

**Project: Bakmitiyawa-Thimbirigolla Grass land conservation and sustainable management by community participation project at Ampara**

**Grantee Organization: National Ethnic Unity Foundation**

**Location: Wattamadu, Ampara**

**Province: South Eastern**

**Period: (2014-2015) Two years (Completed)**

**Project Number: SRL/SGP/OP5/STAR/BD/2014/13**

**Role of TERN: Knowledge Management and Capacity Building**

The project aims to restore part of the Bakmitiyaawa-Thimbirigolla reserve that has been encroached illegally. The reserve which adjoins the Lahugala National park is of 47136.3 acres, declared under the government Gazette of 01.10.2010 (1673/45). The Wattamadu grassland of 4000 acres inclusive of four tanks has been declared under government Gazette 231 of 17.09.1976 by the district secretariat to be utilized by Dairy farmers from Aliyadiwimbu for cattle grazing. This area is now enclosed within the reserve. The smaller forest area located above the Wattamadu tank is under the Department of Wildlife Conservation.

About 600 acres of the grassland has been encroached and used for paddy cultivation initially. This has been gradually reduced through the active intervening and contribution of the local community. The project aims to further reduce threats to the area in the coming season and restore the grassland and the forest for the wildlife and the sustainable use of the dairy farmer community.

The beneficiaries consisted of 125 traditional dairy farmers and another 24 households dispersed within adjacent two villages of the second project site .Beneficiaries have been strengthened and empowered through this project by enhancing their livelihoods and by developing their capacities in sustainable agriculture. The project has also considered about enhancing the enthusiasm and motivation of school children towards environmental protection hence selected local school libraries were donated with books of related disciplines.