

## PRESS RELEASE



### Youths to campaign HIV awareness

**Jowai, 12th August, 2025:** Celebrating International Youth Day with a purpose the District Integrated Strategy for HIV/Aids (Disha), Khliehriat Cluster in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Thomas Jones Synod College supported by the Meghalaya Aids Control Society, Shillong organised the launch of the Intensified IEC Campaign(IIEC) under the theme, "Local Youth Actions for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Beyond".

The campaign launched by Smt. Emelya Ch. Momin, MCS, Assistant Commissioner, West Jaintia Hills District on 12th August in the College Hall of Thomas Jones Synod College, aims to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote safe informed practices among youths.

Speaking at the event, Smt. Emelya Ch. Momin underscored the vital role of young people in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Referring to the situation in West and East Jaintia Hills as 'no longer a threat but a full blown crises', she said that the Intensified IEC Campaign is designed to share correct information, promote early testing, encourage safe practice and reach vulnerable group with compassion.



She stressed that HIV/AIDS is not just a medical issue but also a Social one, where stigma and discrimination have prevented many from seeking help. "A person living with HIV is first and foremost a person who deserves dignity, compassion and support", she affirmed.

Addressing the youths, she urged them to be Ambassadors of awareness, to use their voices in classrooms, among peers and within communities to share facts challenges, prejudice and encouraged testing. Momin, called for collective action so that 'Meghalaya becomes a state where HIV is fought with knowledge and ear and where compassion is stronger than stigma'.



Shri. Sandy Tariang, Cluster Program Manager, District Intergrated Strategy HIV/AIDS, emphasised the growing concern over both the rise of HIV and the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV and other high risk group. He pointed out that West and East Jaintia Hills contributes nearly to 5000 HIV cases about half of the states total.



He explained in response to challenges, the National AIDS Control organisation (NACO) has introduced the Intensified IEC Campaign to address awareness gaps and combat prejudice.

He said the IIEC campaign will use rallies, awareness programmes, traditional games, cultural prorammes to engage communities and spread accurate information especially among rural areas.

The campaign will cover around 150 villages in West and East Jaintia Hills with a focus on educating students in schools and colleges. He informed that campaign will run for two to two and half a month in the district.

Dr. A. Nongbri, Principal Thomas Synod College encourage the students to see themselves as future leaders, innovators and change makers, starting with self-discipline and integrity being loyal, just and honest.



She reminded them to honour the sacrifice of their parents and to use their youth wisely while avoiding harmful distraction. Acknowledging the power of technology, she cautioned it can be a tool and a temptation, urging the students to use it responsibly.



A rally was also organised with students carrying placards and banners with message on HIV/AIDS prevention.

