

Sustainability Report

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2020

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# Basecamp Explorer Kenya

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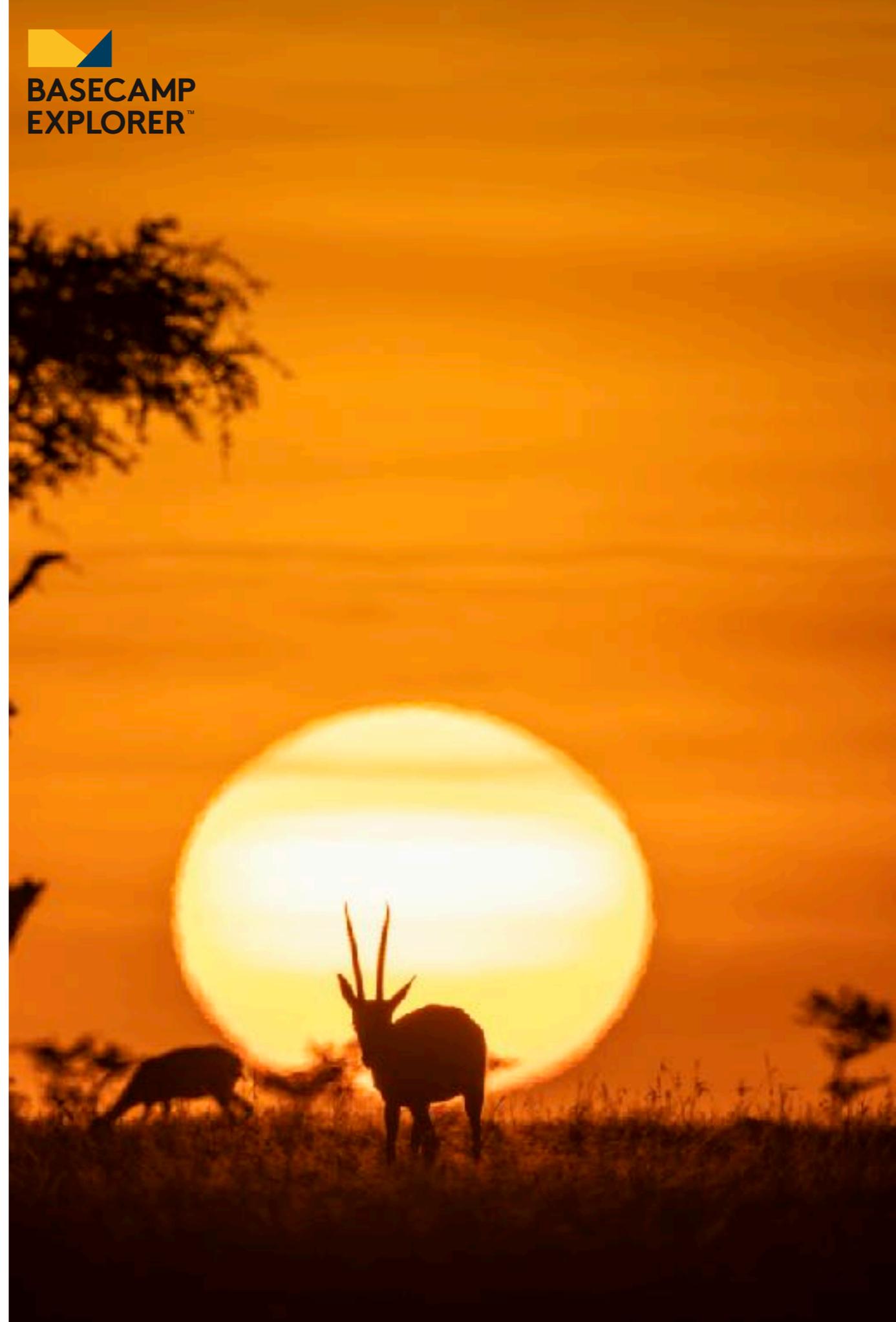
# Coming Together

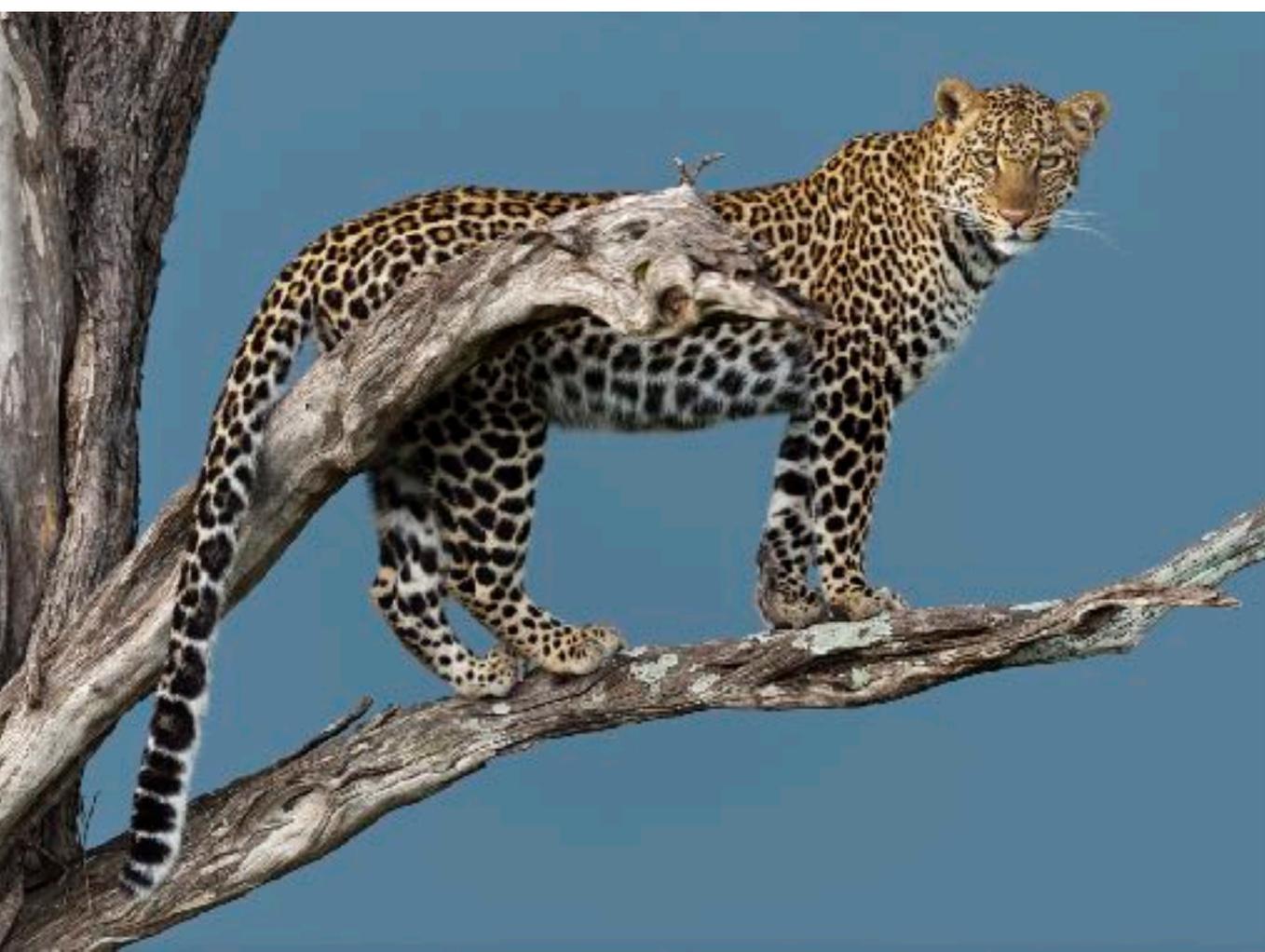
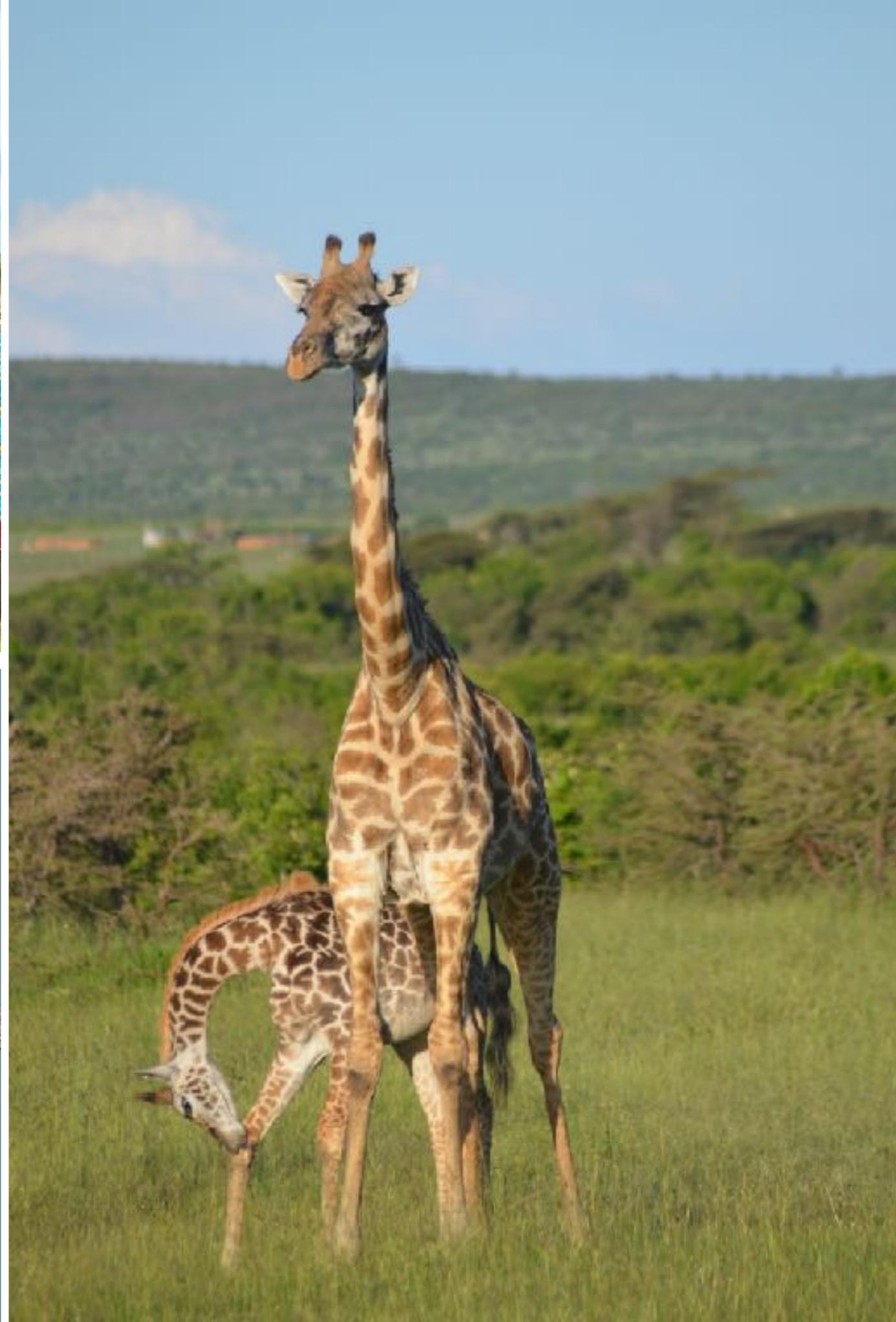
## Vision

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)







There is not a single person in the world who was unaffected by the once-in-a-generation crisis of the last year. As we published our 2019 sustainability report in the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had just begun. Our lives quickly upended, borders closed, and uncertainty prevailed. As the year progressed, we witnessed tragic loss of life and livelihoods. Thankfully, we also saw hope on the horizon through partnerships that guaranteed survival of the model of community-based conservation we have championed since our founding in 1998.

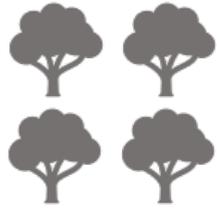
You, our dedicated partners and friends, contributed funds that made Basecamp Explorer, Naboisho Conservancy, and the wider Greater Maasai Mara prevail and prosper despite hardships. We were able to reopen our camps in August, with protective measures in place, and drove forward with our environmental and community initiatives. Sadly, at the publishing of this 2020 report, Kenya has again entered a lockdown due to rising cases of COVID-19. We hope the situation improves quickly. But rather than focus on the challenges that may lay ahead in the coming weeks and months, we've chosen to focus on the people, the projects, and our future as a Company and Foundation, which we believe is brighter now than ever.

This includes highlighting the work that our dedicated team completed while our camps were closed, including building a new borehole, which serves 500 community members between Basecamp Maasai Mara camp and Leopard Hill. We also planted 90,000 trees in our reforestation project, and have 80,000 seedlings prepared to plant in 3 plots in Pardamat Conservation Area - with plans to scale rapidly in the area and invest in a revenue generating carbon credit program. We also focused on expanding education programs at the newly opened Enjoolata! Centre, and drove forward with the exciting Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara. Together these projects bring the youth of the Mara into conservation efforts, ensuring they continue into the next generation.

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

Svein Wilhelmsen  
Founder, Basecamp Explorer Kenya  
Chair, Basecamp Explorer Foundation

# 2020: At A Glance

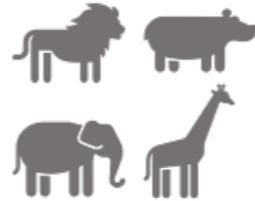


**90,000 trees** planted, with an additional **80,000 seedlings ready** to plant in new scaling project

4 boreholes and 1 natural spring restored providing **clean water to over 3,500 community members**

**2,863 more acres of land** secured for wildlife by de-fencing; **16,500 total**

**Replenishing** of lions, cheetahs, and elephants in Pardamat Conservation Area



**Crowdfunded \$125,000** and fundraised additional support to the 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 **204 Maasai women** through the Basecamp Maasai Brand collective

## Recognitions



Basecamp Explorer Kenya is now a member of The Long Run - a prestigious nature-based tourism membership organization that seeks to support, connect, and inspire business to excel in following the highest standards of sustainability encompassing Conservation, Community, Culture, and Commerce (4Cs).

Our beloved head chef, Benson Ole Soit, was named among the 100 chefs to be featured in the East African cuisine resource book.





# Our Core Sustainability Initiatives



LIFE ON LAND



CLIMATE ACTION



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.



# NABOISHO CONSERVANCY



On March 28th 2010, Naboisho – which means “coming together” in Maa language – was formalized when landowners signed 15-year land leases to dedicate it to wildlife conservation. This long term lease agreement has now been extended to a 25 year lease agreement, with more than 80% of Naboisho landowners signed on to date, showing a tremendous long-term commitment.

The core economic model of Naboisho Conservancy is the fixed lease fee paid by tourism operators, which goes directly to sustaining the monthly lease fees. In addition,

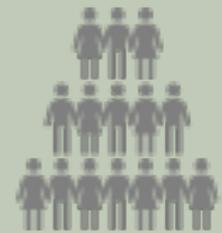
landowners benefit from controlled grazing, community projects, and vital jobs for Maasai youth.

Naboisho Conservancy covers 53,446 acres, and is the second largest of 16 Conservancies in the area.

Each month, 613 landowners receive a monthly lease payment in exchange for dedicating their land to wildlife conservation.

When you stay in Naboisho Conservancy, \$116 per person/per night - approximately 25% 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.

On April 22nd, we launched a crowdfunding campaign to support these costs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud to announce that we raised **\$125,000.**



To anyone who contributed, thank you for your generosity during such a difficult time for everyone. This “coming together” is the spirit of Naboisho.





# Pardamat Conservation Area



On November 9, 2020, landowners of Pardamat Conservation Area (PCA) signed new 15 year lease agreements, extending their existing agreements through January 2033. This is a remarkable achievement of grassroots communication with the community on the benefits of dedicating their land to wildlife conservation.

PCA is the only Mara Conservancy that is premised on a triple-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

triple-use model for unique tourist offerings - but for its heavily fenced settlements and overgrazed land. This fencing has dramatically increased since 2014, before which it was almost non-existent.

The main livelihood in PCA remains pastoralism: 90% is agricultural land where income is generated through the sale of cows, sheep, and goats. 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.



# Pardamat Conservation Area



These marginalized 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 has provided funding to landowners to lease the most important wildlife corridors.

These first phases of 16,500 total acres open to wildlife conservation have already seen enormous change in the habitat for wildlife,

with a population of 2 resident wild dog packs totaling 16 returning after 30 years. There has also been an increase in sightings of lions, cheetahs, and elephants in the area.

PCA landowners also agreed to remove existing fencing to open an additional 2,863 acres. The covered wood will be recycled to use in a reforestation project, modeled after our initiative at Basecamp Maasai Mara, at community schools, churches, and clinics.

Other improvement programs have been completed in 2020, including the construction of a new cattle yard and spray race for a livestock fattening program.

But these strides toward humans, wildlife, and livestock living harmoniously together require heightened security efforts for the safety of all parties.

PCA is currently protected by 21 rangers, who receive frequent training on how to handle incidents of human-wildlife conflict and other issues specific to the PCA model. For example, in October, the troop received a special 2-day training on the heavily threatened pangolin. These trainings have resulted in swifter action when incidents occur and improved communication with Kenya Wildlife Service and the community. We are also working to provide lion-proof bomas to keep livestock secure overnight. To date, 30 have been installed with plans to increase this number substantially in 2021.

To continue all of this work and ensure PCA is financially sustainable in the long-run, a holistic approach is needed to address the urgent economic needs of the community to support conservation efforts. This must include for-profit tourism investment, of which Basecamp Explorer will be a leader in.



# Pardamat Conservation Area



Basecamp Explorer will soon 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. Long term, 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 at:

[marketing@basecampexplorer.com](mailto:marketing@basecampexplorer.com)

We are also fundraising for another 10,000 acres, improved infrastructure, as well as comprehensive livelihood targets including access to quality education, family planning services, sewage, clean water, and improved healthcare to combat the broader issues facing the community.

These efforts are already underway.

In November 2020, we celebrated the restoration of the Koiyaki natural spring, which

will serve 1,500 community members with a sustainable source of clean water.

We also began construction on a 12km road which will greatly improve access to the upcoming Wildlife Tourism College, which you will read more about on pages 18 & 19.

Proving that people, livestock, and wildlife can live together again in harmony has the potential to change the future of conservation around the world.





# Reforestation



This includes species-specific data for now and the future.

Developing this as well as detailed habitat distribution and mapping is critical for scaling the programme and tracking its success.

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.

At the start of the year, the forest held over 200,000 trees. This year, we planted 90,000 more, bringing the total to 300,000 trees.

The project is also ready for rapid expansion into Pardamat Conservation Area and Loita Plains.

For PCA, we have prepared 80,000 seedlings for planting in 2021 in 3 already defined areas covering over 2,000 acres. The area can support up to 2 million trees.

We anticipate seeing the same success in PCA that we have seen at Basecamp Maasai Mara: improved rainfall, animal diversity, and soil qualities.

Finally, we are currently undertaking a high-level scientific study of carbon sequestration levels in the project.





# Large-Scale Carbon Finance Program



Together with some of our valued partners, Basecamp Explorer Foundation has commissioned a feasibility analysis for a future carbon credit program for the Greater Maasai Mara ecosystem.

The proposal includes a comprehensive and interconnected portfolio, including planned reforestation, REDD+ (avoided deforestation), natural reforestation, and grassland restoration.

In particular, there is a window of opportunity to secure land in Nyekweri Forest. Land ownership has recently been de-regulated, and commercial deforestation is expected to accelerate an already high deforestation (25% of the forest has been lost in the last 15 years).

Basecamp Explorer is committed to audacious thinking such as this for the future of the ecosystem.



## What is the Carbon Market?

It is the voluntary purchase of an amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered from the air.

1 carbon credit = 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>

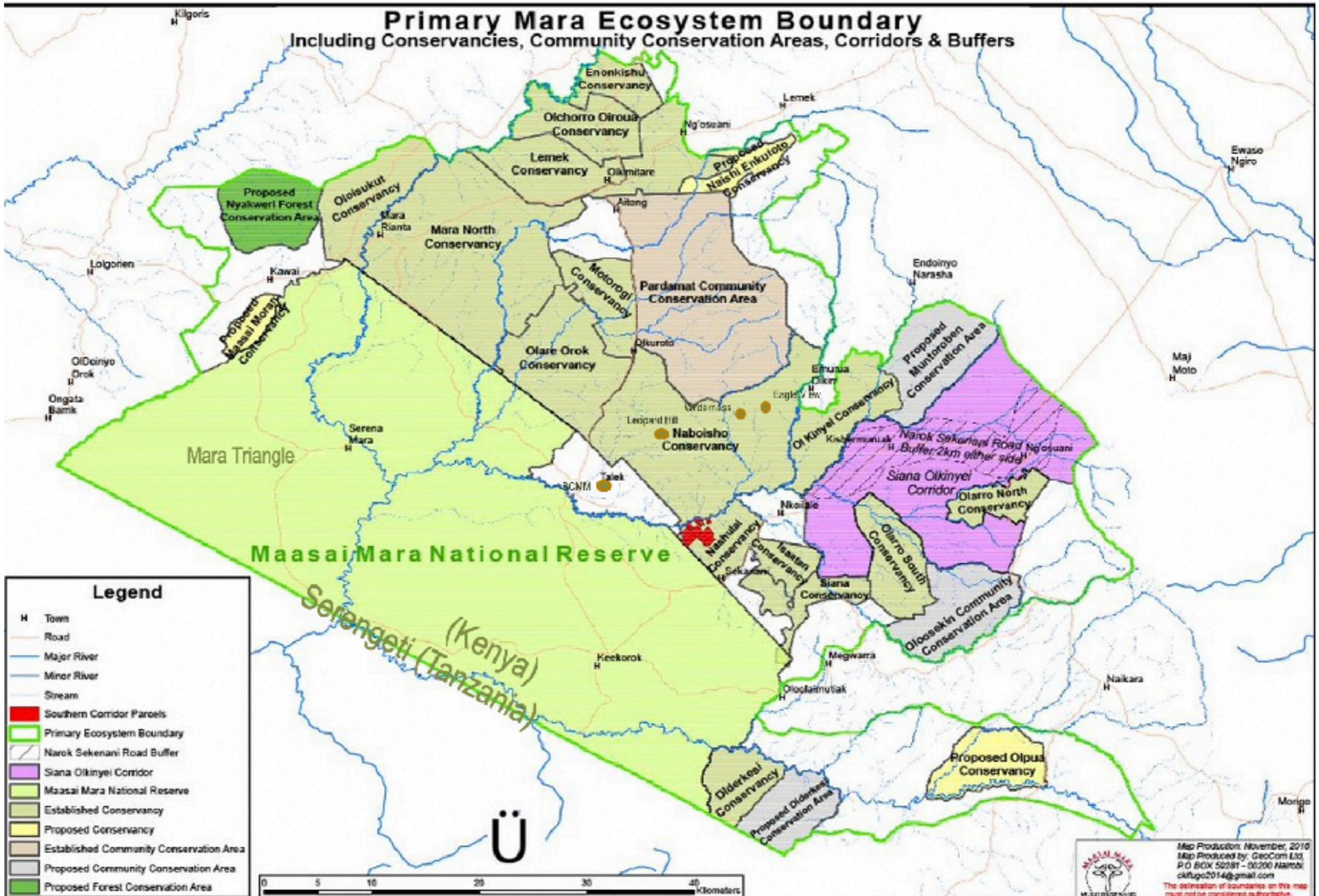
The current price per credit ranges from \$9-17 USD, with trends strongly in favor of well-managed biodiversity projects

**“To restore stability on our planet,  
we must restore its biodiversity, the  
very thing that we have removed.  
We must re-wild the wild”**

**- Sir David Attenborough**



# Large-Scale Carbon Finance Program: Ecosystem Map





## Further Drought Mitigation



In 2018, the University of Notre Dame's Global Adaptation Initiative Index ranked Kenya 36th among all countries in vulnerability to climate change effects - and just 152nd in terms of preparedness to deal with these effects.

Kenya's mean annual temperature has been increasing at a rate of 0.34 degrees Celsius per decade over the last 30 years, resulting in unpredictable weather patterns - prolonged drought in the dry season and dangerous flash floods in the wet season. We saw this in effect this January, when the Talek River

flooded, causing an evacuation of Basecamp Maasai Mara and temporary closure.

Meanwhile, in the Mara ecosystem, it is estimated that close to 90% of families still use unimproved water sources. There is an urgent need for systems to provide sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water, particularly as the possibility of dangerous drought increases. 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 raised on tall posts which drain into a water storage tank. The tanks are guaranteed for 20 years, and only cost \$100 per year to maintain.

Together with our partners, Basecamp Explorer built one such system in the spring at our Basecamp Maasai Mara camp - with a 1,500 square meter roof and 100,000 litre tank that can support camp needs, 500 community members, and irrigate the new vegetable garden.

We also added an additional borehole, between Basecamp Maasai Mara and Leopard Hill Camp, that serves 1,500 people.

Looking ahead to 2021, we have plans to revive the Imbitin spring in Pardamat Conservation Area, which will pipe clean water to a school and additional access areas for the community.



## Additional Climate Action Initiatives



As small trading and settlement centres in the periphery of conservation areas grow, poor waste management poses an increasing risk to wildlife and our rivers - single use plastic can travel all the way to Lake Victoria from the Talek and Mara River. In the past years, we have ramped up our recycling efforts in Talek and 10 lodges bordering the Talek river, and partnered with a new organisation in Nairobi to further efforts toward a more circular economy. All plastic waste now collected in community clean up is converted into a fibre

to be used in the production of clothing like t-shirts.

In 2020, the project collected 5779 kgs of plastic and 472 kgs of glass bottles from Talek and participating camps. We are also ready to expand operations in Aitong, the main settlement in Pardamat Conservation Area. The project aims to collect 1 tonne of plastic bottles per month in 2021.

We also refurbished the existing solar power systems at Basecamp Maasai Mara and Eagle

View to ensure bare minimum use of the back up generator, and made schedule adjustments to reduce power use. These camps also received new charcoal refrigeration systems, which provide effective cold storage of perishable foods, further reducing reliance on the solar systems. All our camps are using new eco-friendly (and COVID-19 certified) cleaning products for all housekeeping, kitchen, and food & beverage areas.

At Basecamp Maasai Mara, we will continue to expand our new vegetable garden - reducing 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 2021. 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 also have plans to utilise water meters in all of our camps to track and reduce water usage considerably, leaving more available for the community.

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.



# Enjoolata! Centre at Basecamp Maasai Mara



“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.

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, all which connect to an open courtyard for events and films.

Enjoolata! is used as a training centre for primary and secondary students, as well as other youth. Prior to COVID-19, the centre hosted two groups of students from Koiyaki Guiding School, a group of stakeholders from Pardamat Conservation Area, and hundreds

of our own guests interested in learning more about Maasai culture through the experience of hands-on bead working.

We are also in the final stage of developing a national and international sustainability education program, anchored at the Enjoolata!’s facilities to launch this fall. It will span the areas of the Mara community-based conservation model, livelihood improvement, rangeland management, and female entrepreneurship and be customisable for various groups in age and size.

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

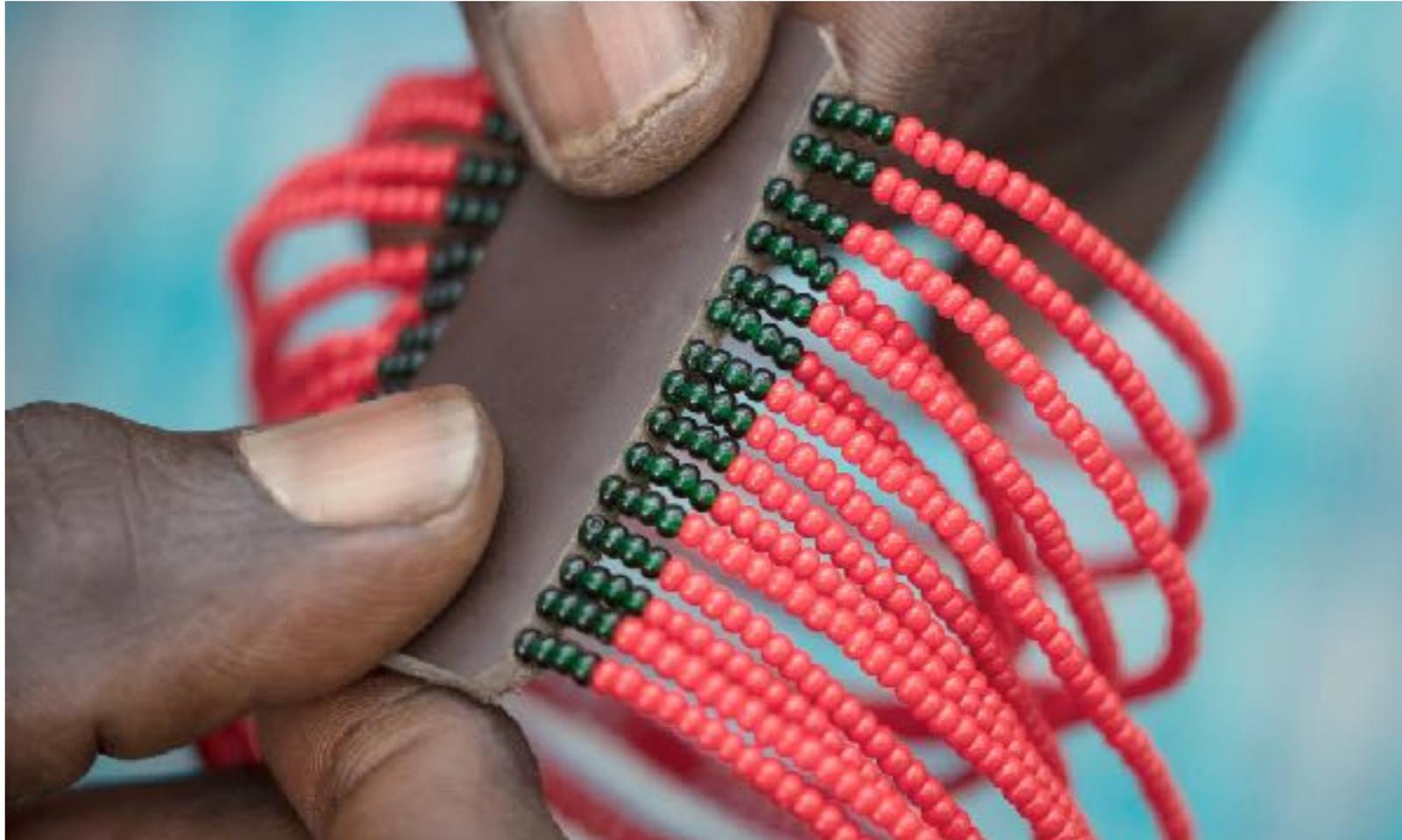
## Practical Sustainability Education



If you are interested in more information regarding Basecamp’s upcoming initiatives for families and individuals, please contact [sarah@basecampexplorer.com](mailto:sarah@basecampexplorer.com)



# Basecamp Maasai Brand



Basecamp Maasai Brand (BMB) is more than just a craft enterprise. These 204 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. Over 75% of an item's price, minus material cost, goes directly to the artisan.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, we were able to distribute food to the women for their families 4 times during 2020 to help support

700 lives affected by the pandemic. In 2021, the BMB is focusing on both local partnerships with camps but also international orders such as Dyreparken Zoo. We are also looking to pilot additional revenue generating activities for them, such as beekeeping.

Basecamp's unwavering 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.

"I earn income from beadwork so I am able to cater for my family needs. I have also attained skills to enable me to start my beadwork projects in the future. And since moving to the Enjoolata! Centre, we are able to work many of us together and adhere to Covid-19 measures, as the building is spacious enough to allow us to keep social distance and hand wash as well as sanitize."

-Noolamala Ketikai





# Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara



Increasing opportunity for Maasai youth has been a critical part of Basecamp Explorer's mission since our founding.

The Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara (WTC) will build 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 own guides.

The WTC not only relocates, expands, and greatly improves KGS, but also includes an

international education and research centre for knowledge-seekers across the globe to study topics ranging from animal migration routes to anthropology and beyond.

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. In addition to safari guiding, it will offer degrees in hospitality management, wildlife technician, and environmental studies - the latest in high-level

training needed for future employment.

A strategic partnership and student, teacher, and graduate exchange program with the leading Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) as well as other participating Universities is planned. 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.

In 2020, capital funds for the initial construction were secured, as well as operating expenses for the first three years of operation. Ingrid Bull and Ajas Mellbye have designed the site, pro bono, that encapsulates the interconnected mission of the WTC.

Basecamp Explorer Foundation is currently fundraising an additional \$600,000 in capital funding to ensure the highest sustainability standards of the site are met.



# Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association

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



Increasing the participation of the Narok County in conservation activities is a key priority for MMWCA in 2021. The creation of a Mara-wide ecosystem management plan, a policy document that guide future development, is underway. It will then be combined with the county's spatial plan to create a 5-year integrated development plan.

The Kenya Tourism & Wildlife Minister Hon Najib Balala, pictured left, recently visited the Mara Conservancies to kick-off this ecosystem planning. His visit was a signal of how important this process is to the National Government.

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.

As of the end of 2020, the 16 Mara Conservancies cover 378,824 acres. 51 Tourism Partners contributed \$7.5 million USD in lease payments to 15,711 households,

while they also contained approximately 2,000 local tourism and 362 ranger jobs.

In 2020, we were heavily focused on securing short and long term operating expenses grants to sustain all the Mara Conservancies during COVID-19. Working closely, concessions were made by all stakeholders, and an agreement was met.



# Our Targets



## LIFE ON LAND

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



## CLIMATE ACTION

Plant **1 million trees** by 2025.

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

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

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



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Through the Enjoolata! Centre and the Wildlife Tourism College partnership, establish Basecamp Explorer as a 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 Long-Term Partners

AKO Foundation

Aqua Nirvana Foundation

Born Global

Bull Arkitekter

C. Sinding Family

Derma Nordic

DIKU

Ecolux

FERD

Floriss

Hvitserk

Karisa Maasai Brand

Kristiansand Dyrepark

LGT VP

Mellbye Arkitekter og Interiør

MMWCA

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## Join Us Today

To learn more about supporting Basecamp Explorer Foundation, please contact us.

Requests for information - Worldwide, non-USA:  
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Requests for information - USA-based Supporters:  
[johnparker@bcfusa.org](mailto:johnparker@bcfusa.org)

