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Aktar Uddin, UNV Advocacy Officer, from Bangladesh, is among 250 UN Volunteers assigned in various capacities to help sustain peace and return capacity to Liberia after years of civil war. Photo: UNMIL 2014

Reflecting on 250 UN Volunteers helping peaceful development in Liberia

Monrovia, Liberia: Aktar Uddin, from Bangladesh, is a UNV Advocacy Officer with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Although the country's civil war is over, Liberia has to deal with the after effects of war, which involve loss of infrastructure and access to electricity, water, basic facilities or health care. Aktar, along with 250 other UN Volunteers, is working to establish and sustain peace in Liberia. I asked Aktar a few questions regarding his views of the work he and other UN Volunteers are doing in Liberia.

When I asked Aktar what he finds most inspiring about his work with UNV, he immediately talked about how, as a UN Volunteer, he is able to work with such a diverse group of people. His work in Liberia involves mixing and working with people from all different cultures and nationalities and he noted how people differ in the way they work, handle certain situations, speak to people and think.

Aktar said he is able to work with such a diverse crowd of people, even when one group's perspective or practice may contradict those of another. The second inspiring aspect of his work which Aktar discussed was the ability he and all the other volunteers have to inspire and help the youth of Liberia.

When I asked Aktar to identify the UNV activity he finds particularly interesting, arranging youth programs and workshops which address development issues was his first choice. He stated that many volunteers are trying to mobilize the Liberian community to raise funds to help provide for children's education and to improve the standard of living.

The volunteers set up workshops which motivate the youth to assist and inform them about what they can do to help. Aktar said these youth-focused workshops successfully resulted in an increase in local volunteers who are able to help based on their own areas of expertise.

Finally I asked Aktar how he thinks UN Volunteers are contributing to peacekeeping work in Liberia. The UNV Advocacy Volunteer immediately thanked me for asking this question and

went on to talk about how much UN Volunteers are helping Liberia.

Like any post-war area, Liberia was in need of support. UN Volunteers arrived in 2003 and 11 years later dramatic improvements have been made. Aktar explained how UN Volunteers all serve and work in different areas such as political affairs, transportation, infrastructure and providing necessities.

Aktar repeatedly stated how exceptional the UN Volunteers in Liberia are and said the "Ambassadors for Peace" are extremely beneficial in establishing peace and development in Liberia.



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