



OUR CURRENT PROJECTS

Due to their rural and remote locations, communities living on the outside of northern KZN's game reserves are offered few employment opportunities. Families are vulnerable to climatic and economic shocks - as we saw in the recent Covid lockdown, when the shutdown of eco-tourism saw an alarming increase in hunger and food insecurity. Subsistence or small-scale agriculture is a way of helping people to feed themselves and their families in a secure and sustainable manner and the permaculture techniques we teach build their resilience to external shocks, including climate change. A key focus is supporting Early Childhood Centre (ECD) feeding schemes, which play an important role in preventing malnutrition during a child's crucial development phases.



KwaJobe Crèche Food Garden Project (Phase I) 2018 - 2019

KwaJobe is traditional area located on the border of Mkhuze Game Reserve and iSimangliso Wetland Park (World Heritage Site). With funding provided by [Foundation-Bel](#), ACT agriculture teams established permaculture food gardens at seven crèches in the greater KwaJobe region to support their daily feeding schemes. The crèches look after a total of 562 children, aged 0 – 6 years.

Like most schools in the area, daily meals consist mostly of a starch-based diet, largely maize meal, which offers little nutritional content. The fresh produce harvested from the gardens provides children with the essential vitamins and minerals required to help prevent stunting and malnourishment.

We also provided five days' training to community members from three communities so that they could help care for the gardens in the long term.

KwaJobe Crèche Food Garden Project (Phase II) 2019 to date

Together with [Project Rhino](#), we established a further six gardens at crèches in the region, with on-going mentorship and advice to all the crèches (a total of 13 gardens).

The [HCI Foundation](#) provided funding for five days' training for the parents of one of these crèches, iSiqalo Sethu Crèche. This means that in addition to receiving at least one nutritious meal at school, the children and their families are also able to obtain fresh vegetables at home. The training focused on permaculture principles (farming in harmony with nature), seed saving, climate change mitigation and healthy eating – ensuring beneficiaries get the most from their gardens.

Mandlakazi Food Security Project 2019 to date

We partnered with [Zululand Conservation Trust](#) and Olivier Van Walsem in the Mandlakazi Food Security Project in July 2019. Much has been done to promote permaculture and food security in the region since then:

- We developed food gardens at three crèches (ECDs) from three communities on the western boundary of Manyoni Private Game Reserve (in the Mandlakazi Traditional Authority region)
- Installed rainwater harvesting systems at each crèche
- Installed a container kitchen at Mbuzeli Crèche which did not have a dedicated cooking area
- Provided a five-day permaculture training course for each community
- Developed a full demonstration garden at Mzomoyethu Crèche, including developing a food forest and staple garden, as well as infrastructure such as fencing, water systems and shade-cloth.

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown, the gardens are producing good harvests – some of which is being sold for a small profit. Future developments will see additional crèche demonstration gardens, as well as the provision of extension and mentorship services to small-scale farmers in the region.

