



BUILDING RESILIENCE TO WILDLIFE CRIME THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHY ARE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES SO IMPORTANT?

Communities bordering game reserves can play an invaluable role in combating wildlife crime. However, many communities have a long history of mistrust with their conservation neighbours and, whilst tourists channel funding into expensive safaris, local people don't always receive benefits and therefore see little incentive to protect wildlife.

Given the high levels of poverty and unemployment that characterises many communities in and around reserves, the direct or indirect material gains which may be obtained from poaching involvement can become increasingly difficult to resist. Project Rhino and its members are currently implementing a number of initiatives to improve these relationships, fulfil human needs and build

resilience among local communities so that they begin to see themselves as active guardians of wildlife.

HOW DOES AFRICAN CONSERVATION TRUST CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

African Conservation Trust is currently working in some of the most rural and deeply impoverished communities of northern KZN to help them meet some of their basic human needs so that they can concentrate on becoming active participants in wildlife conservation.

ACT agriculture teams are establishing **Ecological Food Gardens** at schools and crèches to support feeding schemes as well as providing training and mentorship to local micro-farmers. The promoted eco-agricultural techniques serve to protect the environment and have shown to produce crops that are more resilient to changing weather conditions, improve water usage and reduce soil erosion. A more diverse food supply means improved health and nutrition for communities.

ACT is also installing **Solar PV Lighting Systems** in conservation communities. Due to their rural location, many communities lack access to electricity and meet their energy needs using candles, wood, gas and the burning of animal dung. Needing only the sun to power them, these solar systems provide families with increased hours for work and study and have proven completely life-changing.



African Conservation Trust has also played a key role in the hosting of the 2014 and 2015 World Youth Rhino Summits and is currently planning a third **World Youth Wildlife Summit**, to bring together youth leaders from Africa and the world and empower them to become local, national and international ambassadors for wildlife conservation.

WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DO PROJECT RHINO MEMBERS IMPLEMENT?

Project Rhino, together with the Kingsley Holgate Foundation, implements the award winning, **Rhino Art – Let the Children’s Voices be Heard** project. Using universally appealing mediums of art and soccer games, Rhino Art aims to instil a passion and understanding amongst the youth, inspiring them to build a brighter future for conservation in Africa. The Rhino Art campaign has now reached over 500,000 young people and spread the message to 24 countries on five continents.

Less than 2% of rural youth in KwaZulu-Natal have seen a rhino or been inside a game reserve. The **Rhino Vision** initiative takes rural youth into wildlife parks to educate them on the value of conservation and the negative impact of rhino poaching and wildlife crime. It also supports community schools by providing conservation and environment-related resources and fun activities such as educational Rhino Soccer Matches.

Project Rhino also offers workshops to **traditional leaders** from communities adjacent to game reserves to provide them with insight into conservation issues, challenges and opportunities that are presented by well-functioning conservation areas. These workshops help to draw the communities closer to the game reserves to ensure their sustainability.

