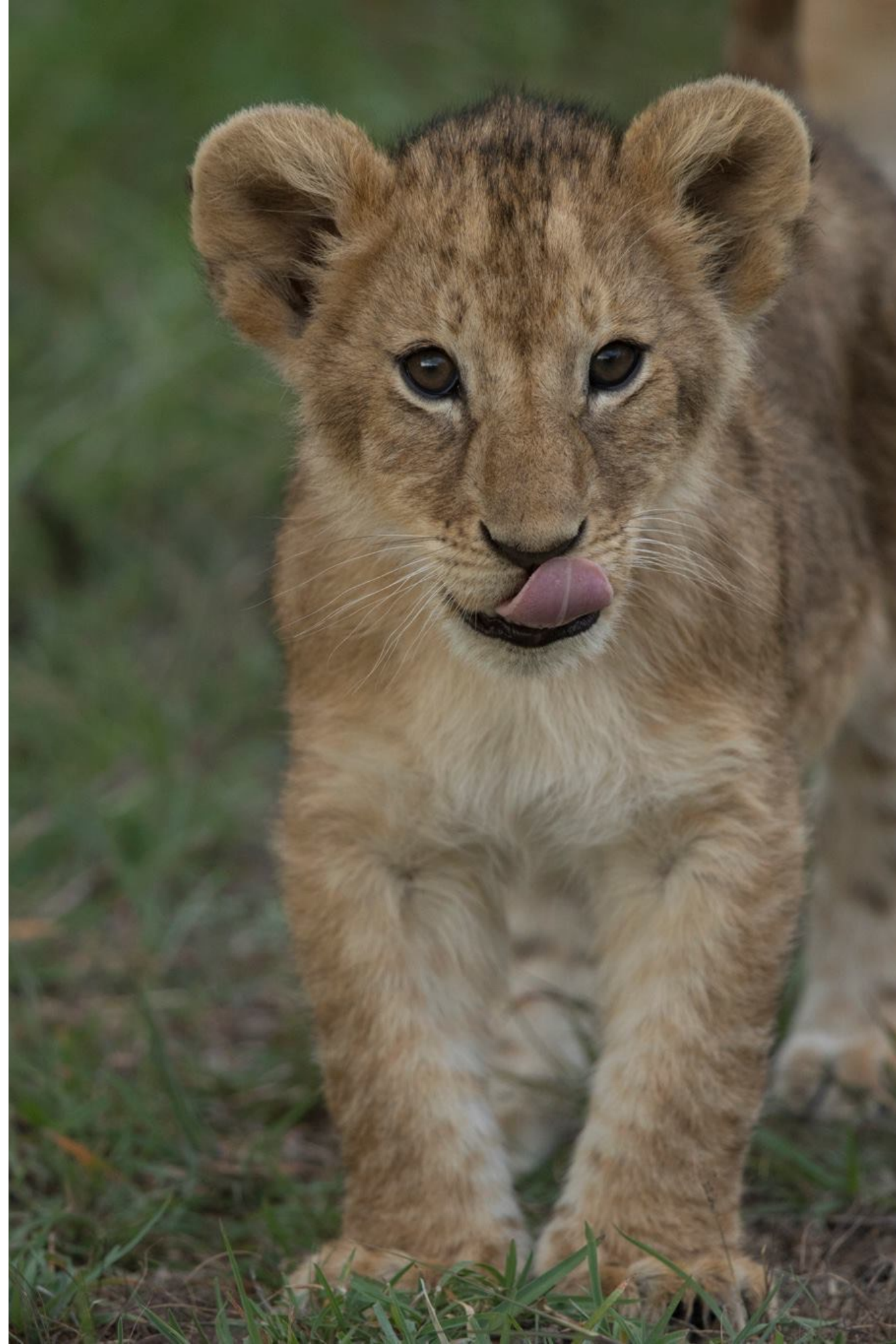
Basecamp Explorer, on behalf of Naboisho Conservancy, won the United Nation's Global Human Settlements award on Planning and Design.



Basecamp Explorer received EcoTourism Kenya's 'Eco Warrior' award for our Social Impact Initiatives.



Leopard Hill Camp was profiled as one of Time Magazine's 'World's 100 Greatest Places to Stay 2019'.





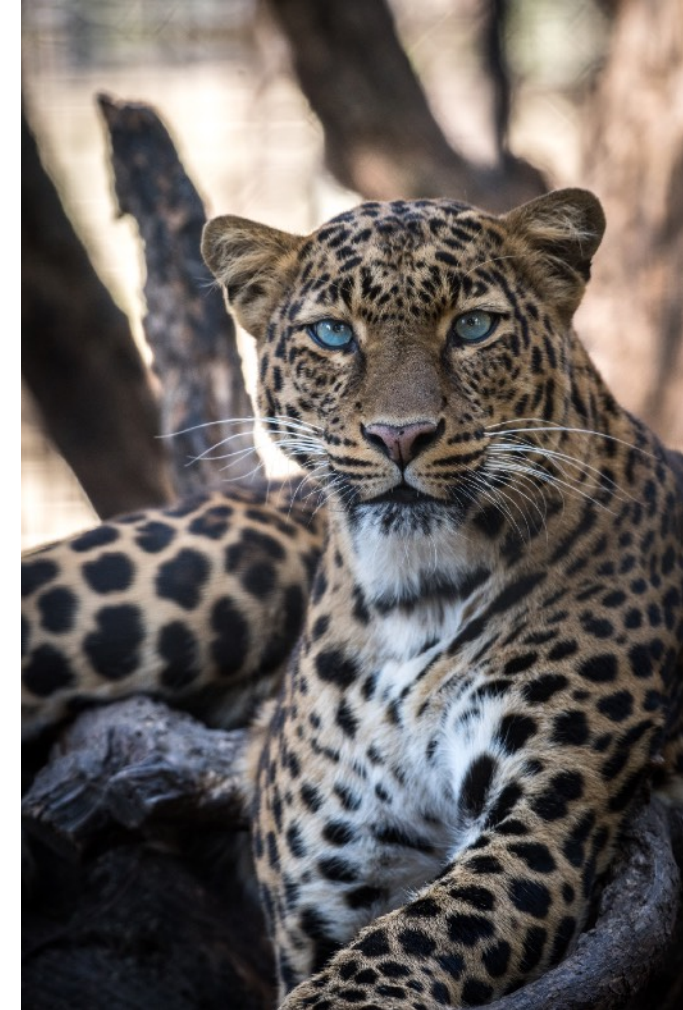
# 2019: Success Through Partnerships

We welcomed more guests to our safari camps in 2019 than any other in our 21-year history. This allowed us to contribute \$785,000 USD directly to the Maasai community in the form of land lease payments, salaries to wildlife rangers, and school scholarships, an increase of close to 75% over 2018. This groundbreaking partnership between conservation efforts and economic empowerment in Naboisho Conservancy was recognised by the United Nations in a landmark award and publication on Sustainable Human Settlements.

We planted 82,000 more trees through our reforestation project, bringing the total at Basecamp Maasai Mara to 197,000. This amounts to an estimated 14,775 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered annually, a huge progression on our goals on climate action. We also launched our plans for building community rainwater harvesting systems, which will provide sources of clean, sustainable water for over 5,000 community members. Looking to further curb our emissions, we enacted new policies on waste management and have set ambitious targets for further reduction in 2020. Our beloved mamas at Basecamp Maasai Brand jewellery had another very profitable year, increasing sales revenue 10.5% from the previous year totalling 95,000 USD.

Finally, on November 23, 2019, we officially opened our much anticipated education and awareness centre, Enjoolata! This anchors our commitment to forging and strengthening comprehensive partnerships to further our vision and mission, including with Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, Pardamat Conservation Area, and the upcoming Wildlife Tourism College.

Throughout our company's history, we've proved that positive change happens only when we *Come Together*. That rally cry is louder now than it's ever been.







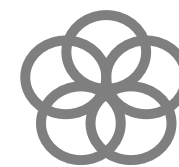
# Our Core Initiatives



CLIMATE ACTION



LIFE ON LAND



PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
THE GOALS

These programs, taken together, directly address all of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including broader societal targets on poverty reduction, education, employment, and strong institutions.





# Reforestation



Our inaugural initiative, tree-planting, was established in 2000 to revive the Talek river ecosystem by addressing the pressing issues of deforestation, ground erosion, and illegal sand harvesting.

In 2019 alone, we planted 82,000 trees, tripling the amount planted in 2018 and marking a total of 197,000 in the forest. This amounts to covering the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 2,463 guests' long-haul international flights each year. Or, 295,500 tonnes over a 20-year period, equivalent to roughly 1/3rd of Oslo's annual emissions.

These efforts have transformed the location into a 'micro-climate', with improved rainfall, animal diversity, and soil qualities. To date, there have been more than 300 identified bird species in the area, 62 indigenous species of plants restored, and 5 more inches of soil depth.

Basecamp has the capacity, including securing almost 2,000 acres of additional land, to continue to add up to 200,000 trees annually starting in 2020 with increased funding.



6,000kg  
*average carbon emitted per trip*



75kg / year  
*average carbon sequestered per tree*



80 trees  
*required to carbon offset per trip*

We estimate each tree costs  
\$0.50 to \$1 to plant and care for.







# Drought Mitigation



Globally, over 663 million - or 1 in every 9 people - still lack access to safe drinking water. This includes 19 million Kenyans, or 41% of the population.

In the Mara ecosystem, it is estimated that close to 90% of families use unimproved water sources. There is an urgent need for systems to provide sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water, particularly as weather becomes increasingly unpredictable. Increasing access to convenient sources of water not only impacts the health of the

community, it enables young girls to continue their education and mothers to participate in income generating activities.

A solution has been found in the form of community rainwater harvesting systems. Each structure consists of a slanted iron sheet roof, totalling 1800m<sup>2</sup> surface area, raised on tall posts, which drain into a 500,000l water storage tank. The tanks are guaranteed for 20 years, and only cost \$100 per year to maintain. These costs can be subsidised by

the space created under the roof for social enterprise projects.

Together with our partners, Basecamp Explorer has secured funding to begin the work on such systems, to be completed in 2020. Basecamp Explorer Kenya has also taken additional measures to ensure a consistent source of water exists for our guests, the maintenance and expansion of the reforestation project, as well as the families immediately surrounding our camps. In 2019, we sunk an additional borehole, bringing the total to four.

With additional support in 2020, we plan to build two sand dams in the Talek River to further support sustainable water harvesting and while increasing the soil density and protecting against erosion.







## Further Climate Action Initiatives



In 2019, we continued ramping up our recycling initiatives, collecting 3 tonnes of glass and 16 tonnes of plastic waste, of which 680kgs were converted into poles to be used for fencing.

We then partnered with a new organisation in Nairobi to further efforts toward a more circular economy. All plastic waste now collected in community clean up will be converted into a fibre to be used in the production of clothing like t-shirts.

We also made smaller adjustments that make a big impact on our back up diesel generator load, such as adjusting the time of day guest laundry is cleaned to run fully on solar energy.

At Basecamp Maasai Mara, we built a large vegetable garden, which reduces the amount of outsourced food production that must be transported by road to the Mara.

We've made big commitments to further reduce our footprint by the end of 2020. This

includes becoming fully plastic free in all our camps, providing each guest with a reusable water bottle and removing any single use plastic from our procurement. We will also install water meters in all of our camps, and add additional solar panels to our existing systems to increase capacity. We already produce a very low amount of food waste, but we are working to have one of the lowest percentages of any safari camp.

Based on the success of our Talek initiatives, we are now looking to bring our recycling efforts to scale. This is vital to ensuring plastic waste stays out of the Talek and Mara Rivers, where it can travel all the way to Lake Victoria.







# NABOISHO CONSERVANCY



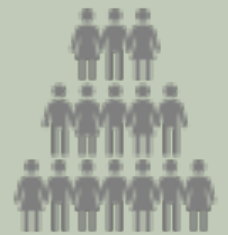
On March 28th 2010, Naboisho – which means “coming together” in Maa language – was formalized when the landowners signed 15-year land leases to dedicate it to wildlife conservation. The core economic model of Naboisho Conservancy is the bed night fee paid by tourism operators which goes directly to sustaining the monthly lease fees.

Naboisho Conservancy covers 53,446 acres, and is the second largest of 15 Conservancies in the area. Each month, 613 landowners receive a monthly lease payment in exchange for dedicating their land to

wildlife conservation. There are 8 eco-tourism camps, including Basecamp Wilderness, Eagle View, and Leopard Hill, all of whom participate in the sustainable payment scheme. Basecamp also employs close to 95% of our staff in these camps from the local community. Naboisho is protected by 50 rangers, and has invested heavily in developing infrastructure like roads, watering holes, and sustainable livestock grazing plans to benefit wildlife, the surrounding community, and tourists on which the model relies.

When you stay in Naboisho Conservancy, \$116 per person/per night - 40% of Basecamp's income - goes directly to supporting conservation efforts, including lease payments, the salaries of 50 rangers, and school scholarship support for Maasai children.

In the coming days, we are launching a crowdfunding campaign to raise virtual contributions toward conservancy costs until guests are able to return.



Please stay tuned.







# Pardamat Conservation Area



Pardamat Conservation Area (PCA) is the only Mara Conservancy that is premised on a dual-use model, where the communities' 850 landowners have legally registered their 26,000 hectares of land as a wildlife area while remaining to live and work on it. PCA shares borders and wildlife dispersal areas with Naboisho, Olare Motorogi, Lemek, and Mara North Conservancies, and serves as a migration route from the Loita plains to the Mara Triangle and Maasai Mara National Reserve. Being adjacent to other conservancies exposes communities in PCA

to human-wildlife conflicts while receiving limited benefits from tourism, as it has no camps. This is not due to its potential - PCA's lush, hilly, and forested terrain is ripe for wildlife as is its dual-use model for unique tourist offerings - but for its heavily fenced settlements and overgrazed land. The main livelihood in PCA remains pastoralism: 90% is agricultural land where income is generated through the sale of livestock, sheep, and goats, sold at the Aitong market on Thursdays and the Talek market on Wednesday. More than 50% of PCA landowners own leased

land in other conservancies that it borders. It is estimated that for every person receiving a lease payment, 7 people benefit. This amounts to a majority of PCA residents receiving benefits from both pastoralism and existing land lease payments. But this alone, unfortunately, will not be sustainable in the future under the current status quo. Population growth in the Greater Mara is estimated to be 8% annually, three times the national average. There will soon be too many people to rely on land parcels alone to generate sustainable income. Not only this, if economic pressures continue to push Maasai families to alternative land use like fencing for crops, wildlife will continue to be threatened in the surrounding conservancies, which make up over 67% of the entire ecosystem, putting the entire existing system at risk.

These marginalised landowners welcome further development in PCA. A 5 year, 2017-2022 management plan details this and was highly participatory and involved both internal and external stakeholders.

Due to its critical importance, Basecamp Explorer Foundation through its partners have provided short-term funding to landowners.

(continued)





# Pardamat Conservation Area



These first phases of 15,000 total acres open to wildlife conservation, funded through 2022, have already seen enormous change in the habitat for wildlife, with a population of resident wild dogs returning after 30 years in near extinction. In September 2019, PCA landowners agreed to remove fencing to open an additional 501 acres. The covered wood has been recycled to use in a reforestation project, modelled after our initiative at Basecamp Maasai Mara, at community schools, churches, and clinics.

To continue this work and ensure PCA is financially sustainable in the long-term, after 2022 when the current funding expires, a holistic approach is needed to address the urgent economic needs of the community to support conservation efforts. This must include engaging for-profit tourism investment.

We are also fundraising for another 10,000 acres, as well as comprehensive livelihood improvements including access to quality education, clean water, and improved health services.

Basecamp Explorer plans to launch a pilot guest offering on a hilltop in PCA, with stunning 360 degree view over the entire Mara ecosystem. This will be an upgrade to our Dorobo seasonal camping experience, and guests will have the opportunity to reach the camp by an incredible walking safari. Once at the camp, the terrain offers excellent outdoor activities currently unavailable in the Mara including hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.



Please contact our sales and marketing team for more information.







# Enjoolata! Centre at Basecamp Maasai Mara



It also houses the BMB workshop and store, a video editing room for guests, a planned community radio station implemented by MMWCA, conference facilities, and a library, which all connect to an open courtyard for events and films.

Enjoolata! will be used as a training centre for primary and secondary students, as well as youth. It's a showcase for awareness building among our national and international guests, and is a hub for organizations to coordinate projects across our beloved ecosystem.

It serves as the heart of why we are here, from where all else flows.

"Enjoolata!" In Maasai language describes the joy felt when something hidden becomes known, when something concealed becomes revealed. The centre is founded on the idea that at any time, the next Enjoolata! moment could change the course of history.

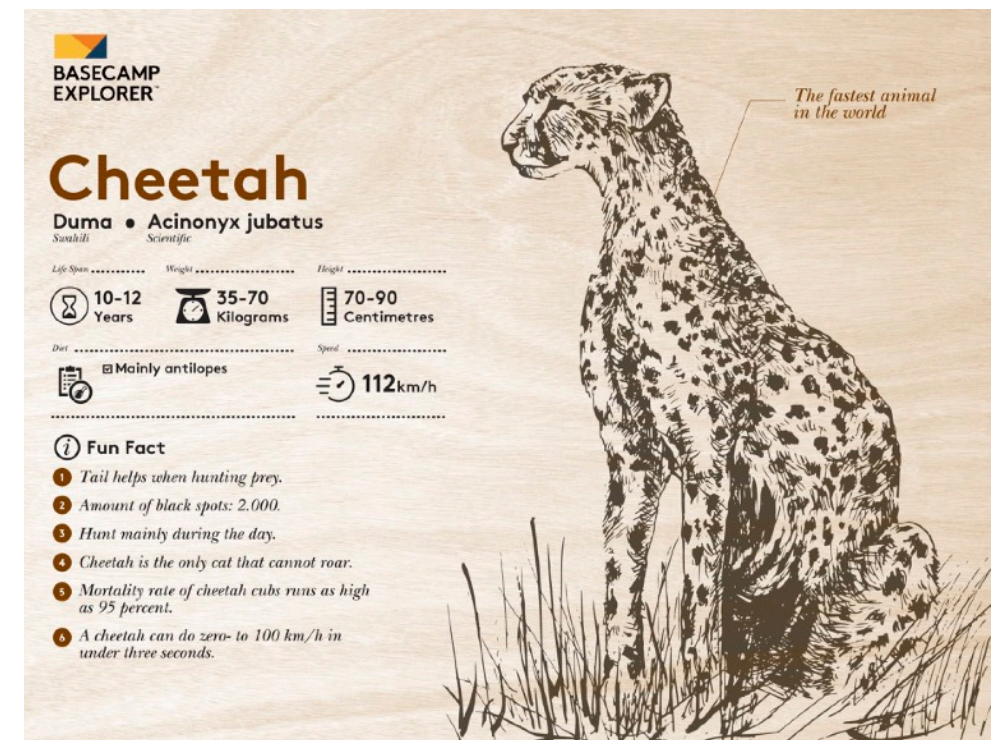
An innovative and integrated centre, Enjoolata! includes two large exhibition rooms, showcasing the wildlife of the Mara, history of the Maasai, climate challenges and solutions initiated by Basecamp Explorer.

Enjoolata! Is now on Instagram



@basecampenjoolata

Follow us there as we bring you the spirit of the Mara, virtually.







Basecamp Maasai Brand (BMB) is more than just an art and craft enterprise.

These 158 local women have not only benefited from a steady stream of income for their families, and inclusion in key financial decision making, but also the growing societal recognition of their natural ability to thrive as entrepreneurs.

In 2019, they not only hit their ambitious sales revenue target, but surpassed it by 10.5%, totalling \$95,000 USD.

In 2020, the BMB workshop has moved to Enjoolata!, where guests will be able to observe, learn, and help make their own unique jewellery, leather, or accessory. The shop is now located here as well.

Basecamp's support for female leaders is also exemplified in our own company. We employ 40% of all female guides in the Mara.

25% of our camp managers and half of our assistant camp managers are women.

Currently, over half of sales come directly from guests visiting the BMB shop at Basecamp Maasai Mara or purchasing items displayed at other camps.

International sales and private orders are available year-round. It is a great way to continue to support the BMB mamas from afar.

Orders can be placed by contacting [jemimah@basecampexplorer.com](mailto:jemimah@basecampexplorer.com)







# Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association

[www.maraconservancies.org](http://www.maraconservancies.org)



Basecamp Explorer Foundation, through the support of our partners and alongside USAID, is the largest donor to Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA), which formed to provide additional comprehensive support to any current or future Mara Conservancy.

In 2019, MMWCA carried out the registration of new leases in Pardamat Conservation Area. They also trained and provided salaries for 10 new female rangers, a critical gender initiative.

They also continued their capacity building and job training work under the Mara Vocational Training Program. 700 women received training in beadwork through the Maa Trust and Basecamp Maasai Brand, as well as 32 women in an entrepreneurship training course from the Street Business School. This is in addition to supporting 140 students at 5 other institutions including Koiyaki Guiding School (KGS), Karen Blixen Cooking School, Maasai Mara University, and Narok West Technical Training Institute.

MMWCA also set up a bee keeping economic enterprise that distributed hives to women in Naboisho, Pardamat, Siana, and Olderikesi Conservancies.

In 2020, MMWCA will continue implementing the Mara Vocational Training Program, as well as establish a goat breeding program led by women. They will also help spearhead the construction of the Wildlife Tourism College in Pardamat Conservation Area.







# Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara



The Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara (WTC) builds on the legacy of the Koiyaki Guiding School, which has graduated over 350 trained Maasai safari guides since its opening in 2005, including many of our very own.

The WTC will be unparalleled in its approach to advanced curriculum, interdisciplinary learning, and cross-cultural immersion while facilitating the highest caliber research not seen elsewhere in East Africa. The project was designed as a comprehensive solution at

the pivotal moment for the future sustainability of the Greater Mara ecosystem.

Key features of the program include the latest in high-level training needed for future employment, including climate change adaption, natural resource management, and international hospitality standards. A strategic partnership and student, teacher, and graduate exchange program with the leading Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) as well as other participating Universities has been forged. The campus includes a

international student safari camp, allowing unique integration of global and local Maasai students, allowing for genuine social growth and citizenship education.

The WTC will also host researchers, with participants from 5+ key international institutions including the Smithsonian, Colorado State University, Oxford Brooks, and Aarhus Denmark, part of the 'One Mara' Research Hub.

Finally, its profit sharing model will support not only both local student scholarships and operating expenses, but also the expansion and sustainability of Pardamat Conservation Area, where it will be located.





# Our Targets



## CLIMATE ACTION

Plant **1 million trees** by 2025.

**Scale waste collection & recycling** program in two large settlements.

Expand access to clean water for an additional **5,000 community members**.

Reduce camp waste by **50%** and increase local food supply.



## LIFE ON LAND

'Come Together' to **ensure the survival of Naboisho Conservancy** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

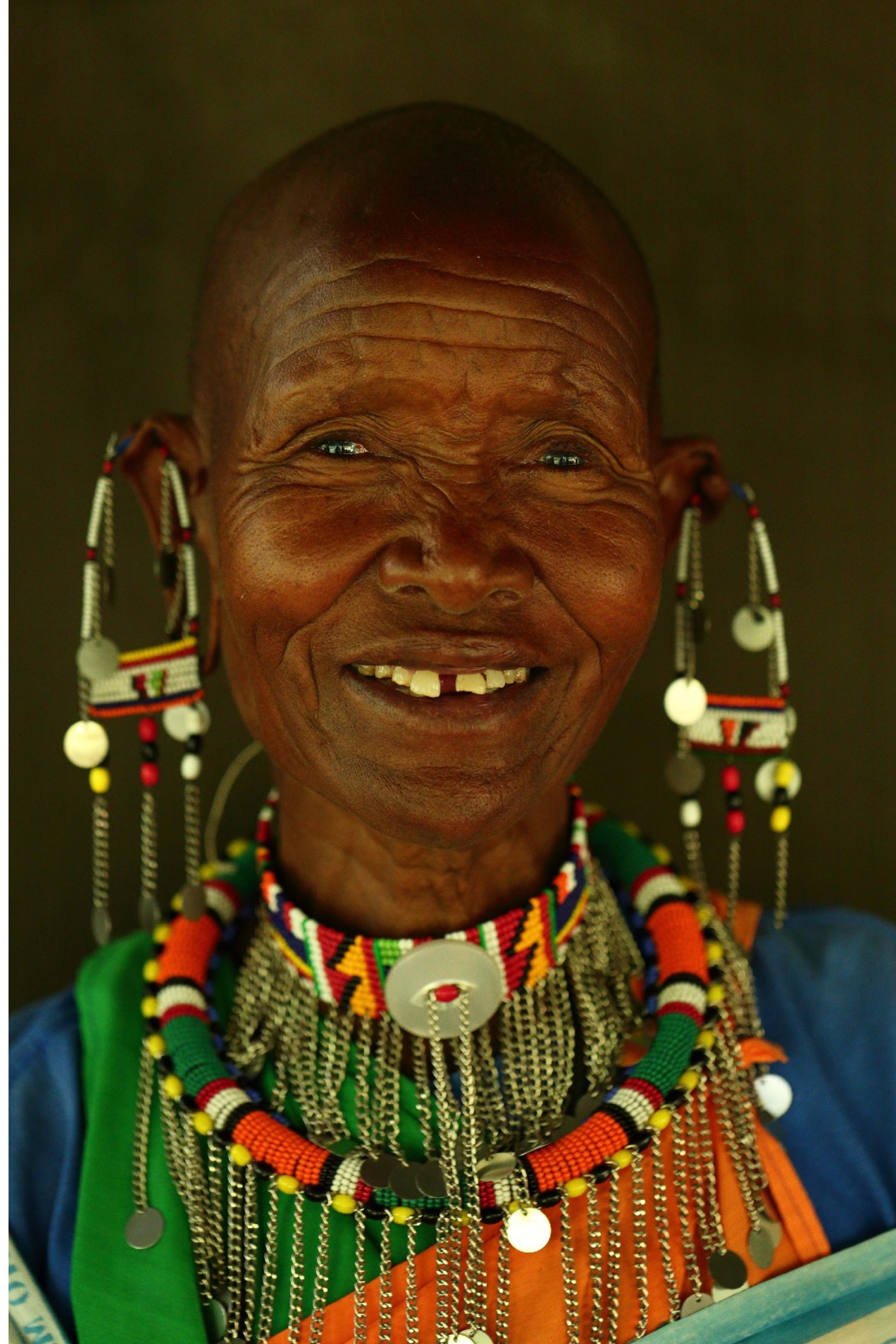
Secure **10,000 additional acres** in Pardamat Conservation Area for the free movement of wildlife.



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Through the Enjoolata! Centre and the Wildlife Tourism College partnership, establish Basecamp Explorer as the pioneer and **leader in education-based tourism**.

Directly impact over **20,000 additional community members** through large-scale livelihood improvement projects across the Mara.







# Basecamp Groups

## Major Partners

AKO Foundation  
Aqua Nirvana Foundation  
Born Global  
Bull Arkitekter  
C. Sinding Family  
Dermanordic  
DIKU  
Ecolux  
Eik Travel  
FERD  
Floriss  
Hvitserk  
Karisa Maasai Brand  
Kristiansand Dyrepark  
LGT VP  
Mellbye Arkitekter og Interiør  
MMWCA  
Norad  
Norfund  
Norrøna  
Odd Harald Hauge  
R. Indahl Family  
Summa Foundation  
Terje Resell  
YPSOMED



**“Ultimately conservation is about people.** If you don’t have sustainable development around wildlife parks, the people will have no interest in them and the parks will not survive.”

- Nelson Mandela

For more information about all our projects and to join our community of supporters, please contact [foundation@basecampexplorer.com](mailto:foundation@basecampexplorer.com)

