



## SEÁN O'CONNELL

**BACHELOR OF CIVIL LAW. 2010.**  
**NICARAGUA 2010,2012,2013**

Meet Seán.

Seán's story begins with a candid admission:

**"To be totally honest, I wasn't motivated by pureness."**

It's a sentiment that will resonate with many of us. Initially, the allure of a month abroad, immersing himself in a different culture alongside friends, was a major motivation to join UCDVO. It turned out to be an experience which would shape his life and career.

Seán first explored volunteering with UCDVO after learning about human rights injustices in Nicaragua while studying Law at UCD.

He worked on various projects in Nicaragua with UCDVO partners, from the construction of an extension in a rural school to providing educational support for children with disabilities, and returned two more times to lead teams of volunteers.

His overseas experience was **"life-changing"**, allowing him to gain a wider perspective on global responsibility, but he explained:

**"It was how I applied what I learned when I returned home that made the most impact."**

Inspired by the community culture and peer-to-peer learning at UCDVO, Seán said the programme prompted him to reassess his personal values.

**"The structure of the programme helps to bring diverse perspectives to the table, and makes you question everything you think you know about the world. It made me ask myself why things were the way they were, and how I could be of more use in improving them."**

After the programme Seán decided to pursue a career in human rights law, interning with Amnesty International and co-founding the World's Best News Campaign for Ireland – stories which challenged people's perceptions of developing countries – before working for UCDVO, helping to recruit and prepare volunteers.

He subsequently qualified as an attorney in New York, worked with the Irish Department of Justice, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the United Nations Development Programme in Vietnam and Lao PDR. He is now based in Geneva with the United Nations, focusing on the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on human rights.

The UCDVO programme served as a transformative learning journey for Seán and guided his commitment to human rights.

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