

AFRICAN CONSERVATION TRUST



Conservation ~ Education ~ Innovation

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African Conservation Trust (ACT)

Since 2000, the African Conservation Trust (ACT) has blended an ethos of conservation, ecological agriculture and heritage, with a core focus of environmental conservation and the socio-economic upliftment of communities in proximity to conservation areas. ACT projects cover a number of inter-related themes: 1) conservation of species and habitat through land use planning and rangeland expansion; 2) climate change and food security; 3) green economics; and 4) heritage – recognizing the importance of sacred sites in terms of history and future planning. We are a member of IUCN and a founding member and nominated secretariat of Project Rhino which is a membership platform that brings together 37 KZN government, private and community stakeholders with a common goal to reduce wildlife crime.



Food Security Through Ecological Agriculture

Food security is a core capacity of ACT, gained over years of practice and collaboration. We incorporate the principles of permaculture and ecological agriculture as strategies to improve water conservation, demand management, nutrition and food security, which enables people to adapt better to the impacts of climate change. Over the past decade, our specialist teams have:

- Delivered training and mentoring to more than 2,000 homestead and small-scale farmers (>65% women)
- Implemented food gardens at 83 schools and 34 Early Childhood Development Centres, mainly in northern KwaZulu-Natal, benefitting more than 35,000 children.
- Facilitated the development of more than 10,000 flourishing homestead gardens in water-scare communities, directly and indirectly benefitting some 70,000 people.
- Supported more than 100 small-scale farmers (>65% women) with infrastructure such as rainwater harvesting systems, seedling nurseries and market access.



ACT assisted in the development of the Conservation Agriculture Institute at Dovehouse Organic Farm near Howick, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in 2011 and, with experts from WESSA, Business World, and the Sector Education Training Authority, co-developed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Course in Agro-Ecological Farming practices in 2012. ACT has also developed shorter sustainable homestead gardening and Ecological Agriculture courses, developed specifically for homestead and micro-farmers. A summary of ACT's food security projects since 2010 appears on the following page.

Project Name & Location	Duration	Funder(s)	Brief Description of Project
Mandlakazi Food Security Project Mandlakazi Traditional Authority, KZN	July 2019 to date	Private donor through the Zululand Conservation Trust	A multi-phased project which seeks to uplift three crèches on the western border of Manyoni Private Game Reserve. Food gardens have been established to support daily feeding schemes and each crèche is receiving training and on-going mentorship. Additional phases will see the development of food forests, demonstration gardens and rainwater harvesting systems at each crèche, as well as collaboration with small scale gardeners in the area.
KwaJobe Food Gardens for ECDs Jozini, KZN	March 2018 to date	Bel Foundation, Project Rhino & HCI Foundation	The establishment of agro-ecological food gardens at 13 Early Childhood Development Centres to support child nutrition. Includes training and ongoing mentorship. The project supports the community engagement work of Project Rhino, working to combat wildlife crime.
KwaDabeka Permaculture Garden eThekweni, KZN	6 months: 2018	eThekweni Municipality	The design and establishment of a large community permaculture garden and food forest, including fencing, irrigation and swale creation, selection and planting of appropriate crops and herbs.
Initiating Agri-Ecology in Imbali & Ashdown Pietermaritzburg, KZN	6 months: 2017	Duzi-Umngeni Conservation Trust (DUCT)	ACT was contracted to assist with the agro-ecological aspect of the Msunduzi River Health Youth Situated Learning Project. The project included various 1, 2 and 5 day permaculture training workshops, as well as the establishment of homestead, school and Green Hub gardens.
eThekweni Municipality Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative eThekweni, KZN	18 months: Jan 2016 – July 2017	eThekweni Municipality	50 micro-farmers were selected to undergo the accredited training course and provided with mentorship as they established their gardens for the duration of the project. An additional 450 gardens were created and potential income generating activities explored, such as links to the Open Food Network and bee-keeping activities.
Inkanyamba Development Trust Community Upliftment Initiative Hluhluwe, KZN	1 year: 2016 to 2017	National Lotteries Commission, via Inkanyamba Development Trust (IDT)	ACT was contracted by IDT, and implementation partner uMkhulu Social Development Trust, to provide permaculture training to 50 small growers from the Phumlani community. ACT will also be developing gardens at 20 schools and crèches in Hluhluwe and surrounding communities in follow-on initiatives.
Dukuduku Forest Seed Distribution Centre Khula Village, Mtubatuba, KZN	6 Months: 2016	Foundation for Human Rights which is funded by the Government of Flanders	An Open Pollinated Seedling Nursery & Seed Distribution Centre was established on the outskirts of Dukuduku Forest and a series of seed saving workshops were held for 120 beneficiaries from the region.
Umngeni and Hlabisa Rainwater Harvesting and Food Security Project Umngeni & Hlabisa, KZN	1 Year: 2015	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)	Gardens and rainwater harvesting systems were established at 20 schools in the Umngeni Municipality and 12 crèches in the Hlabisa region, together with training and mentorship for teachers and community members – reaching in the region of 10,000 learners. In addition, 4,000 homestead gardens were established and local community nurseries created to promote sustainability.
eThekweni GMC Project Greater Durban area, eThekweni Municipality, KZN	1 Year: 2014 - 2015	Department of Environmental Affairs	The project incorporated many elements including waste management and the rehabilitation of an illegal sand mining area with a large permaculture vegetable garden. The garden will become a community market garden, cared for by 25 local community residents; these farmers received mentorship and training in permaculture gardening.
Sinani Homestead Gardening Vulamehlo, eThekweni & Msunduzi Municipalities, KZN	18 Months: 2014 - 2015	Sinani (Programme for Survivors of Violence) via Weltfriedensdienst e.V.	4 groups of trainees (63 beneficiaries from 6 communities) attended a 5-day homestead permaculture gardening course in Hillcrest. The beneficiaries then received on-going assistance and mentorship at their gardens.
Hlabisa Community Food Garden Hlabisa, KZN	1 Year: 2014-2015	Koosje De Koeijer and Adelheid Ponsioen	The design and establishment of a large (2 HA) community food garden, with associated mentorship for community members. Included fencing, rainwater harvesting and irrigation systems, as well as a small nursery.
WesBank Food Gardens: Khula Evolution Mtubatuba Municipality, KZN	3 Years: 2012 - 2014	WesBank Fund	600 beneficiaries from four communities now benefit from the sustainable food gardens established at their homes. The project included specially designed gardens for disabled beneficiaries, the installation of rainwater harvesting systems and on-going training and mentorship.
Richmond Food Gardens Richmond Municipality, KZN	1 Year: 2013 - 2014	NLDTF via Duzi-Umngeni Conservation Trust & Winterskloof World's View Conservancy	100 individuals were trained and mentored to build and maintain 400 sustainable food gardens in Richmond Municipality. A demonstration garden has been established for open days and teaching purposes, and community gardens established at schools and clinics.
Zakhe Richmond Food Gardens Richmond Municipality, KZN	1 Year: 2012-2013	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)	21 food gardens were established at schools and early childhood development centres (ECDs) and an agricultural school was renovated.

Training and Mentorship in the Somkhanda Region, Zululand Municipality, KZN	6 Months: 2012	German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)	16 rural farmers were trained in ecological agriculture and provided with equipment, materials and mentorship to develop food gardens
180 Food Gardens Mtubatuba Municipality, KZN	1 Year: 2012	Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa (CoGTA)	180 individuals were trained to build and maintain sustainable food gardens in rural Mtubatuba, using permaculture and conservation agriculture methodologies.
Mphola Village BioFarm and Food Gardens Hlabisa Municipality, KZN	2 Years: 2010 - 2012	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)	56 individuals were trained and mentored to build and maintain a Biofarm in Mphola Village. 15,000 indigenous Marula and Wild Jacket Plums were planted, and 8 food tunnels established to provide sustainable food for 40 households.
Hlabisa ECD Food Tunnel, Rainwater Harvesting and Greening Project Hlabisa Municipality, KZN	2 Years: 2010 - 2012	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)	48 individuals were trained and mentored to build and maintain food gardens at 16 Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres. Rainwater harvesting systems were also installed at each school.
Food Tunnels for Schools Project Mtubatuba Municipality, KZN	2 Years: 2010 - 2012	National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)	21 schools received food tunnels and rainwater harvesting systems. Training in conservation agricultural methodologies was given to a representative from each school.

Further Information

A number of these gardens have been documented and videos are available on Youtube:

- **The Richmond Abundance Garden:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKoxX7M8m5w>
- **The EThekweni Municipality Food Security Project:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foOzj8UREc8>
- **Conservation Agriculture and the Zakhe Food Gardens for Schools Initiative:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZZavfThSIY>

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The African Conservation Trust (registration number IT2174/2000/PMB) is a registered non-profit organization (NPO Number 030-243) and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO 930014758). It holds a **Level 1** Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) accreditation.

