



## KATE O'DONNELL

**BA INTERNATIONAL MAJOR IN POLITICS AND MINOR IN HISTORY, 2015.**

**TANZANIA 2012, 2013**

Meet Kate, a two-time UCDVO volunteer and an active member of the UCDVO Student Society.

Kate's interest in international development and her inherent curiosity in societal inequalities, coupled with a desire to find a community and make friends, led her to UCDVO.

**"University can be overwhelming. I found volunteering was an easy way to connect with the community. I made some of my best friends through UCDVO."**

One of Kate's most memorable experiences with UCDVO was

volunteering in Tanzania, where she taught computer literacy to school teachers. Her experience and exposure overseas led her to question the status quo.

**"My experience with UCDVO has encouraged me to be curious and continually question why things are the way they are."**

The critical-thinking skills she cultivated during her time with UCDVO were integral in the next steps on her journey, as Kate went on to complete a Master's in Public Policy and Human Development at the Maastricht School of Governance and begin a PhD at the International School of Social Studies, focusing on how donors influence social policy systems in low and middle-income countries.

She has also implemented those skills on a practical level in a variety of roles, including working as a child poverty and social protection consultant for UNICEF, a policy analyst in the Irish Ministry for Social Protection, and a consultant on a flagship project on

the non-take-up of social protection for the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

**"UCDVO and Comhlámh trained me in a way of thinking about how we must connect our understanding of development to both local and global issues."**

Kate highlighted the complexity of overseas volunteering and said she continues to grapple with the intricacies of international development. She credits the UCDVO programme with cultivating a safe space to question and understand its nuances and the staff's commitment in clarifying its purpose - to positively impact communities while facilitating personal growth and learning opportunities for volunteers.

**"I'm driven by trying to understand and question the framework of society and how it can be changed for justice."**

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**The programme opened my eyes and introduced me to a powerful way of thinking.**



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