



Enjoolata!

A Cultural Centre opens in Masai Mara

In an effort to boost awareness of the benefits of conservation and empower the community, Basecamp Explorer, which runs a number of campsites in Maasai Mara, has launched a multipurpose centre where locals will interact with visitors wishing to boost their knowledge of the Maasai culture in the interlude between game in one of Kenya's world-renowned safari destinations.

Enjoolata Awareness and Training Centre, which was inaugurated on 23rd November 2019, aims to build the capacity of the local community placing greater emphasis on their conservation efforts as custodians of the iconic wildlife that draws tourists from across the world.

Enjoolata is a Maasai expression for the joy felt when something awesome but hidden becomes clear. The centre's aim is to become a fountain of knowledge for anyone who seeks deeper understanding of the Maasai culture and who seeks a deeper understanding of traditions. There are exhibition rooms, video editing rooms, a library, a conference room, an outdoor movie square as well as the Basecamp Maasai Brand (BMB) art & craft centre where the local Maasai women will create unique beaded and leather handicraft items for sale to visitors.

"We are community-based conservation wildlife conservationists," said Jeremiah Mutisya, The CEO of Basecamp Explorer Kenya. "The community comes first and if you can't partner with the community you



TOP: Svein Wilhelmsen addresses guests during the launch of Enjoolata on 23rd November 2019.

MIDDLE: The Enjoolata Centre exhibition room showcasing information on wildlife.

BOTTOM: The Basecamp Maasai Brand (BMB) women whose art & craft centre is located within the Enjoolata Awareness Centre.



JOHN NYAGA is the editor of Swara magazine.

can't call yourself a conservationist." The centre will also strive to "facilitate collaboration and vital cooperation between communities and conservancies in key areas such as infrastructure, security and anti-poaching, capacity building, knowledge sharing, branding and wildlife research." The ultimate objective is to promote responsible low-impact tourism while preserving the Mara ecosystem to ensure the survival of the wildlife and uplifting the living standards of the inhabitants of the people. This is in line with Basecamp's vision to demonstrate how to conserve key global ecosystems through co-existence between wildlife and humans.

Basecamp Maasai Mara was founded in 1998 and is the brainchild of Svein Wilhelmsen, a Norwegian financier, who, while on holiday in Kenya two years earlier had listened to the concerns of a Maasai elder who was anxious about the degradation of the Mara ecosystem.



Wilhelmsen felt obliged to find a solution to the environmental degradation in the Maasai Mara. He subsequently founded the safari company Basecamp Explorer aiming to use it to help the Maasai to protect their environment while benefiting from their natural and cultural heritage.

Seeing the need to practice a more wholesome form of sustainable tourism, Basecamp Explorer introduced

TOP: Learning about conservation - children with Basecamp Explorer's Maasai guide in the Enjoolata Centre.

a concept that seeks to preserve the ecosystem while empowering local communities to improve their livelihoods through capacity building, conservation awareness and women empowerment. Enjoolata is a culmination of that aspiration. ●

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