



## STUART GARRETT

**BSC PHYSIOTHERAPY, 2011.  
HAITI 2008, NICARAGUA 2009,  
DELHI 2011, UGANDA 2012,  
2013, 2014, 2015, 2016.**

Meet Stu. Stu had a strong desire to find his way back to Uganda after a trip of self-discovery when he was just 16.

**“At school I was an underperforming messer until I had the opportunity to volunteer in a rehab hospital and that set me on my path to becoming a physiotherapist.”**

A few years later Stu joined UCD to study physiotherapy. By 2008 he was recruited to UCDVO and ready to depart for Haiti.

He subsequently volunteered in

Nicaragua and Delhi before eventually returning to Uganda. These collective experiences with UCDVO were the catalyst for an idea that later came to fruition through the charity CHEEERS ([Community Healthcare Empowering Education Experiences Relationships and Support](#)).

Inspired by UCDVO, CHEEERS was co-founded in 2014 by Stu, fellow physiotherapist Mark McGowan, a doctor Roisin Plunkett, and Ugandan friend and volunteer Elliot Mbeta over a pint of Guinness.

**“Our goal was to set up overseas volunteering opportunities for healthcare professions.”**

CHEEERS sends healthcare professionals from Ireland to Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda, the same hospital Stu first volunteered in with UCDVO. The charity focuses on improving facilities and providing education and training which is informed by the needs of the local healthcare community.

Stu explains:

**“It’s a great opportunity for clinical staff to use their professional skills to improve healthcare in a developing setting. So far we’ve sent over 65 healthcare workers to volunteer in Uganda, fundraised over €120k and trained 10 local staff to become midwives, nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists and doctors.”**

Stu graduated as a physiotherapist in 2011 and practiced for several years as a senior therapist in St James’ Hospital. He completed an EMBA at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School and played a pivotal role in successfully lobbying the Irish Society for Chartered Physios to set up a multi-discipline network for healthcare professions interested in global health and development.

**“This wouldn’t have been possible if it wasn’t for the incredible network of people I met volunteering with UCDVO.”**

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**There are so many unrecorded, unseen and incredible impacts from the work UCDVO does.**

Stu, recently made a notable shift from his clinical role to an operational management position at St James’ Hospital – a significant transition that he attributes to the invaluable transferable and transformational skills he acquired through his volunteering journey.

**“Every aspect of my CV has the imprint of UCDVO’s influence in some capacity or another.”**



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