



EMILY LYON

BSC SOCIAL SCIENCE (INTERNATIONAL), 2015; MASTER'S IN WOMEN, GENDER AND SOCIETY, 2016 INDIA 2015, 2017

Meet Emily. Emily first joined the UCDVO community as a student leader in 2015, later returning as a team coordinator. In 2016 she joined the small but mighty team at UCDVO as an employee to work as the programme assistant, supporting the delivery and expansion of the volunteering programme.

Emily's overseas volunteering experience included two trips to Assam in north-east India. The project focused on community development, working on preschool refurbishments and supporting Indian social work students with capacity building and awareness raising.

"My job primarily was about keeping everyone safe and healthy and after that, it was about trying to facilitate a positive, impactful and meaningful experience."

A big part of Emily's experience was learning how to embrace collaboration and cultural exchange. She spoke about the complexities of delivering a project while adapting to a different culture, managing group dynamics and being responsible for delivering measurable outcomes - all skills which were fundamental to her future career.

"The programme is uniquely special. It's challenging but you soon realise it's the challenges that make the successes even sweeter."

Emily is a dedicated humanitarian worker and has years of experience working in overseas development with UCDVO, Irish Aid and the United Nations. She now works for Plan International Ireland managing humanitarian programmes funded by Irish Aid and also acts as the first point of contact with regards to

safeguarding in the organisation and keeping programme participants safe.

"My volunteering with UCDVO was the catalyst for me doing what I do now. It's helped me clarify my values, given me the tools to succeed and provided the network to make everything happen."

Emily volunteers on the committee of Calcutta Connect, a Dublin-based NGO that works in partnership with local organisations to support the education of children and young people in Calcutta. She supports the NGO's global citizen education programme and advises on programme implementation, safeguarding and partnership management.

"My experience with UCDVO now allows me to support other NGOs and charities to reflect on their motivations, to appreciate the importance of development education, and to continually question what ethical and sustainable volunteering is, why it's important and what it looks like in practice."



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