

Lolly Singh's friends introduced him to injecting drug use when he was 11 years old. A friend injected Lolly and himself, saying it would give him a good feeling. After that Lolly started injecting himself regularly and became



addicted. At first, his family did not suspect anything, but when his studies started to suffer, his parents admitted him to a detoxification centre at Imphal in north-east India. He failed to complete the treatment and eloped with his girlfriend, but at the insistence of her family, he went to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal for a blood test. He tested HIV-positive. His girlfriend left him and he contemplated suicide. One of his friends, who was a member of a self-help group organized by UNODC, counselled him and encouraged him to be trained as a UNODC peer educator. Lolly was selected to work for a UNODC project. "A great change has come into my life after working as a peer educator," he says. "I have developed confidence and I feel happy working in this field. I am now 27 years old, living with HIV, taking anti-retroviral drugs-and I am a peer educator".