



## FOOD SECURITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### WHAT ARE WE DOING?

ACT agriculture teams are promoting food security at homes and Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) in the KwaJobe region, near the Mkhuze Game Reserve. The first phase of the initiative (funded by Bel Foundation) provided gardens and training to three crèches, supporting 167 children. The crèches are non-fee paying schools and so financial resources (for meals and educational materials) are limited.

We have now moved into phase two of the programme, (funded by Project Rhino, with the assistance of WILDlands agricultural teams) and are busy developing gardens at an additional three crèches. We will also be assisting a number of households to develop their own food gardens

through training and mentorship provision. A more diverse food supply means improved health and nutrition for communities, which is particularly important for young children as stunting and malnutrition are common in the region.





## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Northern KwaZulu-Natal includes some of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas in South Africa. In the project area, less than 5% of households have access to piped water and 8% have access to electricity for cooking and lighting. There are few employment or advancement opportunities for the households living there.

At the same time, we have seen an unprecedented increase in rhino poaching in the region - from 7 rhinos poached in South Africa in 2007 to over 1,000 in 2013 and every year since. Given the high levels of poverty and unemployment in these communities, the direct or indirect material gains which may be obtained from poaching involvement can become increasingly difficult to resist. ACT, Project Rhino and its members are working to improve relationships between communities and conservation agents, fulfil human needs, and build resilience among local communities so that they begin to see themselves as active guardians of wildlife.

## WHAT OTHER PROJECTS HAS ACT IMPLEMENTED TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION?

Our Applied Ecology Unit and agricultural teams have been active in a number of critical environmental areas:

- We are currently engaging with seven traditional authorities north of Ithala Game Reserve, working to establish sustainable communities as well as long term solutions for wildlife
- We installed solar lighting systems in three deeply rural communities between Somkhanda Community Game Reserve and Mkhuze Game Reserve
- We provided accredited agricultural training and mentorship to 16 persons living adjacent to Somkhanda game reserve in a “train the trainer” initiative
- We worked with three Somkhanda communities to develop an environmentally, socially and economically beneficial plan to expand the protected area south of the Mkuze River
- We have implemented numerous food security initiatives in sensitive areas near Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve and iSimangaliso Wetland Park

