

Wildlife A.C.T. Fund
Somkhanda Community Conservation Project



Community Perspectives, Needs and the Feasibility of Development Options

ABSTRACT

A survey of Gumbi community members' ideas and perspectives on community needs and conservation perspectives was conducted through a questionnaire. Though opinions varied from community to community, a majority of people surveyed thought the availability of water was the greatest limiting factor on community development, and thought agricultural cooperatives would be the best way forward to serve the needs of the community. The feasibility of various community development options was considered and addressed, with the conclusion that finding funding for boreholes and aiding in the development of community gardens would be most feasible way to meet the most immediate food security and community development needs of the Gumbi Community.

PROCEDURE

A community questionnaire was developed and translated into the local siZulu language. English and siZulu versions of the questionnaire are included as attachments to the final project completion report.

Question 1 asked the name of the community to which the respondent belonged, so that results could be compiled separately for each village community. Five village communities were surveyed.

Village heads were asked to organize community meetings where the questionnaires could be explained and distributed to adults. In some cases, village heads allowed the questionnaire to be completed during the meeting. In these cases, nearly 100% of the questionnaires distributed were completed and collected. In most cases, the village heads instructed their community members to complete the questionnaires and return them to the village heads at a later date. WACTF staff would then collect the completed questionnaires from the village heads. In these cases, only a small percentage of the questionnaires were recovered.

Meetings were also held individually with village heads and their own opinions were sought about the needs and perspectives of their communities. In all cases, though they had not seen the results of the questionnaire, village head opinions matched the results of the questionnaires in their village communities.

DATA

A spreadsheet of data from the questionnaires was created and attached to the final project completion report. 144 questionnaires were completed and collected from five communities within the Gumbi tribal area:

• Candover Community (Fakude)	22 questionnaires completed
• Candover Community (Matenjwa)	31 questionnaires completed
• Cottlands Community	30 questionnaires completed
• Zonyama Community	51 questionnaires completed
• KwaZandla/Hlabanyathi Community	<u>10 questionnaires completed</u>
TOTAL	144 questionnaires completed

ANALYSIS

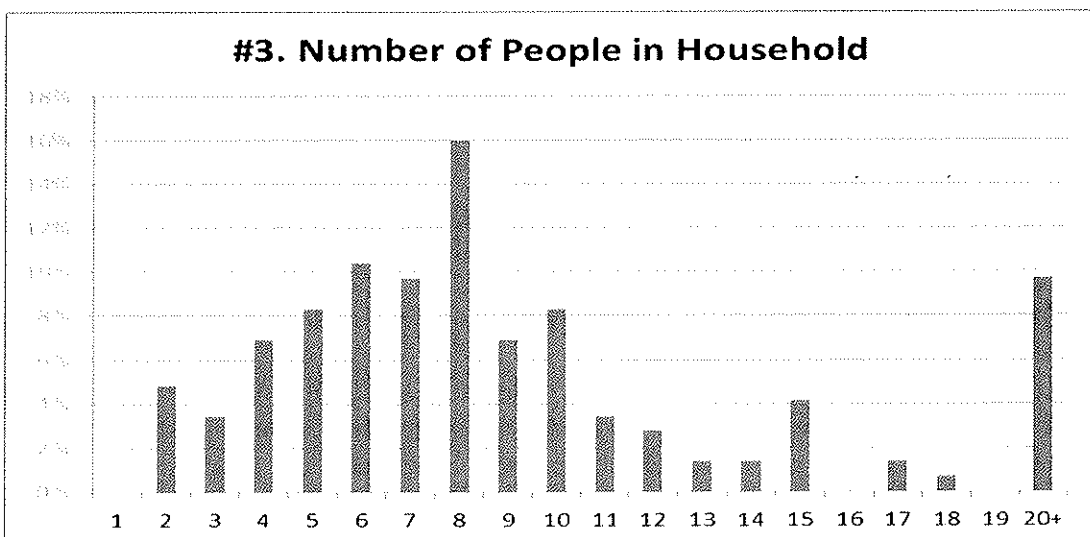
Raw data from the questionnaire answers was compiled on a spreadsheet. Data from the five different communities was entered separately. Data from the five communities was totaled for each possible answer to each question. Percentages of the total number of respondents who chose each possible answer were calculated. Graphs were constructed to represent percentages of all respondents who chose each possible answer.

Answers to questions 5-7 varied significantly from community to community; therefore individual graphs for each community were created for answers to those questions, on a separate spreadsheet tab of the aforementioned document.

DISCUSSION

In **Question 2**, 72% of the 144 respondents, claimed to be the head of their households.

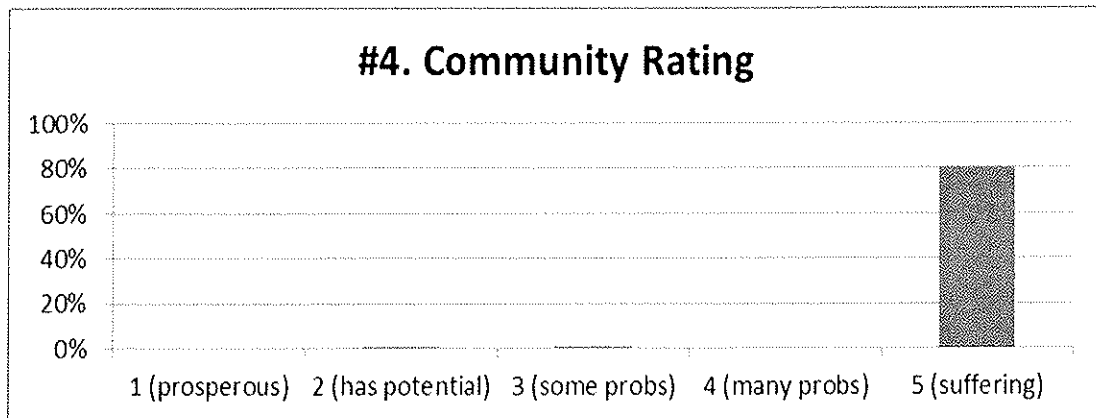
Question 3 responses show a household size mode of 8 family members.



In **Question 4**, respondents were asked to pick one of the below answers that would best describe their community:

- 1 My community is prosperous and people are happy there now.
- 2 My community has a lot of potential and people are hopeful about the future.
- 3 My community has some problems, but most people are doing well enough.
- 4 My community has many problems and most people are anxious about the future.
- 5 My community has many problems and most people are suffering now.

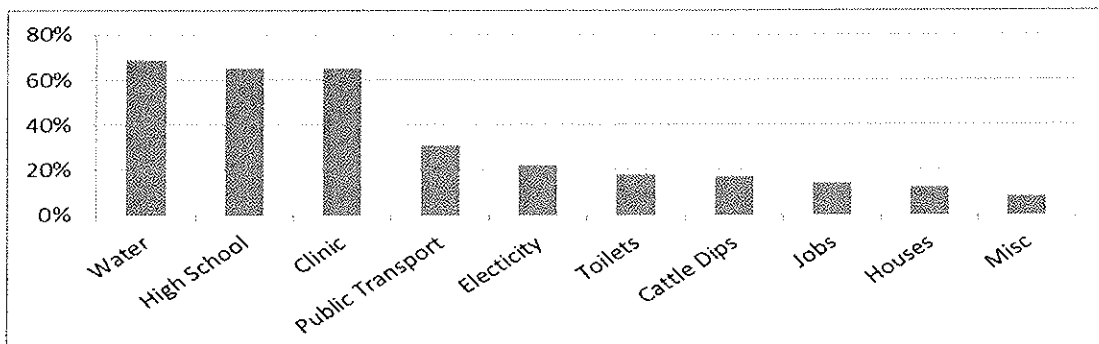
Of the 144 respondents, 81% of the respondents choose the answer: “My community has many problems and most people are suffering now.” As can be seen in the results below, the predominate perspective in the whole Gumbi tribal area is a negative one.



According to the results compiled for the whole community, the leading needs of the Gumbi tribal area are infrastructure related. People appear to be more concerned about services than they are about employment opportunities. This is most likely due to fact that the Gumbi tribal area was only recently formed after the Gumbi Tribe won a land claim settlement in 2005. Gumbi people are now resettling in former ranchlands and private game reserves that have a bare minimum of infrastructure

Question 5 asked an open-ended question about what respondents thought was the greatest need their community had. Respondents were permitted to suggest more than one need. The below graph represents the percentage of respondents who listed each need. The three needs sited most by respondents were:

- Water
- A High School
- A Clinic



These priorities were also voiced by community leaders. Each need is addressed separately below.

Water:

Some of the village communities have access to public water points, where members can come to fetch water and carry it home. Others must wait for water to be delivered regularly in large water trucks.

The need for water ranks high with most community, however, the case at the Zonyama village is especially problematic due to a prolonged disagreement between the former land owner and the local government. This issue has yet to be resolved and is reflected in the answers to this question from members of the Zonyama village community.

A High School:

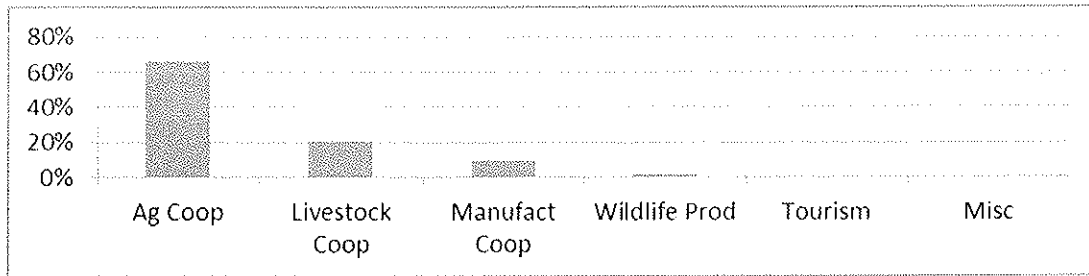
Students who graduate from any of the primary schools in the Gumbi Community must travel very far to the nearest high school. Transport costs would be beyond the average family, as would lodging costs, so those who attend high school are the fortunate ones who have extended family members who live near a high school somewhere. Therefore, far fewer students attend high school from the Gumbi Community than would be expected if a local high school was present. It had been clear through discussions with the community and its leaders that community members are well aware of the economic handicap this creates for their community.

The SCCP Manager, Wishwell Mabuya, is a former Head of Department at one of the project's target primary schools. He is very familiar with the workings of South Africa's Department of Education and is endeavoring to help community members organize to make a more effective appeal for a local high school through government channels.

A Clinic:

There is no clinic in the Gumbi tribal area. A mobile clinic visits each village community twice each month. Otherwise, sick members must travel to clinics in nearby towns, the nearest ones being ten to twenty miles distant, depending on the village. In most cases, there is no access to public transport and very few families own cars.

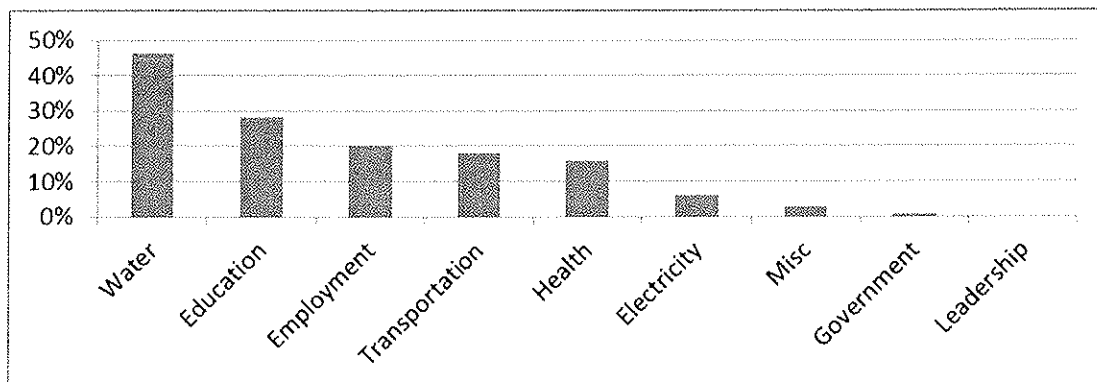
Question 6 asked an open-ended question: "What ideas do you have about how people in your community could work together to create new opportunities to earn income?" Respondents were permitted to suggest more than one idea. The below graph represents what percentage of total respondents listed each idea.



Two thirds of the respondents listed community gardens or other agricultural cooperatives. In all villages, the idea of community gardens and other agricultural cooperatives comprised a significant percentage of the responses. It was the most common response in three of the five villages surveyed.

Together with the need for water being cited by over two thirds of the respondents, one of the most feasible ways forward for community development in the majority of the villages would be to seek funding from community development organizations to install more boreholes (wells) and support the development of community gardens around those boreholes. This would also be the way most easily supported by Wildlife ACT Fund staff.

Question 7 asked an open-ended question: “What do you think is the greatest problem your community faces?” The purpose of this question was twofold, to allow community members to list a problem not connected to an unfulfilled need, and to confirm the important answers to question 5 about community needs. Answers were placed in the below categories. Respondents were permitted to suggest more than one idea. The below graph represents what percentage of total respondents listed each idea.



Answers to this question confirm the predominant need for water sources. Again, most ideas relate to the lack of infrastructure. Most education category responses related to the lack of a high school addressed earlier under in the Question 5 discussion. The health category related to the need for a community clinic as addressed in the Question 5 discussion. The most commonly cited problems are addressed below.

Employment:

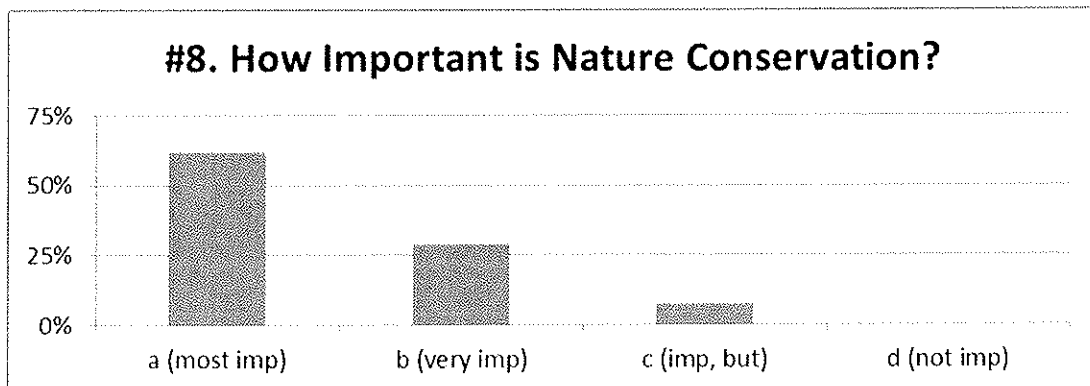
The lack of job opportunities was listed by one fifth of the respondents. Many people expressed a hope that Somkhanda Game Reserve could be a source of jobs for the community. Hoping to find work, most young people are leaving the community to go to major urban centers, where they live with relatives.

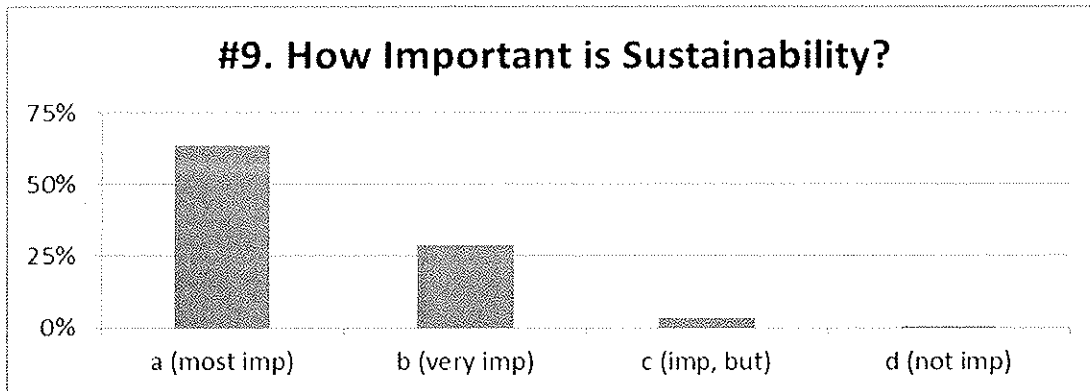
Transportation:

Transportation problems were listed by 18% of the respondents. There is no public transport in the Gumbi community. There is only one private transport operator who offers transport in the back of an overloaded pick-up truck each weekday morning and evening from the Cottlands community west to the town of Pongola. Community members who live east of Cottlands, or who wish to travel east of Cottlands, must either walk or find lifts, because there are no regular transport services between Cottlands and the N2 highway. This makes getting to the nearest towns to shop or work a challenge. However, many of the respondents who listed transportation as a major problem were referring to the problem of the high school discussed earlier. Since there is no public transport and no local high school, attending high school from home is nearly impossible.

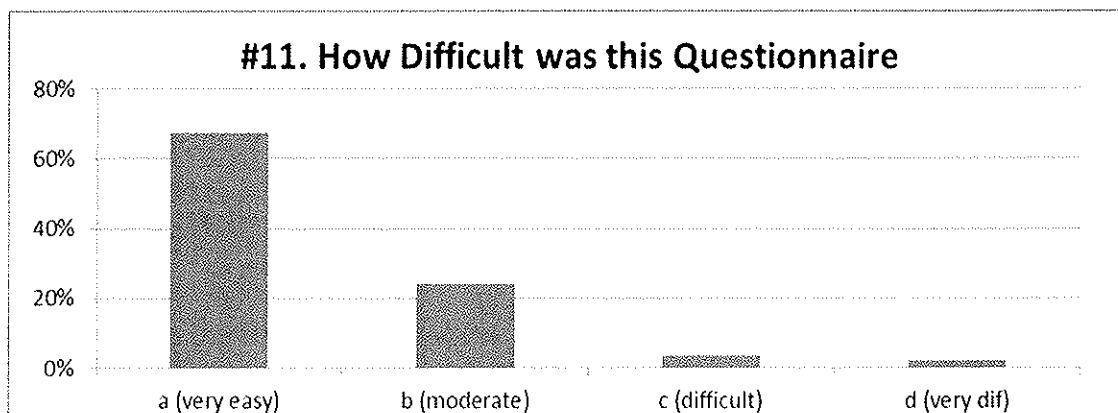
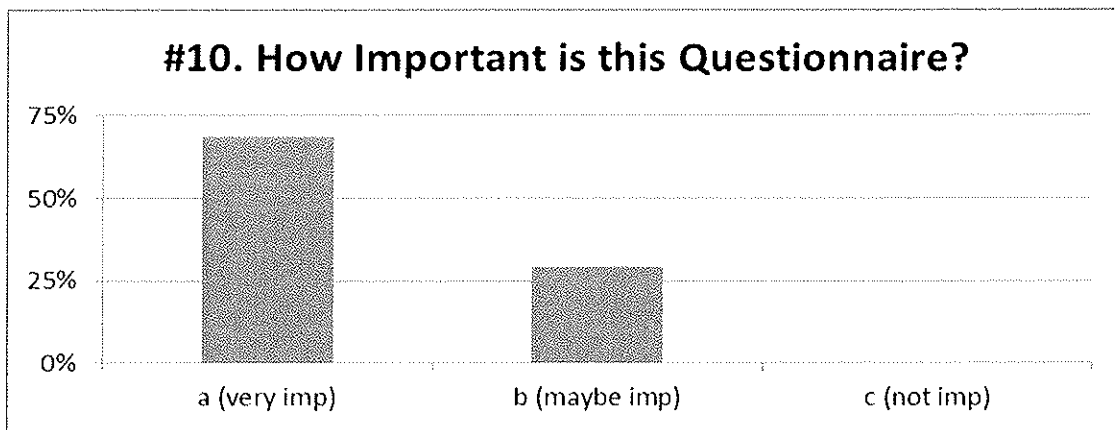
Questions 8-9 asked respondents to choose from the below answers to express their perspectives on conservation and sustainability. The below graphs show that the clear majority of community members considered both were at least very important, with over 50% choosing “The most important thing.” These results reflect a very high consciousness regarding conservation in the Gumbi culture.

- a. The most important thing
- b. Very important
- c. Important, but not as important as many other things.
- d. Not important.





Questions 10-11 asked respondents to share their thoughts about the survey's importance and how difficult it was for them to understand and respond to the questionnaire. About two thirds of the respondents thought the survey was both very important and very easy to complete. Many respondents expressed a hope the survey would help their community.



CONCLUSION

Results from the questionnaire indicate the need for water sources is high from most village communities in the Gumbi tribal area. With community gardens being high on

the list of suggestions from community members about how best to work together to improve their community, one of the most effective ways to help the community would be to create more boreholes or water points, with community gardens at those points. This avenue would also help meet food security and nutritional needs of the community, as well as offer income generation opportunities. Also, help in this arena would be most suitable for the capacities of Somkhanda Community Conservation Project staff to offer assistance. Although Wildlife ACT Fund staff will continue to help the community organize its efforts to secure a high school for the area, it will also attempt to serve as a conduit between the community and development organizations, which may be able to fund new boreholes or other water access infrastructure, since communication with potential donors is difficult for the community members themselves. Also, SCCP staff can help coordinate training and advice from community garden experts who can advise communities on how to maximize the benefits of community garden activities.

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