**Uva Wellassa University Integrated Community Development Project**

**“Success Story of Uva Innovative Youth Entrepreneur”**

**Abstract**

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As a community services activity for contributing towards the advancement of agriculture sector in Uva Province as well as in the country, Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture initiated Uva Wellassa University Integrated Community Development Project (UWU-ICDP) covering Ella, Kumbalwela and Halpe Agriculture Instructor (AI) regions. Accordingly, a Model Farm Village was established with the purpose of having mutual benefits among academic staff, students and farmers while supporting farmers to enhance living status by a collaborative arm which is formed by the collection of all state and non-state organizations that involve in agriculture and related activities. During a crop clinic held for the farmers in above AI regions under this project, a young successful entrepreneurial farmer, Mr. Shiral Dissanayake could be recognized. He was an exceptional farmer who has crossed the boundaries of the conventional farmer and farming systems. He grows Bell pepper under protected environment in polytunnels in Kumbalwela area and currently receives assistance from the Smallholder Agribusiness Partnerships Programme (SAPP) under the mediation of UWU-ICDP. When analysing his case study, it was recognized that he was self-motivated to start polytunnel agriculture with the experience that he had gained during his stay in Japan. While taking a calculated risk, he has commenced his entrepreneurial agricultural business with the assistance of his family members, Agrarian Service Centre, Kumbalwela, Agricultural Research and Development Centre, Kahagolla and In-Service Centre, Bindunuwewa. With the relationships he developed with these institutions, he has been able to grab new technology and high-quality inputs. By successfully overcoming the obstacles faced during Easter attack, COVID-19 pandemic and other natural threats like Blight attack, he has managed to develop his business further. Another key characteristic of this farmer is that he is market-oriented rather than production-oriented. When facing difficulties with available markets, he was strong enough to find alternative markets by himself. His next step is to expand his agribusiness by capturing the export market where the guidance and assistance to be provided through UWU-ICDP will be acknowledged. In conclusion, there are many lessons to be learnt from Mr. Shiral Dissanayake such as capitalizing opportunities, resistance to problems, innovating alternatives, being market-oriented and willingness to learn and upgrade for betterment of the agribusiness.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Integrated Community Development, Model village, Market oriented.