



WILDLIFE TOURISM COLLEGE OF MAASAI MARA

REIMAGINING THE LINK BETWEEN EDUCATION, SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM, AND JOB CREATION FOR COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Project Summary

The Wildlife Tourism College (WTC) of Maasai Mara will be unparalleled in its approach to advanced courses, experiential learning, and cross-cultural immersion while facilitating the highest caliber research and an innovative sustainable financing model not seen elsewhere in East Africa.

The WTC builds on the legacy of the Koyaiki Guide School (KGS), which has graduated over 300 trained Maasai safari guides since its opening 15 years ago. Key features of the expanded WTC program include:

- The latest in high-level training needed for future employment in the Greater Mara Ecosystem and throughout the region, 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
- Unique integration of global and local Maasai students to mutual benefit; allowing for genuine social growth and 'G(local) citizenship education
- An on-site research hub, with participants from 5+ key international universities, to launch crucial impact measurements and further contribute to programs
- A profit-sharing model which supports both local student scholarships and operating expenses but also the expansion and sustainability of Pardamat, a groundbreaking dual-use conservation area, through land-lease payments

Due to the WTC's unique model and vast potential, the \$1.3M in capital expenses needed have been secured through support from LGT Venture Philanthropy, a leading global impact fund, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

An additional \$725,000 in operating expenses is needed to support the project for the first three years of its development, from 2021-2023.

This will ensure the WTC is the catalyst for not only highly trained Maasai youth throughout Africa and a new generation of global students ensuring the Maasai Mara's future, but one for comprehensive, innovative conservation efforts worldwide.

Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together.

Project Background

Pardamat Conservation Area (PCA)

Pardamat Conservation Area (PCA) is the only Mara Conservancy that is premised on a dual-use conservation model, where the community's 850 landowners have legally registered their 26,000 hectares of land as a wildlife conservation 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 on to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Being adjacent to other conservancies exposes communities in PCA to human-wildlife conflicts while receiving limited benefits from tourism. As climate change continues to bring unpredictable

flood and drought patterns to the region, PCA's higher rainfall and higher capacity will be critical to supporting the 5 Conservancies that surround it, together totaling over 67% of the entire Greater Mara ecosystem.

PCA is also the only Mara Conservancy that lacks tourism 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. This hinders PCA's ability to be financially sustainable through bed night fees, the successful model seen in other Conservancies.

These marginalized landowners and community members – who lack alternative income sources – 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, organizations like Basecamp Explorer Foundation through its partners have been and continue to secure short-term grant funding to pay landowners to lease their land, impose cattle herd limits, and provide predator proof bomas - removing fences, restoring grass health, and guarding against human-wildlife conflict in the process.

This 'Phase 1' of 15,000 total acres open to wildlife conservation has been funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), LGT Venture Philanthropy, Kristiansand Dyrepark, and Basecamp Explorer Foundation United States via Basecamp Explorer Foundation. We are confident in continuing to secure additional grant funding for opening more phases of the PCA strategic plan.

This work to date has been a success. In September 2019, PCA landowners agreed to remove fencing to open an additional 501 acres to wildlife conservation. The recovered wood will be recycled and used for a reforestation project. And as expected, wildlife is returning. After 30 years in near extinction, a population of resident wild dogs has been identified in the PCA hills.



To continue this work and ensure PCA is financially sustainable in the long-term, however, a holistic approach is needed to address the urgent economic needs of the community so they continue to support conservation efforts.

This must include engaging for-profit tourism investment.

Koiyaki Guide School (KGS)

In 2005, the Koiyaki Guide School (KGS) was established in Naboisho Conservancy as a community empowerment facility to improve the standards of safari guiding and offer economic opportunity to local Maasai. Since then, 331 youth have received the Kenya Professional Safari Guide Bronze certificate. At its highest, 80% of the guides found employment upon graduation, though the rate is currently 63% due to market saturation of this limited certification.

Despite KGS's successes, the hiring needs of tourist operators in the 15 Conservancies and Maasai Mara National Reserve are evolving, with more citing the need for comprehensive hospitality training as well as additional language and cultural training. It is critical for local Maasai to continue to meet the demands of this industry, as it represents as much as 80% of total revenue for the county. This includes being able to adapt quickly to changing demographics and tastes of international guests. For example, Chinese tourism in the Maasai Mara has increased by 11% in 2017 alone.

“The most rewarding thing is seeing my people, local people, getting benefits from wildlife and tourism. People are starting to realize that animals are good and can be economic drivers for the community.”

– Simon, recent graduate of Koyaiiki Guide School

Project Elements

1. The College

Relocating and expanding Koiyaki Guide School (KGS) as the Wildlife Tourism College of Maasai Mara (WTC) is the core of the project.

In consultation with Tourism Partners and Conservancy leaders on employment skill gaps, the College has designed three new degree programs in addition to the already accredited Safari guiding certificate, including Hospitality Management, Wildlife Technician, and Environmental Technologies. A partnership with the Maasai Mara University will ensure proper accreditation through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETA) at the Ministry of Education in Kenya.

The original Board of Trustees for KGS, which remained unchanged for over a decade, is currently being restructured with a focus on bringing additional women and representatives from the tourism industry and local government. A new Principle has been hired, who brings 15+ years of working experience in the Mara across areas of community development, species ecology, and sustainable tourism. In his last role as Assistant Lecturer at Maasai Mara University, he taught undergraduate students in subjects spanning wildlife tourism and natural resource management.

In April, members from the College team, including representatives from the **Norwegian University of Life Sciences** visited the **Southern African Wildlife College**, a leading vocational training program outside of Kruger National Park with high caliber Professors, researchers, and offerings. An official partnership on curriculum development, teaching methods and training, exchange programs, and technical advice (including on various international coursework certification policies) is now being formed.

There are additional plans to create similar partnerships with one European and one American institution.

A Master's Degree program is also being developed, to begin by 2023, for advanced students and continuing education, to attract students throughout Kenya and East Africa. The two-year program will be in partnership with host universities, where students spend the majority of their classroom time but have a 6-month fieldwork residency at the WTC.

Elevating the academic quality of the the College is of great importance to the success of the model. This demands hiring top teachers at competitive salaries.

2. Education Tourism & The EduCamp

Education Tourism is one of the fastest growing markets in Global Tourism and one that has been largely unexplored on a coordinated, large-scale venture in the Maasai Mara. The market includes high-school and university student travel, young adult and mid-career volunteers, academic researchers, and corporate retreats.

As these groups vary in budget and length of stay, while all requiring access to large meeting rooms, computer facilities, and other workspaces, a versatile program is needed to adequately accommodate them outside of existing Mara infrastructure.

Educational Tourism is rooted in cross-cultural exchange, with an emphasis on applied learning, language immersion, and practical experience. Placing the EduCamp within the WTC allows for genuine and meaningful interaction with Maasai students, faculty, researchers, and the local community. Within the first three years of

operation, as wildlife replenishes, guests of the EduCamp will also have access to certain parts of Naboisho Conservancy for game drives.

Daily operation of the EduCamp will be managed by a professional local operator upon completion of tender.

“Guiding is a science-oriented career. And how to handle different races of people from the west or Asia, so that gave me a background on how people view different things. **The School introduced me to the world.**”



3. Research

The Maasai Mara has long been a source of vital environmental research relating to wildlife movement, endangered populations, and climate change. With the growth of the community conservancy model, there is also a need to expand social research and impact assessments from Anthropologists.

Currently, research in the Mara is centrally uncoordinated, leaving it difficult for all stakeholders to benefit from this important data. Managing research is within MMWCA's mandate but they currently lack the capacity to do so at their headquarters, making the WTC an important launchpad for such activities. Species specific initiatives currently underway in the Mara, including the Mara Predator Hub and the Mara Elephant Project, will have a dedicated access to the facilities.

A **Mara Research Council** has been created to facilitate this. They have established partnerships with two leading U.S. Institutions to date, the Smithsonian Institution and Colorado State University, and are actively pursuing additional partnership in Europe.

4. Community Capacity Building

The final phase of securing Pardamat includes the area's most populated areas – settlements including Aitong, Olemoncho, Endoinyo Erinka, Mbitin, and Olesere. Improving infrastructure and general livelihoods in these areas is a key challenge facing PCA.

Many organizations are currently coordinating livelihood improvement projects, including Maa Trust and the Mara Training Center. This includes beadwork, honey, cattle management, and others, as in order for PCA to thrive, a market for livestock products must be established as well as successful income-generating cultural manyattas.

The WTC will provide a functional workspace for these organizations to plan & execute projects while serving as a resource for these community members to gain regular access to ongoing activities. The proximity to the EduCamp will allow programs to incorporate community volunteer and intern projects surrounding these needs.

Additional Details

WTC Location & Design

The selected site for the WTC sits on a 50 acre plot of land with a vital natural spring, both already donated by the PCA Community. It is in an easily accessible location with plans to build a new access road and airstrip. The total area of the hub is approximately 1,000m², which includes close to 100 beds for students, visiting professors, and researchers.

A leading pro-bono architect has designed the WTC Hub's facilities to mimic its interdependent program, while also focusing on the highest standards of sustainability. This includes recycling existing KGS equipment, using bricks from a local social enterprise, a solar power system, water tanks for rainwater harvesting, and a garden. The hub will have a 150m panorama view of PCA and the neighboring conservancies.

High quality technology and connectivity will also be a priority to ensure students and visitors have the IT facilities, reliable internet, and equipment needed.

A trusted professional with extensive experience in the region has completed a construction assessment based on the architect's plans.

The building permit has been applied for, with approval anticipated in October 2019.

Partnerships & Business Development

Higher learning institutions that have existing programs in East Africa are key partnership targets. These include The School for Field Studies, a semester course in wildlife studies that welcomes students from over 100 US universities outside Amboseli National Park, and Princeton and Columbia Universities, which have individual programs. It also includes targeting Alumni Travel programs of such universities, either directly through their staff or working with their tour operators like Royal Adventures, Classic Journeys, and Academic Arrangements Abroad. It also includes building relationships with the United States International University (USIU) and the University of Nairobi, as well as exchange partnerships with the Southern Africa Wildlife College – who is also a partner in curriculum development for the Koiyaki Guide School – and other related institutions throughout Africa.

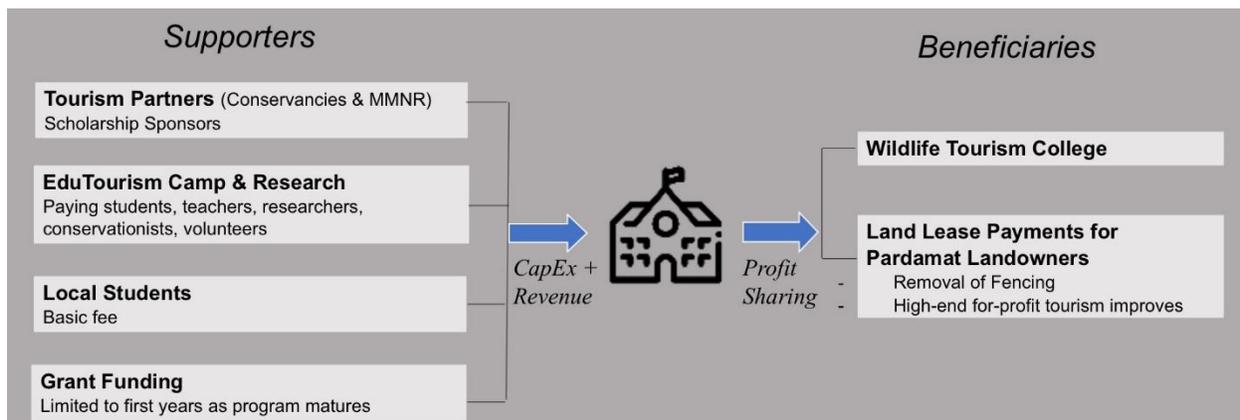
We are also looking more broadly into the market to build new program offerings with high profile organization that do not yet have East Africa trips, both at the student and adult level, including Smithsonian Student Adventures and Board of Trustee Travel for environmental and cultural institutions like natural history and science museums.

Key Milestones

- ❖ Fundraising Activities / CapEx: Secured Spring 2019
- ❖ Fundraising Activities / OpEx: Fall 2019
- ❖ Construction: Fall 2019-2020
- ❖ Land-Lease payments for PCA Phase 3: 2020
- ❖ Opening WTC: the College & the EduCamp: January 2021 student intake
- ❖ Inaugural International Exchange: 2021
- ❖ Master's Degree Offered: 2023
- ❖ Development of high-end sustainable tourism camps: 2020 – 2023

Financial Sustainability

The project's concept is centered on a sustainable finance model. As the success of the EduCamp increases, the benefits to students and the community increase. Operating expenses for the College are expected to be covered by profits and support from Tourism Partners following an initial 3-year scholarship grant period.



Stakeholders & Partners

Basecamp Explorer Foundation (BCEF), which has been completing community projects for 20 years, has been mandated by Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association and its Partners to fundraise for the investment required for this partnership. MMWCA will be the implementing & reporting partner of the grant to BCEF.

Basecamp Explorer Kenya also plans to bring the first for-profit tourism development to PCA starting in 2020. The site is nearby the WTC campus, and an access road will be constructed so guests can move freely between the two sites for programs and engagements.

Tourism Industry:

The tourism sector is the largest generator of revenue in the Greater Mara, with approximately 170 tourist facilities containing over 4,000 beds and employing an estimated 2,000 employees. This is a crucial source of employment and income for local individuals. This program will work closely with these employers to adapt to demand and evaluate success of graduates employed, openings, with a special emphasis on promotion to management and other leadership positions.

International Partnerships:

Strategic partnerships have been built with The South African Wildlife College and the Norwegian Institute of Life Sciences on curriculum development and exchange programs.

Research partnerships have been built with the Smithsonian Institution and Colorado State University, with additional anticipated.

Local Partnerships:

There are also numerous local stakeholder organizations that will be involved in the project including Maasai Mara University, Maa Trust, Mara Training Center, Karen Blixen Cooking School, Narok West Training Institute, Mara Discovery Center, African Impact, the Mara Predator Hub, and the Mara Elephant Project.

Impacts

The WTC is rooted in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly #8 Decent Work & Economic Growth & #4 Quality Education but also its larger impacts to community and environmental

sustainability including #5 Gender Equality, #12 Responsible Consumption and Production, #6 Clean Water & Sanitation, #15 Life on Land, and #13 Climate Action.

Through a profit-sharing model, 40 full-time students are taught per year, with approximately 40 additional full-time teaching, administration, and facility employment opportunities. 400 Maasai landowners in the community surrounding the College will also receive lease payments for their land. It is estimated for every job or land lease in the Maasai Mara, 7 additional people receive economic advancement – resulting in 4,000 total beneficiaries in the first 3 years of the program. There will be additional short-term beneficiaries, such as in a locally recruited construction team.

Overall, the revitalization of PCA will have a cascade effect into the lives of its over 5,000 residents, and ensure the continued environmental success of conservancies that surround it.

More broadly, in 2013, following the success of conservancies, the Kenyan Government validated the model in its Wildlife Conservation and Management Act. The Act identifies community conservancies as the best instruments for protecting and managing the 65% of Kenya's remaining wildlife which lives outside designated protected areas like the National Reserve (MMNR). Over 6.3 million hectares – an area larger than Norway – have now been protected while providing economic benefit to an estimated 700,000 people.

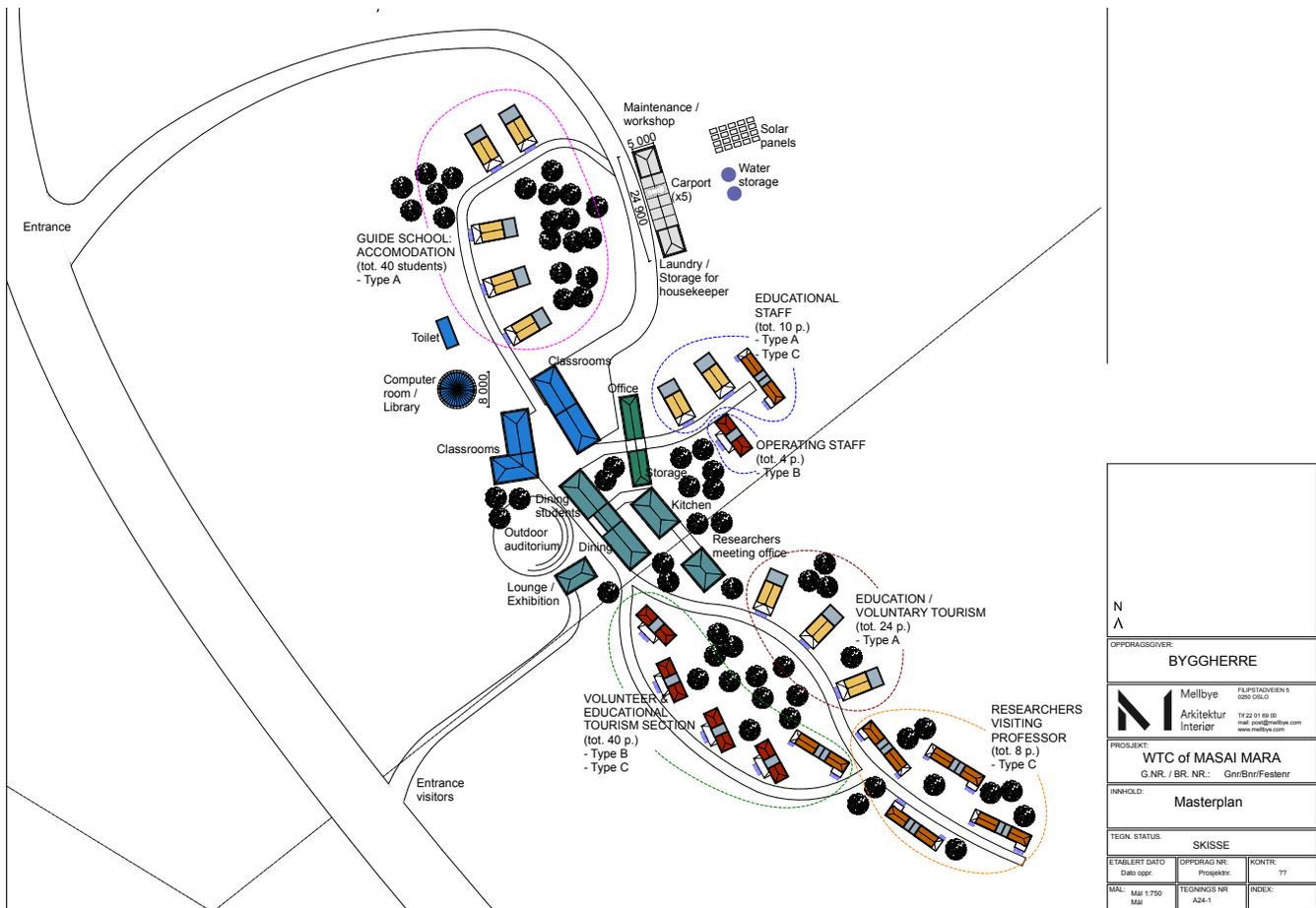
But the extremely high rate of population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the vast majority of the world's remaining large mammals reside, presents a challenge to which now dual-use conservancies like PCA are the only solution.

It is our expectation that these interventions in PCA can bring about the next wave of community-based conservation efforts, inspiring further economic growth and environmental protection, while bringing experience-driven travel to guests worldwide.

Appendix A: Financials

BUDGET	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Notes
EXPENSES				
Final Estimate	200,000	250,000	275,000	725,000 over 3 years
CONTRIBUTIONS				
DIKU Scholarship Support (end in 2021)	-21,000			-21,000 (ends in 2021)
Family Participation	-9,000	-12,000	-12,000	-33,000
Grant from BCEF and its network	-170,000	-238,000	-263,000	-671,000 over 3 years
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Appendix B: Map of WTC & PCA



Access Road to Koiyaki Guiding School (KGS)

