



University College Dublin
Ireland's Global University



INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENS

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 – 2027



CONTENTS

Introduction	<u>1</u>
Our Vision and Mission	<u>2</u>
Inspiring Global Citizens	<u>5</u>
Our Values	<u>6</u>
Strategic Objectives	<u>7</u>
Our Governance and Accountability	<u>18</u>



UCD Volunteers Overseas (UCDVO) is a registered international volunteer charity located in the heart of University College Dublin (UCD).

We hold a unique place in providing transformative learning experiences for the UCD community through engaging with global justice issues.

We believe that by offering opportunities to the UCD Community to become more proactively engaged on issues of global solidarity and active citizenship, we play a meaningful role in contributing to a fairer and more sustainable world. Our new strategy, Inspiring Global Citizens, builds further on our strengths and will sharpen our focus on achieving our mission.

INTRODUCTION

The world has changed significantly since the establishment of UCDVO by the late Fr. Tony Coote twenty years ago...

Our work with partners in different regions of the world has made us deeply conscious of the evolving nature of the discourse around the ethics of international volunteering and approaches to global citizenship education. The issues are nuanced and complex and we are committed to ensuring that our work is informed by best practice and held to the highest standards.

Inspiring Global Citizens was developed through a series of workshops and stakeholder consultations, and an analysis of key issues and challenges of international volunteering. It builds on the findings of the first independent evaluation of UCDVO, *Looking Back, Moving Forward* (2021). The evaluation described a well-run organisation that has had a transformative impact on many of the more than 1,700 volunteers who participated in volunteering programmes with UCDVO's partners in Haiti, India, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Uganda over 20 years.

Inspiring Global Citizens has been developed within the context of the climate emergency facing our planet.

Inspiring Global Citizens has been developed within the context of the climate emergency facing our planet. UCDVO is committed to environmental sustainability and to contributing to UCD's response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Creating a Sustainable Global Society is the first theme of UCD's Rising to the Future Strategy: "As a matter of urgency, humanity must learn to live sustainably without degrading its shared planet". A fair and sustainable future for all requires us to understand how our actions intersect with the climate crisis and UCDVO is committed to being proactive and responsible in our decisions and choices so that we contribute in a positive way to environmental sustainability.

Inspiring Global Citizens articulates UCDVO's commitment to implementing the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). We will embed these fairness principles into all aspects of our work, and contribute to UCD's vision to be a "leader and role model in equality and diversity in the higher education sector nationally and internationally, and for EDI to be at the heart of all we do".

UCDVO will seek ways to improve the accessibility of its programmes, including through the development of new funding models to reduce the financial barriers to participation.

Learning from our past, and preparing for future, this strategic plan represents UCDVO's vision to evolve and develop as an organisation and inspire active global citizens.

The world is likely to see significant challenges in the period of this strategic plan, not least as the devastating war in Ukraine unfolds and the impact that has on global food security, and human displacement. Understanding such challenges, and where we can make a positive difference, informs how our work comes to life. As with our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will remain agile and flexible in how we respond and reach our goals.

In 20 years we have achieved much as an organisation – we have connected communities and had a transformative impact on the lives of many. Learning from our past, and preparing for future, this strategic plan represents UCDVO's vision to evolve and develop as an organisation and inspire active global citizens.



VISION

Our vision is of a vibrant, global community working together for a fair and sustainable world.



MISSION

In collaboration with UCD and partners, we create opportunities for transformative learning and responsible volunteering.

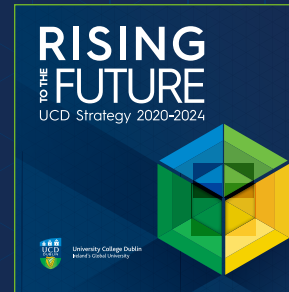


UCDVO's vision and mission are intrinsically connected to UCD's Rising to the Future Strategy. As UCD will rise to the global challenges of the future, UCDVO will continue to connect with colleagues across the University and directly contribute to Core Objective Three: 'Continue to build our engagement locally, nationally and internationally', as well as to Theme 4 – 'Empowering Humanity', through solidarity, connecting communities, empowering learners and inspiring action for global justice.

Objective One of UCD's Global Engagement Strategy is 'A Global Experience for All'. UCDVO has a strong contribution to make to Priority 3: 'Enable and encourage students, faculty and staff to gain a global experience in Ireland and abroad'. The Global Engagement strategy also reiterates UCD's commitment 'to promoting responsible, ethical volunteering through UCD Volunteers Overseas'. The Global Engagement strategy places value on graduates being equipped to contribute to the world – with non-formal and outside the classroom education recognised as playing an important role in the development of student's interpersonal skills, intercultural awareness, and knowledge of global justice issues.

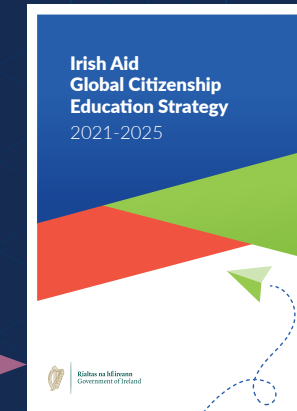
UCD's Rising to the Future Strategy

Theme 4: Empowering Humanity + Core Objective 3: Continue to build our engagement locally, nationally and internationally.



UCD's Global Engagement Strategy

Priority 3: Enable and encourage students, faculty and staff to gain a global experience in Ireland and abroad.



Irish Aid's Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025



Inspiring Global Citizens: UCDVO Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027

Beyond UCD, UCDVO's strategic plan is informed by the wider global citizenship education and international development policy landscape



Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development



INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENS

UCDVO aims to inspire active global citizenship through our volunteer and global citizenship education (GCE) programmes.

What do we mean by volunteering and global citizenship education (GCE)?

At its essence, volunteering can be defined as:

“any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain”.¹

Ireland’s National Volunteering Strategy recognises that “Ethical and skills-based international volunteering can play an important role in delivering results for beneficiaries and in fostering Global Citizenship”.

UCDVO’s international volunteer projects are developed and implemented with partners working in a variety of contexts. The volunteer projects implemented over 20 years range from public health (including paediatric disability and rehabilitation; nutrition), to ICT/English language education, and community development and livelihoods. UCDVO’s responsible volunteering programmes have also cultivated a sense of community and solidarity, as well as building partner capacity (via the health programmes). The future volunteer programmes will explore new and innovative approaches, that embrace GCE values of global interconnectedness and interdependence.

UCDVO’s approach to volunteering is rooted within a GCE framework. UCDVO’s understanding of GCE draws from best practice and is particularly inspired by the following two definitions of GCE:

“a lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives and how they can act to build a better world”.² [Irish Aid]

“GCE works by empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.”³ [UNESCO]

¹ www.gov.ie/en/publication/3cba6-national-volunteering-strategy/

² Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021 - 2025

³ en.unesco.org/themes/gced

Global
Citizenship
Education

+

Responsible
volunteering

**Active
global citizens*
for a fair,
sustainable
world**

*A global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands our rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make the world more equal, fair and sustainable in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴

⁴ www.gov.ie/en/publication/3cba6-national-volunteering-strategy

OUR VALUES

We are committed to the following values that inspire us and guide our work:



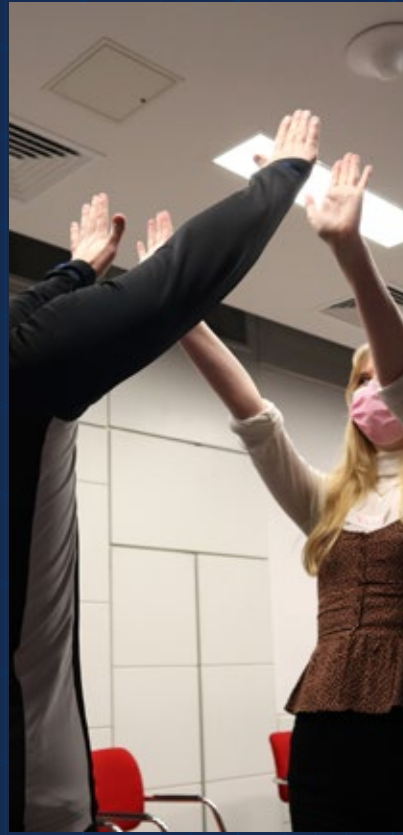
Solidarity

We work with others in a spirit of mutual respect, collaboration, openness and inclusion.



Compassion

We practice kindness; we care for ourselves, for others and for the planet.



Integrity

We are trustworthy and honest in our relationships and in how we work.



Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable to each other and to all our stakeholders.



Learning

We believe that every encounter is a creative opportunity for learning and can guide us to become better global citizens.

Strategic Objective

1

A vibrant space in UCD for volunteering, collaboration and learning.

In collaboration with colleagues in UCD, we will work to create a dedicated hub in UCD to promote excellence in local and global volunteering and active citizenship. This new vibrant space will connect existing initiatives while inspiring new ideas, facilitating collaboration and making a significant contribution to UCD's Rising to the Future strategy, in particular Theme 4: Empowering Humanity.

We will also re-imagine our current volunteer programme to offer a broad range of inclusive and accessible volunteering opportunities for the UCD community, and develop new programmes in Europe and beyond that reflect our values.



Strategic Objective

1

A vibrant space in UCD for volunteering, collaboration and learning.



Outcome 1:

Innovative and ethical models of volunteering.

Initiatives include:

- Development of a broader range of volunteering opportunities that will include the best of virtual and in person programmes in Ireland, Europe and beyond.
- Piloting new innovative volunteer programmes with partners, embracing environmental sustainability as far as possible.
- Strengthening the programme quality framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Strategic Objective

1

A vibrant space in UCD for volunteering, collaboration and learning.



Outcome 2:

Inclusive and accessible range of volunteering opportunities connecting the local to the global.

Initiatives include:

- Progressing the creation of a dedicated active citizenship and volunteering hub in UCD.
- Connecting with local volunteering opportunities and active citizenship initiatives in partnership with UCD in the Community.
- Developing new funding models to reduce financial barriers to participation.
- Embedding UCD's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles across the volunteer programme.

Strategic Objective

1

A vibrant space
in UCD for
volunteering,
collaboration
and learning.



Outcome 3:

Diverse portfolio of national and international partnerships and collaborations.

Initiatives include:

- Reviewing current partner portfolio and our partnership approach.
- Identifying new partners in Europe and beyond to expand the traditional scope of our volunteering programme and reduce the reliance on air travel.
- Leveraging existing UCD global university partnerships particularly with Universitas 21 members.

Strategic Objective

2

A community
of active and
responsible
global citizens.

We believe that by offering opportunities to the UCD Community to become more proactively engaged on issues of global solidarity and active citizenship, we play a meaningful role in contributing to a fairer and more sustainable world.



Strategic Objective

2

A community
of active and
responsible
global citizens.



Outcome 1:

Extensive range of opportunities for engagement and action on global citizenship that expands UCDVO's reach and audience.

Initiatives include:

- Providing a range of relevant GCE courses in collaboration with UCD and partners, including in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.
- Strengthening and building new relationships with Irish, European and global GCE networks.
- Connecting with UCD faculty, staff, partners and development specialists to engage with UCDVO across the education and engagement programmes.

Strategic Objective

2

A community
of active and
responsible
global citizens.



Outcome 2:

Staff and faculty participating in global citizenship education courses in UCD that enhance student engagement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Initiatives include:

- Assessment of the needs and interests of the UCD community vis-à-vis global citizenship and volunteering.
- Piloting a new GCE training course for UCD faculty and staff.

Strategic Objective

2

A community
of active and
responsible
global citizens.



Outcome 3:

New campaigning and advocacy initiatives to put GCE and volunteering learning into action.

Initiatives include:

- Providing opportunities for the development of advocacy and awareness raising skills in collaboration with UCD colleagues and external organisations.
- Collaboration with colleagues in UCD and peer organisations and partners to forge opportunities for research that contribute to best practice in international volunteering.
- Engagement in collaborative campaigning with national and international networks aligned with our strategic objectives and programme priorities.

Strategic Objective

3

A sustainable,
effective and
networked
organisation.

In order to fulfil our mission, we will more effectively leverage our home within UCD, integrate into UCD systems and harness the potential collaborations and partnerships that exist.



Strategic Objective

3

A sustainable, effective and networked organisation.



Outcome 1:

UCDVO is effectively integrated into UCD to make best use of systems, capacities and networks.

Initiatives include:

- Reviewing of UCDVO's systems and transition into UCD systems for improved management efficiency.
- Aligning UCDVO's risk approach with UCD's risk management processes to make greater use of available expertise and capacity.
- Embedding UCD's environmental sustainability and EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) standards into UCDVO's policies and procedures.

Strategic Objective

3

A sustainable, effective and networked organisation.



Outcome 2:

UCDVO has greater visibility across UCD and the GCE/international volunteering sector.

Initiatives include:

- Developing a UCDVO networking and communications strategy.
- Creating a high-profile programme to mark the 20th anniversary of UCDVO in 2023.
- Collaboration with like-minded entities within UCD to enhance visibility and meaningful engagement with UCD community.

Strategic Objective

3

A sustainable,
effective and
networked
organisation.



Outcome 3:

Diverse and consistent funding and support base.

Initiatives include:

- Development of a new funding strategy to effectively target institutional donors, trusts and foundations.
- Engagement with stakeholders in UCD to explore innovative ways to generate financial support for volunteering to reduce economic barriers to participation.
- Identification of opportunities for joint funding through UCD's networks and initiatives in partnership with University Schools, Colleges and Departments.

OUR GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

UCDVO is a charity governed by a Board of Trustees. The organisation is also an integral part of UCD Global and reports to UCD Global's Director. We uphold high standards of governance and oversight, and uphold the principles of the Charities Governance Code of the Charity Regulator. We are a signatory to the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies, and to the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education.

As expressed in our values, UCDVO works with integrity, and we hold ourselves to account in our work.

In order to fulfil the commitments set out in our new Strategic Plan, we will:

- Continue to strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and learning processes to track our impact and improve how we work.
- Further strengthen our systems of governance and accountability to all stakeholders: our staff, the UCD community, our partners, peer organisations, donors and supporters.
- Maintain a safe and supportive working environment and nurture the wellbeing of our staff and participants.
- Build meaningful, inclusive and collaborative partnerships and strive to connect people in new and innovative ways.





UCD Volunteers Overseas

UCD Global

Gerard Manley Hopkins Centre, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

UCDVO is a charity registered with the Charities Regulator,
registered charity no: 20055776 and has been granted tax exemption
by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland,
registered charitable taxation no: CHY 15856.



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Ireland's Global University



www.ucdvo.org