



# PRESS RELEASE

**EMBARGOED: 00:01h Wednesday 14 March 2018**

The ESCAPE Foundation along with Well Told Story, African Wildlife Foundation, African Conservation Centre and the Conservation Alliance of Kenya will today proudly present at the KWS HQ, **MABINGWA**, the film that follows the lives of four young people from four corners of Kenya, exploring their relationship to nature and what barriers they face to appreciate and benefit from Kenya's natural resources and to engage in its conservation. The film **MABINGWA** is produced by three-time Emmy Award winning film maker Matt Mays and based on research that explores young people's differing views on conservation and wildlife with the goal to lay the foundation for a new approach to greater engagement by Kenyans in the protection of our natural resources.

The ground-breaking research reflected in **MABINGWA** has found young Kenyans feel detached from wildlife conservation, but simple steps could increase their support to protect their country's precious natural resources before it's too late.

The research, commissioned by the ESCAPE Foundation and undertaken by Well Told Story found four segments of young people.

**Conditional conservationists** who have many opportunities to engage in conservation but whose positive engagement wanes when incentives decline;

**Self-starting conservationists** who genuinely care about wildlife but don't always have the necessary knowledge or financial support;

**Non-conservationists** for whom wildlife is part of a fairy tale and not part of their reality;

**Philanthropic conservationists** for whom every engagement earns them social capital.

These findings have immense implications that can guide the authorities and conservation organizations as they work to conserve natural resources including forest and water-catchment areas and wildlife for the economic and social benefit of future generations. A key approach would be to support the conservation champions that exist and bring into the fold those who believe that conservation is only a hobby for foreigners or entertainment for the rich. **Please see the attached research report which includes an executive summary of the key findings.**

The conservation of natural resources plays an important role in the Kenyan economy and its future development. It is also a potential source of job creation for Kenya's growing number of youth. The Tourism Board of Kenya data shows that tourism revenue surged 20.3% in a year to 120 billion shillings. Tourism remains the top foreign exchange earner and contributor to GDP. Their data also shows that for every ten tourist arrivals, one job is created for Kenyans. This is a



huge opportunity for young people and for the future of the nation. But it's not just tourism that benefits – many industries from agriculture to commerce benefit from the protection of our land.

On March 14 the ESCAPE Foundation's research and film MABINGWA will be made public on the following websites: [www.escapefoundation.org](http://www.escapefoundation.org) and [www.maraelephantproject.org](http://www.maraelephantproject.org).

The research findings will be launched at the conservation champions event on March 14 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at KWS HQ that features a showing of the film and a discussion panel. The panelists will be available for interviews immediately after the launch. The launch will be followed by a youth forum at 2 p.m. at the Brookhouse School organized in partnership by the ESCAPE Foundation and Wildlife Direct.

All of the organisations partnering in these two events hope that this launch will lead us to answer the question: how do you get youth engaged? To kick start those answers, Well Told Story and the ESCAPE Foundation are inviting Kenyan businesses and other conservation organizations to join them in a digital campaign to positively influence young people to help protect their country's natural resources. The campaign, to run initially for 12 months on the Shujaaz multi-media platform, will provide a unique opportunity for corporate and other funders to be associated with a new conversation about conservation amongst Kenya's youth and the next generation of conservation champions. The ESCAPE Foundation has committed to provide 20% of the funding for the campaign if other funding partners can be found.

Link to the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/249594293>

## QUOTES

"We cannot do our business as usual, like we did 15 years ago," says Najib Balala, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife. "We have to invest in digital marketing to target millennials who are 25% of the global population." The Kenya Tourism Board has committed to digital marketing in 2018 for this reason.

"We cannot talk about economic growth in Africa when the youth—Africa's biggest asset—are relegated to the periphery. We must put them at the core of conservation narratives, said Kaddu Sebunya, President, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

"We have assumed that young Kenyans are exposed to and have the same wonder for wildlife like tourists do when they come in, but they don't – because they are not exposed," says Lucy Waruingi, Executive Director, African Conservation Centre.



## Contacts

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