

Project: Protection of the Belihuloya Galagama forest reserve against forest fires with community participation.

Grantee Organization: Peoples's Youth Foundation

Location: Galagama-Belihuloya

Province: Uva

Period: 2014-2015 Two years (completed)

Project Number: SRL/SGP/OP5/STAR/BD/2013/06

Role of TERN: Knowledge Management and Capacity Building

Galagama forest reserve covers a total area of 1500 hectares. This project focuses on the most endangered 800 hectares of the reserve, Mount Hagala, which is severely being damaged by forest fires. The four villages (Ihala Galagama, Passaramulla, Landuyaya, Janapadaya) covered by this project are the identified community locations that cause most of the forest fires. The project, funded by GEF, is active in the locality since December 2013. Selected community members are committed to minimizing forest fires and to practicing alternative sources of income in order to protect the biodiversity around Galagama-Belihuloya reserve. The target community is dominated by females (male-175 / female-350 -65%) where equal cooperation can be seen by both genders in activities like pepper cultivation, participating in workshops, meetings, etc.

Twenty community members have been trained as the fire fighter task force. Workshops on biodiversity and local environmental regulations were given to the community and the school children of the area. Training programs on eco-agronomy, forest fire mitigation and protection of biodiversity were provided for the community.

Kitul (*Caryota*) Palm cultivators have been equipped with knowledge and technology to produce Jaggery (non-centrifugal palm sugar) and some beneficiaries for Apiculture. Selected community members are facilitated with knowledge, funds and pepper saplings to cultivate pepper in land strips that are identified as fire belts. Fruit plants, especially Pomegranate, are distributed among selected community members. The organization buys back the products from the locals, creating a sustainable market.