HIGHLIGHTS

- Examples of how others have used visual images to communicate key HIV/AIDS/STI-related concepts and messages

V. Key Concepts for HIV/AIDS/STI Programs

There are a number of key concepts for communicating HIV/AIDS/STI messages effectively. They range from communicating the basic information, such as the "window period" and healthy carrier, to specifics on care issues and links between STIs and HIV. We now have almost 20 years of experience, from many different countries, in communicating these concepts visually.

In this section we list the key concepts and, where possible, present an example of how these concepts have been communicated visually in different countries. This is to assist program staff from nongovernmental organization (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and government programs to think about the kinds of symbols, analogies, and ideas that might work best when visually communicating these concepts to low-literate audiences.

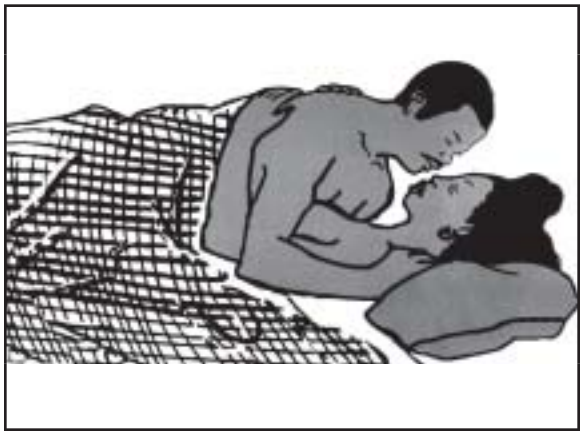
Concepts

1. Modes of Transmission
   a. Sex
   b. Blood Transfusion
   c. Injecting Drug Use
   d. Mother-to-Child Transmission
   e. Female Genital Mutilation
2. Healthy Carrier
3. Virus
4. STI-HIV Link
5. Ways HIV Is Not Transmitted
6. Basic Facts of STIs
7. Knowledge-Prevention: Safe Sex Options
   a. Abstinence and/or Delay or Postponement of Sex
   b. One Faithful Partner
   c. Condoms
   d. Reduction in Partners
8. Knowledge-Prevention: Health Care-Seeking Behavior for STIs
9. Issues
   a. Stigma and Human Rights
   b. Sexual Violence and Violence
   c. Social Cohesion
   d. Lack of Self Esteem
   e. Gender Power Inequity, and Economic and Social Vulnerability
   f. Harassment
10. Negotiating Safe Sex and Condoms
11. Risk Perceptions and Risk Settings
12. VCT and Issues of Confidentiality
13. Breastfeeding
14. Proper Nutrition
15. Self Help
16. Orphans
17. Opportunistic Infections
18. Medication
19. Home Care Issues

Many images in this section were used in conjunction with peer education, counseling, small group, or one-on-one interpersonal communication interventions. Thus, many of the images rely on oral explanations to communicate complicated concepts to low-literate audiences.

1. Modes of Transmission

1a. Sex



(From a Senegalese flip chart prepared under the AIDSCAP Project)

1b. Blood Transfusion

(From a series of Nepali peer educator discussion cards)

1c. Injecting Drug Use

(From an AIDS flip chart for El Salvador, prepared by ISSS, Ministry of Health, and AIDSCAP)

1d. Mother-to-Child Transmission

(From an AIDS flip chart for El Salvador, prepared by ISSS, Ministry of Health, and AIDSCAP)

1e. Female Genital Mutilation

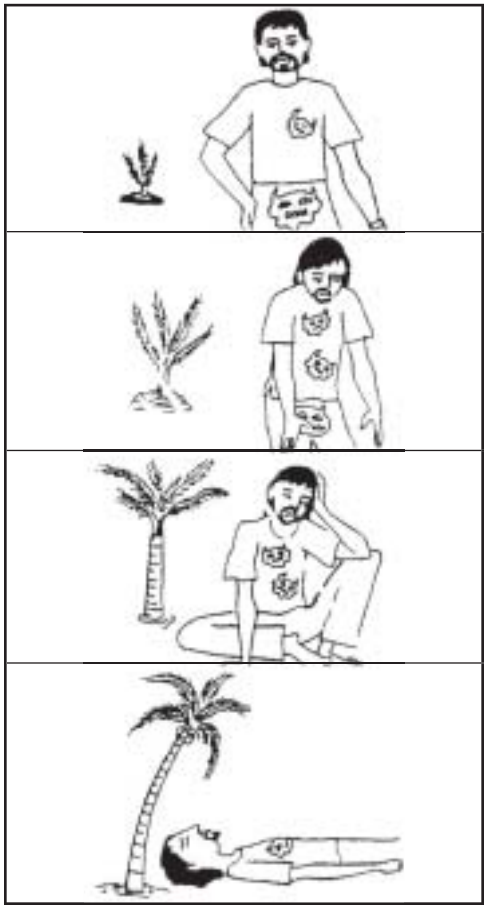
(Courtesy of the Foundation for Research on Women's Health, Productivity, and the Environment (BAFROW), in Gambia)

2. Healthy Carrier, Example A

The concept of a healthy carrier was depicted in discussion cards by showing a "girar" tree indigenous to Ethiopia being infested by termites. This type of tree is known for being very strong, growing slowly, and being capable of growing back very quickly if damaged or cut. Audiences in group discussions and peer education sessions could relate to the concept of this particular tree looking healthy even as it was being destroyed slowly by termites, just like a human carrier of HIV.

(From the Multiple Partners Sexual Contact Females [IMPSC] [Sex Worker] HIV/AIDS Project in Ethiopia)

2. Healthy Carrier, Example B



The healthy carrier concept was also illustrated in Goa, India, by placing side-by-side images of a man (infected with HIV) and a coconut palm tree. The tree was used because audiences understood that an average coconut palm tree takes six years to grow to fruition. This matched the average time it took in the region at that time for a healthy infected person to die from AIDS-related illnesses.

(From the State AIDS Cell Goa Sex Worker Project, Government of India)

HIV/AIDS programs have used various symbols to represent HIV/AIDS for low-literate audiences, some of which are pictured here:

3. Virus, Example A

As discussed earlier, termites were used by the Ethiopian IMPSC Project to represent the HIV virus in discussion cards intended for low-literate audiences.

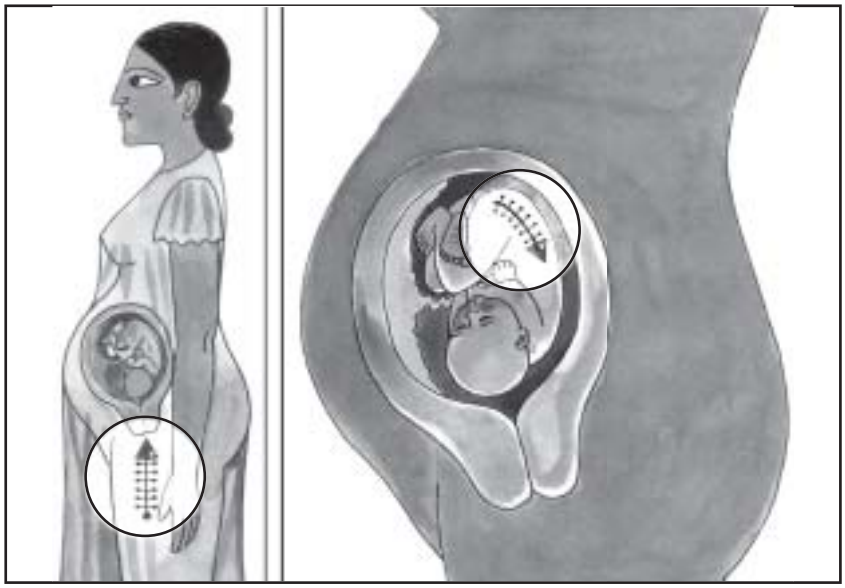
(From the Multiple Partners Sexual Contact Females [IMPSC] [Sex Worker] HIV/AIDS Project in Ethiopia)

3. Virus, Example B

(From the Sonagachi Project in Calcutta, India)

For the Sonagachi Sex Worker project, sex workers developed a symbol resembling a fish skeleton, which reminded them of another popular depiction of the HIV virus. This symbol came to represent HIV in an entire series of pictorial discussion cards.

3. Virus, Example C



(From the Sonagachi Project in Calcutta, India)

3. Virus, Example D

An enlarged representation of an HIV cell was used adjacent to a man contemplating his serostatus in a series of Nepali discussion cards.

(From a series of Nepali peer educators discussion cards)

4. STI-HIV Link

Through a series of discussion cards in Ghana, low-literate audiences understood the concept of STIs—other than HIV/AIDS—through illustrations showing a man and woman clearly experiencing pain in their abdominal areas. The illustrations facilitated discussions emphasizing the fact that having STIs other than HIV/AIDS makes transmission of the HIV virus much more likely. The cards were part of "The Risk Game," a peer educator discussion kit.

(Courtesy of the Red Cross Ghana, Action with Youth HIV/AIDS and STD Project, USAID, and Impact)

5a. Ways HIV Is Not Transmitted, Example A

(From a series of Indian pictorial discussion cards)

5b. Ways HIV Is Not Transmitted, Example B

(Courtesy of the Nigerian Society for Environmental Management and Planning [SEMP] with support from AIDSCAP/USAID Nigeria)

These images depict individuals coughing—a way HIV is not transmitted.

5c. Ways HIV Is Not Transmitted, Example C

Peer educators used this upbeat series of images on a flip chart to explain to Indonesian audiences how HIV is not transmitted. Modes include, from left to right going down: hugging, getting a haircut, sharing a toilet, contact with tears, sharing eating utensils and/or food, holding hands, swimming in the same pool, sharing a toothbrush, and contact with pets.

(From an Indonesian flip chart on AIDS, courtesy of Yayasan Utama)

6. Basic Facts of STIs

This image was used in Sierra Leone to show a man suffering from an STI, most likely gonorrhea.

(Courtesy of the Sierra Leone Home Economics Association)

7. Knowledge-Prevention: Safe Sex Options

7a. Abstinence and/or Delay or Postponement of Sex

The woman/girl is clearly communicating her wish to delay or postpone sex with the male.

(From an AIDS pamphlet prepared by SFPS, for use in West Africa)

7b. One Faithful Partner

(From a series of Kenyan counseling cards prepared under the Mother Care Project)

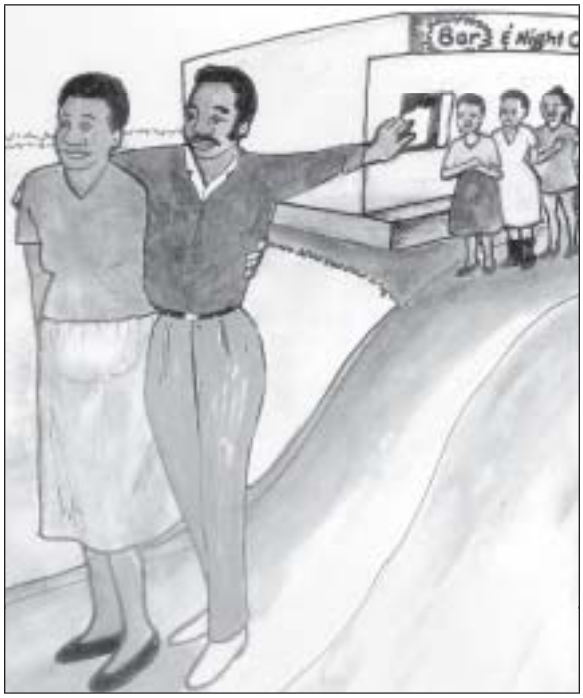
This image is used in a set of counseling cards to discuss being faithful to one partner.

7c. Condoms

(From a Nepali flip chart for female sex workers and their clients/Courtesy of Save the Children)

In this illustration, the image of the condom is doubly reinforced by the male client holding the individual condom and condom package, and by the enlarged caption depicting the condom package and a "filled" condom.

7d. Reduction in Partners



This poster from the European Commission AIDS Project with the Tanzanian National AIDS Control Programme differs from the Kenyan illustration (7b) in that it shows the couple leaving a "Bar & Night [Club]," suggesting that this couple may be sexually active.

(Courtesy of EC AIDS Project/National AIDS Control Program, in Tanzania)

8. Knowledge-Prevention: Health Care-Seeking Behavior for STIs

This poster depicts a health worker speaking to a small group of men and women on the facts about HIV/AIDS.

(Courtesy of NGO Consortium, Nairobi, and AIDSCAP)

9. Issues

9a. Stigma and Human Rights

This poster from Zimbabwe depicts how people living with HIV and AIDS are often stigmatized and ostracized from their societies and families.

(A poster prepared by several organizations in Zimbabwe)

9b. Sexual Violence and Violence

A Nepali peer educators manual depicts a woman confidently defending herself from at least two male assailants.

(From a Nepali peer educators manual/Courtesy of General Welfare Pratisthan/AIDSCAP)

9c. Social Cohesion

(Part of a series of discussion cards used in the Sonagachi Sex Worker Project in Calcutta, India)

9d. Lack of Self-Esteem

This image is used to stimulate discussions on self-esteem.

(Part of a series of discussion cards used in the Sonagachi Sex Worker Project in Calcutta, India)

9e. Gender Power Inequity, and Economic and Social Vulnerability

This image depicts a woman being cast out of her home by her husband/partner and was understood by women/sex workers to illustrate a woman's powerlessness to defend herself in her society in such a situation.

(Part of a series of discussion cards used in the Sonagachi Sex Worker Project in Calcutta, Bangladesh)

9f. Harassment

(From a Nepali peer educator manual for Outreach Education to Commercial Sex Workers and Transient Population Groups in Central Nepal, 1997)

10. Negotiating Safe Sex and Condoms

This image from a Rwandan condom social marketing brochure shows a man and woman "negotiating" condom use.

(From a brochure produced for a Rwandan condom social marketing project)

11. Risk Perceptions and Risk Settings, Example A

This image clearly shows an environment where high-risk behavior could take place.

(From an AIDS flip chart for El Salvador, prepared by ISSS, Ministry of Health and AIDSCAP)

11. Risk Perceptions and Risk Settings, Example B

This panel is part of a series of paintings on the wall of a Zambian center catering to the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. The image illustrates commonly known and observed risk behavior that can lead to HIV transmission (i.e., significant alcohol intake that may lead to unsafe sexual behavior, etc.).

(Courtesy of Chishilano Multifunctional Center in Zambia, and Deborah Boswell)

12. VCT and Issues of Confidentiality

These two photos depict wall murals at the Chishilano Multifunctional Center in Zambia. They convey the supportive environment and some of the context of what a VCT session at the center entails.

(Courtesy of the Chishilano Multifunctional Center in Zambia)

13. Breastfeeding

(From an AIDS flip chart for El Salvador, prepared by ISSS, Ministry of Health, and AIDSCAP)

14. Proper Nutrition

This image from Guyana stresses the need for proper nutrition.

(Prepared by the Guyana HIV/AIDS/STI Youth Project)

15. Self-Help

This illustration depict two examples of the kinds of income-generating activities women can be supported to undertake, especially as alternatives to sex work.

(Part of a 1997 wall calendar from the Rwanda AIDSCAP Project)

16. Orphans

This image depicts street children, a growing reality of the AIDS epidemic.

(From Karate Kids—a booklet and video from Street Kids International)

17. Opportunistic Infections

These images show symptoms of opportunistic infections.

(From an AIDS flip chart for El Salvador, prepared by ISSS, Ministry of Health, and AIDSCAP)

18. Medication

Certain complex, clinical topics such as anti-retroviral therapies (ARVs), tuberculosis (TB), and medication pose challenges for BCC program implementers and those developing print materials for low-literate audiences. FHI and PATH would like to encourage you to share with your colleagues any materials or ideas that might help to broaden the range of examples of how such complex topics can be communicated visually.

19. Home Care Issues, Example A

This image, from a Nepali peer educators' manual, shows a family and provider caring for a family member with HIV/AIDS. Some family members are smiling, which helps convey the sense that family members need not be afraid and that home care can be a positive, nurturing experience for all concerned.

(From a Nepali peer educators manual/Courtesy of General Welfare Pratisthan/AIDSCAP)

19. Home Care Issues, Example B

This image portrays home care in a positive light.

(Part of a series developed in Zimbabwe under AIDSCAP in collaboration with the Government of Zimbabwe, the Matabeleland AIDS Council, UNICEF, and The Zimbabwe Council of Churches in 1994)

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **Tips for designing quality print materials for low-literate populations: layout, illustrations, and text**
- ❑ **Materials developed for one program, region, and/or country can be adapted for use elsewhere**

VI. Guidelines for Materials Production

Tips to Follow

The following tips may be useful in developing quality print materials for low-literate groups.[4,5,10,11,17,32]

1. Design/Layout

Present One Message per Illustration. Each illustration should communicate a single, distinct message. (See Figure 19.)

Figure 19. Present One Message per Illustration

A health worker describes condom use to clients.

(Courtesy of the Gambia Family Planning Association)

Limit the Number of Concepts/Pages per Material. If there are too many messages, readers may become restless or bored or may find the information hard to remember. Try testing different formats with members of the target population to determine what is most appropriate for them. The number of pages in a document can also affect the cost of printing. (See Chapter VIII, Printing, for more information on this.)

Make the Material Interactive Whenever Possible. In cases where audiences have some level of literacy, include simple question-and-answer sections that allow readers to "use" the information in the material. If the material is to be given to these readers to keep, leave a space for the reader's name, and include review or question-and-answer sections that encourage readers to actually write in the material.

Leave Plenty of White Space. This makes the material easier to read, follow, and understand.

Arrange Messages in the Sequence That Is Most Logical to the Audience. People who learn to read from right to left, top to bottom, as well as those who are not used to reading at all, will have different ways of viewing pages. (See Figure 20.)

Figure 20. Arrange Messages in the Sequence That Is Most Logical to the Audience

Instructions for Using a Condom Properly	
1 	Carefully open package so condom does not tear. Do not unroll condom before putting it on.
2 	If not circumcised, pull foreskin back. Squeeze tip of condom and put it on end of penis.
3 	Continue squeezing tip while unrolling condom until it covers all of penis.
4 	Always put condom on before entering partner.
5 	After ejaculation (coming), hold rim of condom and pull penis out before penis gets soft.
6 	Slide condom off without spilling liquid (semen) inside.
7 	Throw away into a container or latrine.

Men who reviewed condom instruction found it easier to follow the sequence when the package insert unfolded to show vertical rather than horizontal drawings. Numbering each step in the process also helped, since many low-level readers have been trained to recognize numbers.

Use Illustrations to Supplement Text. Placing illustrations throughout the text makes the material more appealing and can help the reader to absorb the information presented. For illiterate and low-literate viewers, illustrations are critical for conveying the message.

2. Illustrations

Use Appropriate Colors. Use colors that have been pretested with the intended audience. Colors have different connotations in different cultures. For instance, in some Asian countries such as India, red is a symbol of happiness, while in parts of Africa, it is a symbol of death.

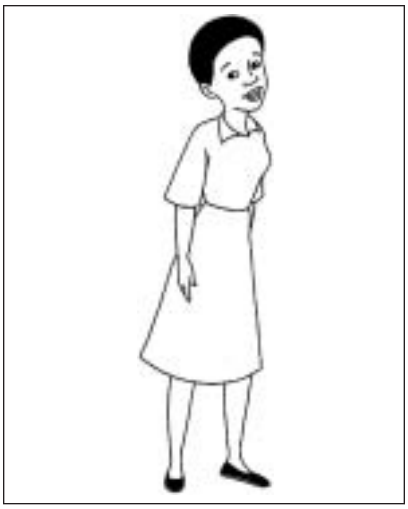
Use Familiar Images. People understand and are attracted to pictures that seem familiar to them. Expressions, activities, clothing, buildings, and other objects in illustrations should reflect the cultural context of the audience. (See Figure 21.)

Figure 21. Use Familiar Images

Example A

This drawing from Gambia was well-liked because the men identified with the father, relaxing on his compound and listening to the radio, while the women saw themselves and their children performing everyday activities.

(Courtesy of the Gambia Family Planning Association)



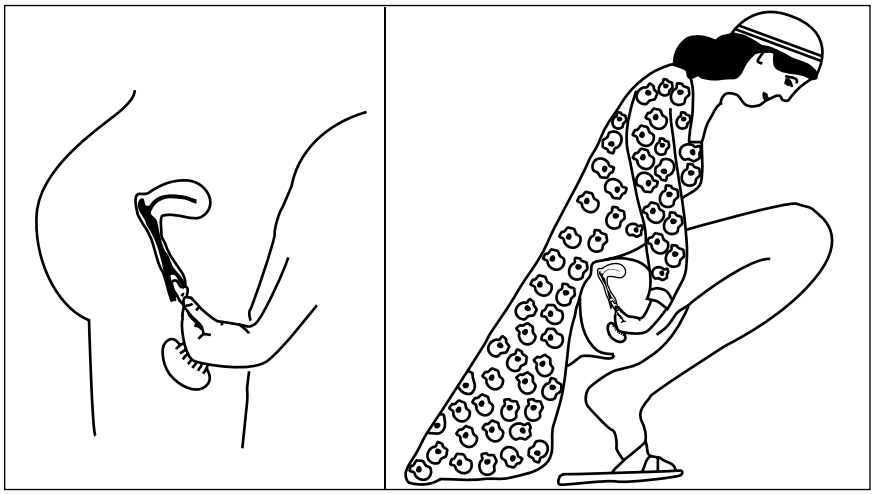
Example B

When preparing comic book and video materials for an East African project promoting the needs and rights of adolescent girls, artists from across the region drew their impressions of Sara, the main character in this series. By the end of the research phase, it was clear that the intended audience wanted Sara to be seen as a bright, feisty, cheerful girl, already maturing physically, with a simple school uniform (shirt and skirt), and a simple hairstyle, since in some countries researchers learned that school girls are not allowed to wear fancy hairstyles. They also learned that less stylized drawings were more acceptable to young people in East Africa.[26]

(Courtesy of UNICEF ESARO's Sara Communication Initiative)

Use Realistic Illustrations. People and objects portrayed as they occur in day-to-day life are easier to recognize than anatomical drawings, enlargements, parts of things or people, schematic diagrams, maps, or other drawings that do not resemble things that people normally see. (See Figure 22.)

Figure 22. Use Realistic Illustrations



Example A **Example B**

Example A shows a "cut-away" drawing of a woman inserting a female condom. The angle and incompleteness of the figure could be confusing to audiences. Example B may portray this message more clearly by showing the woman's full body and correct position for performing the action. The woman is shown wearing clothes appropriate in the local culture.

(Courtesy of an Egyptian women's reproductive health organization)

Use Simple Illustrations. Avoid extraneous detail that can distract the reader from the central message. (See Figure 23.) For instance, it is easier to see a women's health clinic set against a plain background than against a crowded city street.

Figure 23. Use Simple Illustrations

Here a Kenyan mother talks to her adolescent daughter about HIV.

(*Courtesy of PATH/Kenya)*

Illustrate Objects in Scale and in Context Whenever Possible. Although large pictures and text are easier to see, excessive enlargement of detail may diminish one's understanding of the message. (See Figure 24.)

Figure 24. Illustrate Objects in Scale and in Context

The size of familiar piercing objects used throughout Kenya is shown beneath an illustration of one way the AIDS virus can be transmitted: by one school girl piercing the ears of another (here shown using a dirty needle).

(Courtesy of the NGO AIDS Consortium, Nairobi)

Use Appropriate Symbols. All symbols should be carefully pretested with the target audience (see Chapter VII, Pretesting and Revision). Crosses, arrows, check marks, inserts, and balloons that represent conversations and thoughts usually are not understood by people who have not been taught what they mean. (See Figure 25.) Likewise, symbols to represent time are culture specific: in some countries, calendar pages may be used to represent months, whereas moons and stars may be more appropriate in other countries.

Figure 25. Use Appropriate Symbols

Figure 25a

Figure 25b

Figure 25a shows a doctor telling a pregnant woman not to take medications unless they are prescribed by her doctor. The use of this familiar gesture for "no" or "don't" was understood by women in the Philippines, whereas the abstract symbol of a red "X" over an earlier version of two pill bottles and several loose tablets was either misinterpreted or entirely overlooked.

While the picture in Figure 25a was widely understood, respondents preferred Figure 25b, a more positive variation showing the doctor handing the woman a bottle of pills: "Only take medicines prescribed by your doctor."

(Courtesy of Kabalikat ng Pilipino, Manila, Philippines)

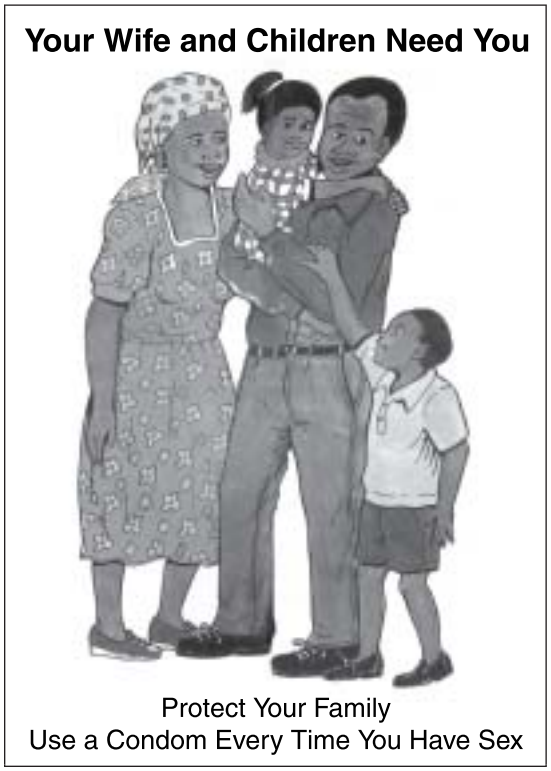
Use Appropriate Illustrative Styles. There are different kinds of illustrative styles: line drawings, shaded drawings, photographs, cartoons, etc. Photos without background detail are more clearly understood by some audiences than are drawings. When drawings are more appropriate, some audiences prefer shaded line drawings rather than simple line drawings. Test shading carefully to make sure that it is acceptable and obvious enough that it is not mistaken for poor-quality printing. Similarly, cartoon figures or highly stylized drawings may or may not be well understood, depending on the audience's familiarity with cartoon characterizations and abstract representation. Identical messages, using the same symbols, should be tested in several graphic styles to determine which style is most acceptable to and well understood by the audience. (See Figure 26.)

Figure 26. Use Appropriate Illustrative Styles

Here the photograph shown in Figure 25b has been re-drawn using watercolors. Project staff found that the hand-drawn colored version was better accepted and more easily understood than the colored photo. Also, in the drawing, the artist could show more clearly that the woman was pregnant, which was important in a booklet on ways to ensure a healthy baby.

Use a Positive Approach. Negative messages may be alienating or discouraging rather than motivating. (See Figure 27.)

Figure 27. Use a Positive Approach



This poster uses a positive approach toward family life, and also gives a reason to use protection. Rather than tell men to have sex only with their wives, which earlier FGD research had shown was not realistic, this message implies that men will be available to take care of their families if they use a condom every time they have sex.

(Courtesy of the NGO AIDS Consortium, Nairobi)

3. Text

Choose a Type Style and Size That Is Easy to Read. Choose a type style that is clear and easy to read, especially for audiences with low literacy skills. Choose a type size that is large enough for the audience to read (if possible, use a 14-point font for text, 18 point for subtitles and 24 point for titles). Italic and sans serif type styles are more difficult to read.

Use Uppercase and Lowercase Letters and Regular Type. Text printed in all upper case (or capital) letters is more difficult to read. For emphasis, use underlining or a distinctively bold typeface.

Test the Reading Level. For low-literate audiences, use short words whenever possible, and keep sentences short. For a literate audience, use more complex language since they may be offended by overly simplified language. If there is a significant amount of text, draft materials may be tested with standard readability tests such as SMOG or Fry. (See Appendix E for instructions on how to use one of these tests.) However, PATH has found that proper pretesting with the target audience usually will indicate whether the language level of a material is appropriate for that audience. (See Chapter VII, Pretesting and Revision.)

Review Repeatedly. Restate important information, and include review sections whenever possible. This will help the reader to understand and remember the messages presented.

4. Adaptation

Materials developed for a specific program, region, and/or country can often be adapted for use elsewhere. It may be easier and more cost-effective to change something that already exists than to create an entirely new material. Adaptation requires more rigorous pretesting than developing new materials to ensure that they are acceptable and appropriate for the needs of different target populations. (See Chapter VII, Pretesting and Revision.)

Reasons for Adapting Materials

Proven Messages Work Well. If a pictorial message has been successful elsewhere, it may work well in another area with a similar program. A major advantage of adapting materials is having the opportunity to test proven ideas in a different setting.

Technical Information Requires Few Changes. The technical information in adapted material is often the same. For example, the message "Hugging and showing affection for a person with HIV/AIDS will not give you the virus" will be the same for villagers in the Transkei and urbanites in Johannesburg. However, the approach to delivering the message—such as ways of depicting dress and hair styles—may change.

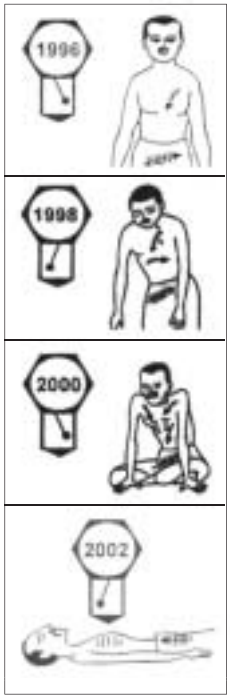
Locally Relevant Materials Are Effective. Research has shown that materials are more acceptable and effective when they are written in the local language and when the pictorial messages include relevant objects that are easily recognizable in the local situation.

Adaptation Saves Time and Money. A project can save both time and money by carefully adapting pictorial materials that are clear and correct to local conditions. (See Figure 28.)

The four visuals, in Example A, were part of a North Indian flip chart designed to show the progression of the AIDS virus. It used a wall chart to show the passage of time. But in Goa people were often confused by the large clock, as well as the change of numbers over time, which was not a familiar concept. Therefore the message was not well understood.

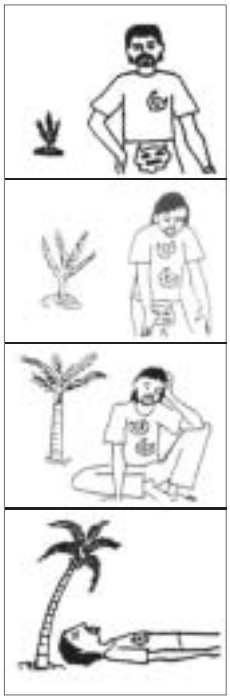
In the Goan adaptation (Example B), the passage of time is illustrated by the growth of a coconut tree, which takes six years, from time of planting, to bear fruit. To show the passage of time, this coconut tree was found to be both an appropriate and easily understood symbol in the Goan cultural context, as such trees are common throughout this tropical part of India.

Figure 28. Adaptation of Materials



Original message designed for North India.

Example A



Adaptation designed for a more tropical section of India.

Example B

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **Defining pretesting**
- ❑ **Understanding the importance of pretesting**
- ❑ **Five variables to measure during pretesting**
- ❑ **Why individual pretests are preferable when working with illiterate and low-literate populations**
- ❑ **Selecting respondents for any pretest**
- ❑ **Sample pretesting forms and how to use them**
- ❑ **Pretesting with groups**
- ❑ **Importance of sharing pretested print materials—along with the back-up pretest results forms—with any "gatekeepers"**

VII. Pretesting and Revision

What Is Pretesting? Once the first drafts of the messages and a series of visuals are prepared, interviews are conducted with representatives of the target population to test the messages and visuals. This is called "pretesting" or "field-testing." During pretesting, an interviewer shows the materials to members of the target population and asks open-ended questions to learn if the message is well understood and acceptable. The goal of pretesting is to ensure that BCC materials convey the intended messages in a way that the audience endorses. [7,8,17,18,32]

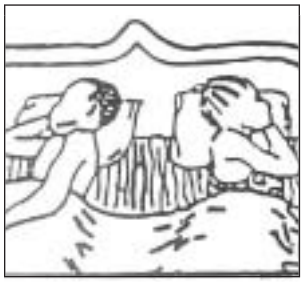
When to Pretest? Pretesting takes place before the materials are finalized so that they can be revised based on the audience's reactions and suggestions. Most materials must be pretested and revised several times. Each new or revised version is tested again until the material is well understood by—and acceptable to—the target population.

Why Pretest? Pretesting is crucial because illustrations and text can easily be misinterpreted, especially by audiences who have had little exposure to printed materials. Pretesting helps project staff know whether the draft materials are understandable to the audience for whom they are being prepared. If people cannot understand the materials, or do not like them, the message is lost. It is also easier to change materials before they are finalized than to find out the materials are inappropriate after a large investment of time and expense.

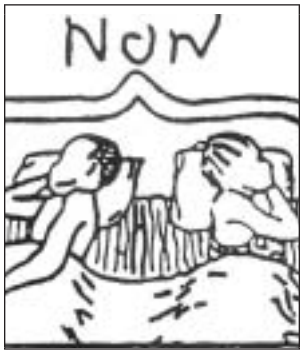
The three drafts shown in Figure 29 were designed to promote the message that couples must abstain from sexual relations for the entire time they are in treatment for an STI. The message further explained that persons can "catch" STIs by having sexual relations with someone who is infected. When young people in Burkina Faso and Togo were shown the first version (Draft A)—the image of a couple sleeping away from one another on different sides of the bed— many weren't sure about the meaning of the message. Some suggested writing the word "non" (no) in red over the bed (Draft B), but comprehension of this important message remained poor.

Project staff then explained the message they wanted to convey and asked respondents for additional suggestions to improve the pictorial message. Pretest respondents suggested a completely different approach. When this third version (Draft C) was redrawn and pretested, most pretest participants understood that the woman definitely intended to stay away from her partner.

Figure 29. Three Drafts of an STI Message
(from a brochure on What to Do When You Have an STI)



Draft A: The audience did not understand who the persons were with their backs to one another. In many cultures, siblings and/or children often share their beds with relatives.



Draft B: Same picture as above, but with a red "non" (no) written over the bed frame, implying "no sex" during the STI treatment. Many respondents still did not like the picture of a couple in bed turning their backs on each other. Some said one person in the bed must be ill; others thought the man and woman were angry with each other.

Draft C: In the final version, the man is pursuing his partner, but she is clearly keeping him at an "arm's distance." When the illustration was tested among both older and younger men and women in Burkina Faso and Togo, respondents said it was obvious that the woman was not interested in any sexual intimacies. Both comprehension and acceptability improved and this illustration was used in the printed brochure, now being used in other West African AIDS prevention programs.

(Courtesy of Sante Familiale et Prevention du SIDA [SFPS], a regional project of West Africa, in collaboration with JHU/CCP)

A. Variables to Be Measured

Five variables are measured during pretesting:[28]

Comprehension. Comprehension measures not only the clarity of the material content, but also the way that content is presented. A complicated or unknown word may cause the audience's failure to understand the message. Or, perhaps the message is clear and the language appropriate, but the use of a too-small typeface makes it difficult for the audience to read the message. Additionally, the transmission of too many ideas may confuse audience members and cause them to overlook the action the material asks them to undertake. Materials should also accomplish strategic objectives. If the strategy calls for the materials to evoke tenderness toward a family member with AIDS, pretesting should make certain that the audience perceives this in the message.

Attractiveness. If a material is not attractive, many individuals exposed to it will not pay much attention to it. A poster may go unnoticed if it has been printed in a dull color or if the illustration is of poor quality or is irrelevant. Print materials achieve attractiveness through appropriate visuals, such as colored or black-and-white illustrations and photographs.

Acceptance. The messages and the way they are communicated must be acceptable to those to whom they are directed. If the communication materials contain something that offends, is not believable, or generates disagreement among the target audience, the message will be rejected.

Involvement. The target populations should be able to identify with the materials and recognize that the message is directed toward them. To ensure that the target audience for the new material becomes involved, it is necessary to make appropriate use of the symbols, graphics, and language used by a particular population group. Illustrations and characters should faithfully reflect that specific population segment, together with its environment and characteristics, through clothing, hair styles, furniture, building style, etc. (although there are always some who will ask to see people different from themselves, so they don't feel singled out).

Inducement to Action. The materials should indicate clearly what the target population is being asked to do. No matter how good a communication material is from a technical standpoint, it will be worthless if it fails to transmit a message that can be acted upon or carried out. Even those materials that create awareness should induce listeners or viewers at least to seek more information on a subject, as this can move them to take steps leading to the required action or behavior change.

B. Individual Pretests

Whenever possible, pretests of materials for low-literacy groups should be conducted with only one target audience member at a time. (See Figure 30.) This will ensure that a respondent's answers are not influenced by other people. As with FGD participants, pretest respondents must be representative of the audience(s) the project wants to reach. **The same respondents should not participate in more than one round of pretesting and should not be the same individuals who participated in the earlier FGDs.** This is to ensure that respondents have no prior knowledge of the intended messages being tested.

Figure 30. Pretesting in Sierra Leone

Pretest sites and times must be selected with the audience in mind. It is often more convenient to pretest materials where participants work, reside, or pass time—such as marketplaces, clinic waiting rooms, or tea stalls—rather than at the pretester's office. Such pretests can be either planned (scheduled) or unplanned (intercept interviews). The main difference between an intercept interview and a planned interview is how it begins.

Follow these guidelines when using the **intercept interview** technique:

Tips on Beginning Intercept Interviews

- Begin the intercept interview by stopping people who look like they are representative of the group for whom the materials are intended. Explain that the program is testing some materials and that you would like to ask their opinion.
- Next, find out if the person is in the intended group by asking him or her the questions on the participant Pretest Background Sheet (see Appendix C on Pretesting Forms).
- Conduct the interview in a private place. A private atmosphere can be created by providing a room with a curtain or interviewing the person away from crowded areas.

From this point on, the intercept interview and the planned interview continue in the same way (see pages that follow).

Like FGDs, pretests require a two-person team: an interviewer and a note-taker. (See Figure 31.) Usually, a team can conduct individual pretests with six to ten respondents a day, depending on the length of the material being pretested and whether or not respondents have had any schooling. (Those who have been to school, if only for a few years, are usually more adept at interpreting pictorial messages.)

Figure 31. Pretesting in Peru and Nepal

Pretesting in Peru

Pretesting in Nepal

First Rounds of Pretesting. The first drafts of materials for initial pretests should be the least complicated in terms of technical elements such illustrations, graphics, and color. Initially, when pretesting print materials for low-literates, it is best to use line drawings of the illustrations with the accompanying simple text. **The text and picture for each message should be tested separately in order to obtain specific pretesting results for each.** One method is to print the text beneath the picture so that, while testing the picture alone, the text can be folded out of sight or covered with a blank sheet of paper held in place with paper clips . The page may then be unfolded or paper removed so that the picture and text can be pretested together.

In materials showing people talking to one another, developers often use a "talk bubble." In Figure 32, the illustrations needed to be tested separately from the text to ensure that respondents understood that the woman was saying "no," as well as what she was saying "no" to the man's interest in having sex. After providing feedback on the pictures alone, pretest respondents were shown the second version, where the woman says, in Wolof, "Sex only after marriage."

Give each individual message a number to refer to when pretesting: for example, "1A" and "1B" could be alternative versions of the same message.

Figure 32. Pretesting Illustrations and Text

Example A

Illustration without text

(Courtesy of AIDSCAP-CRWRC/Senegal)

Example B

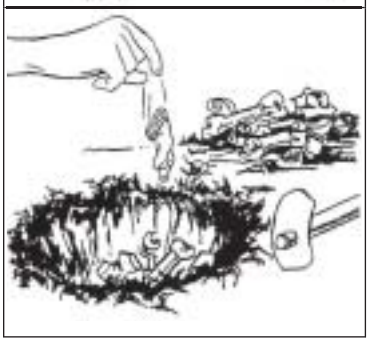
Illustration with text

Figure 33 presents a situation where project staff might pretest more than one illustration of the same message. When the World Health Organization (WHO) published a monograph on preparing flyers demonstrating proper condom use, they included alternative illustrations showing where to dispose of a used condom. They suggested that program staff might alternate the following pictures (or substitute others, as needed) to pretest the most appropriate condom disposal illustration to use in fliers for a particular country.

Figure 33. Pretesting Alternative Illustrations

This illustration will form the seventh message in a series on proper condom use.

Alternate 1



Alternate 2

Tips on Conducting Individual Interviews

Follow these steps for both intercept interviews and planned interviews.

Once the pretester has selected a pretesting site and identified a respondent, the pretester should introduce himself or herself and the note-taker. He or she should explain that the purpose of the pretesting is to solicit comments from respondents to help improve print materials that will be used to benefit people like the interviewee. The pretester should emphasize that the *material* is being tested, not the respondent.

Tell the participant that his or her name will not be used and that the conversation is confidential. Tell him or her how much time the interview will take. Discourage onlookers, since they may be distracting to the respondent. During pretesting, the interviewer must:

- Ask questions that are "open-ended" rather than "closed-ended" and "probing" rather than "leading."
- Be supportive of the respondent's answers: use phrases such as "very good" and "you are doing a fine job," even when the respondent misinterprets the message the picture is meant to convey. If the respondent gets the idea that he or she is doing something wrong, he or she will stop talking and the pretest will be invalid.
- Allow the respondent to talk freely without interruption, disagreement, or ridicule. After getting—and recording—the respondent's interpretation and comments on all the messages being pretested, thank him or her for participating. Provide refreshments for participants, if possible, as a way to thank them for their participation in the process.

Number of Respondents. During early rounds of pretesting, improvements needed in the drawings should become evident quickly. Therefore, it is usually not necessary to interview more than 10 respondents before analyzing the results. In subsequent pretests, at least 20 respondents per round should be interviewed before revisions are made.

Number of Copies. When doing individual interviews for pretesting leaflets, brochures or other print material intended for individual consumption, you can use the same copy for each person. For group interviews, make a photocopy for each participant. When pretesting posters, flip charts, counseling cards, or any print material that is usually viewed in a group setting, one copy is enough.

Figure 34. Question Types

1. Closed-Ended Questions Closed-ended questions require a brief and exact reply. Example: "How many men do you see in this picture?" (This assumes that the respondent has already mentioned a man in the illustration.)	**2. Open-Ended Questions** Open-ended questions require longer answers and demand more thought than do closed-ended questions. Example: "What is happening in this picture?"
3. Probing Questions Probing questions respond to replies or request further information. Example: "You said one man looks sad. Tell me, why you think this man looks sad? What is there about him that suggests sadness?"	**4. Leading Questions** Leading questions lead respondents to answer the question in a particular way. Example: "Are you bothered by this picture of a health worker showing men how to use a condom?"

As the material content improves during subsequent rounds of pretesting, drafts should begin to closely resemble the final product in terms of color, size, layout, etc. When testing any materials that will be used in a group setting, make sure the illustrations can be seen clearly.

In later rounds of pretests, it is often appropriate—and less time consuming—to use groups, again composed of representatives of the target population(s). This is especially true when project staff are having trouble finding visuals that are fully understood by an audience. Assembling a group of 8 to 12 persons, explaining to them the messages to be depicted, and then asking for their suggestions, is often a cost-effective way to generate many ideas in a short period of time. When doing this, consider having the artist present to sketch out suggestions and get immediate feedback. Of course, it is still important to pretest these new illustrations with other members of the intended audience, but this exercise may generate immediate ideas that are both comprehensible and acceptable.

During the **final pretest**, use a mock representation of the material (final size, layout, type size, and colors) exactly as envisioned by project staff. Following this final round, minor changes may be necessary, but comprehension and acceptability should be high enough to proceed with printing.

C. Use of Pretesting Forms

PATH and FHI use several forms and outlines to help organize and gather data during pretesting: the Pretest Background Sheet, the Pretest Data Collection Sheet, the Pretest Summary of Results Sheet, Sample Questions for Group Pretests, and the Group Pretest Answer Sheet. Samples of each are provided in Appendix C. These forms can be adapted to suit each project. Figures 35, 36, and 37 demonstrate the uses of some of these pretesting forms. Each form documents one round of pretesting; the same general procedures are used for all rounds of individual pretests until an "acceptable" version of the message is created.

It is important to use forms because:

- Pretesting generates many details about how to improve the materials, and if they are not carefully organized and documented, such details are easily lost.
- Keeping track of pretest participant characteristics ensures that only individuals who meet the screening criteria are included in pretesting.
- Forms help systematize the pretesting process, making it easy to summarize what project staff learned and how they applied it.

1. Pretest Background Sheet

The sample completed Pretest Background Sheet (Figure 35) shows how this form is used to record information about pretest respondents. One Pretest Background Sheet should be prepared for each round of pretesting. Project staff must decide in advance which criteria to use in selecting pretesting respondents and what information is important to record. These selection criteria are listed in the spaces at the top of each column and should be filled in prior to pretesting.

Personal information that some individuals may feel sensitive about revealing (age, level of schooling, vocation, ability to read) should be solicited tactfully. For example, after approaching a potential respondent in an "intercept" interview and explaining the need to pretest a particular material among people with limited reading skills, the interviewer may then inquire about the potential respondent's educational level. If the person does not qualify,

the interviewer should politely thank the person and continue to search for respondents who represent the target population.

Each individual should be assigned the same respondent number for the Pretest Background Sheet and the Pretest Data Collection Sheet. (See Figure 35.)

2. Pretest Data Collection Sheet

The Pretest Data Collection Sheet is used to record feedback from respondents about the material that is being pretested. One Pretest Data Collection Sheet should be completed for each message (page) during each round of pretesting. (See Figure 36.) Information above the bold line should be filled out by project staff prior to pretesting. The letters "A,""B,""C," etc., in the "Describe Picture" box correspond to major elements of the illustration. This shorthand system allows the interviewer to record responses quickly by listing the appropriate letters.

Everything below the bold line on the Pretest Data Collection Sheet is completed during and after pretesting:

- First, each respondent is assigned a number, the same used on the Pretest Background Sheet. This number is recorded in the left column.
- Before showing the picture to the respondent, the interviewer folds any text out of sight or covers it. The he or she asks questions about the picture.
- Next, the interviewer unfolds the page and asks about the text.
- In the box labeled "What do the words mean to you?" the "R" should be circled if the respondent read the accompanying text; the "H" should be circled if the respondent cannot read and heard the text read aloud by the interviewer.
- The respondent's feeling about the message and suggestions for improvements should be listed in the next two boxes.

After the team completes a round of pretesting, the coder should carefully read all the responses, determine whether the picture and text are "OK" or "Not OK," and mark the appropriate box. This assessment should be based on:

- Comprehension (indicated by the "What do you see?" and "What do the words mean to you?" boxes)
- Acceptability (indicated by the "How do you feel about the picture and/or words?" and "What would you change?" boxes)

Figure 35. Sample Completed Pretest Background Sheet

Interviewer(s): SM and DD
Pretest: ____

PRETEST BACKGROUND SHEET

Topic: AIDS Education Material: Booklet

Region: Compound X Language: Local Dialect

Date	Resp #	Schooling 0	Schooling 1-2	Schooling 3+	Sex M	Sex F	Age <25	Age 25+	Profession	Random use Yes	Random use No
Aug. 8	1	X			X			X	taxi driver	X	
Aug 8	2		X			X		X	Farmer's wife		X
Aug 8	3			X		X	X		Student		X
Aug. 8	4	X			X		X		Cassette tape salesperson		X
Aug. 8	5		X			X	X		Hotel maid	X	
Aug. 8	6		X			X		X	Typist		X
Aug. 8	7			X	X			X	Accountant		X
Aug 8	8	X			X			X	Guard		X
Aug. 8	9			X	X		X		Truck driver	X	
Aug. 8	10		X			X	X		Produce seller		X
TOTAL	10	# % 3 30	# % 4 40	# % 3 30	# % 5 50	# % 5 50	# % 5 50	# % 5 50	# %	# % 3 30	# % 7 70

Test the text using the language that will be used in the material.

Use these columns for additional information as needed.

The respondent number will correspond with the one used on the Pretest Data Collection Sheet.

A response to a picture is considered "OK" if the respondent correctly describes all major elements in the illustration, is comfortable with the picture, and suggests no changes. Similarly, a response to the text is "OK" if the respondent correctly states the meaning of the text and is satisfied with the way the message is stated and that it reinforces the illustration. Otherwise, a response should be coded as "Not OK."

Figure 36. Sample Completed Pretest Data Collection Sheet (for message illustrated in Figure 38)

The numbers in this column correspond to the respondent numbers on the Pretest Background Sheet.

This is the first time this picture has been pretested.

This is the 4th of 10 messages (pages) in the booklet.

This is the response of *one* respondent to *one* message (#4, see above).

If the respondent does not understand a part of the picture, the respondent's interpretation should be noted.

One leading rule is that if respondents make any appropriate suggestions for changes to the illustration, the picture is "Not OK" and should be changed.

If the respondent recognizes part of the picture, a check mark can save the recorder time.

If the text is not understood, it should be changed.

Background information on whether the test was read or heard will help project staff to decide if changes are needed.

Pretest Data Sheet

Topic of Material: AIDS Education

Language: Local dialect Pretest Round: 1

Region: Compound X Date: Aug. 8-9, 1988

Interviewers: SM and DD Message no.: 4

Res. #:	Describe Picture: What do you see?	Write Text: What do the words mean to you?	How do you feel about the picture and/or words?	What would you change?	Coding: Picture: "OK"	Coding: Picture: NO	Coding: Text: "OK"	Coding: Text: NO
	A) 2 men B) used clothing c) buying at market	Used clothing is AIDS-free						
1	A) 1 man washing clothes, the other drying them B) no c) no	You can get AIDS through gifts (RH)	• People look dirty • Wearing funny shoes • "AIDS-free" confusing	• Put clothes on table like a market • Show money		✓		✓
2	A) ✓ B) stains on shirt c) ✓	AIDS is in used clothing (RH)	• Men are villagers, especially those in "pato pato" shoes	• Show a nurse buying used clothes • Remove "pato" shoes		✓		✓
3	A) ✓ B) ✓ c) ✓	Used clothing is AIDS-free (RH)	• Men look angry	• Have men smiling • Change text to "You cannot get AIDS from used clothing"		✓		✓

Project staff must determine when a message is "OK" or "Not OK" in terms of the overall level of comprehension and acceptability. Staff should consider and decide in advance how many "OKs" signify a successful message. PATH and FHI recommend that at least 70 percent of respondents should be able to correctly interpret the visuals alone, and at least 90 percent should be able to interpret the visuals with the text, find them acceptable, and understand any action the messages recommend.

An **alternative to collecting pretest data** is a simple Pretest Question Guide. Some find it easier not having to prepare a special chart with small boxes to be filled in. However, using a Pretest Question Guide is somewhat bulkier, as the interviewer and the note-taker must use a separate sheet of paper for each message pretested by each respondent. A Pretest Question Guide would contain questions such as:

- (Note: Show only illustration.) What do you see in this picture? What is it telling you? Are you supposed to do anything? If so, what? (Then leave room to write the respondent's responses, or use the Group Pretest Answer Sheet; see Appendix C, Form No. 6).
- (Note: Uncover text and either read it, or have participant read it.) What does the text mean, in your own words? (Again, always leave empty space to enter reply.)
- What information—or message—is this page trying to convey?
- Does it ask/tell you to do something? If yes, what?
- Does the picture on the page match the words? Why? Or why not?
- Are there any words in the text that you do not understand? Which ones?
- Is there anything on the page that you do not like? What? Why? How might we improve it?

3. Pretest Summary of Results Sheet

The Pretest Summary of Results Sheet indicates any changes needed to the text and/or visuals to increase the messages' comprehension and acceptability. As soon as a round of pretests ends and the coding is completed, the coder must transfer the results to the Pretest Summary of Results Sheet. (See Figure 37.) Usually, only one or two Summary of Results Sheets are needed to record data from all the messages pretested during one round.

Two separate lines should be used to record the results of the pictures ("P") and text ("T") for each message. For example, if several pages of a material are being pretested, label the first line "1P" and record the comments for improving the picture of message number 1 on

Figure 37. Sample Completed Pretest Summary of Results Sheet

Fill in the coder's name here.

Coder(s) Rani Kundah
Pretest Round 1
Region Compound x
Topic of Material AIDS Education

PRETEST SUMMARY OF RESULTS SHEET

Message number	Total interviewed	OK #	OK %	NOT OK #	NOT OK %	Suggested Changes
1P	10	1	10%	9	90%	Put clothes on table; show money; show nurse buying clothes; show men smiling; show city shoes; delete patches on shirt, as they were mistaken for stains;
1T	10	4	40%	6	60%	Change text to "You cannot get AIDS from used clothing."
2P						
						Continue summarizing pertinent suggestions from the forms used when pretesting. This summary is very useful when explaining proposed changes to the artist.

P = Picture

T = Text

This will help you to judge which messages need the most work.

Incorporate these suggested changes into Pretest Round 2.

that line. The next available line should be labeled "1T" and contain the results for the text of message number 1. Subsequent messages should be recorded as "2P," "2T," "3P," "3T," and so forth.

The coder should calculate the percentages of "OK" and "Not OK" pictures and text based on the total number of pretests. He or she should also summarize the suggested changes recorded on the Pretest Data Collection Sheet in the right-hand column of this summary form. Figure 37 shows the results of pretesting the picture and text of Figure 38. Figure 39 shows how the suggested changes were incorporated into Pretest Round Two.

Figure 38. Sample Illustration, Pretest Round One

"Used clothing is AIDS-free." **Respondents understood that men were examining clothing, but thought they were looking for garments that had not been mended.**

(From a pretest in a sub-Saharan African country)

Alternative Pretest Summary Form. When using the Pretest Question Guide, it is necessary to collate responses collected from the individual pretests. Create a master compilation form, with one question per page, and leaving large spaces to record what was said. Again, there are shortcuts project staff can initiate. For example, if respondent #4 gives the same reply to question 1 as respondent #2, then staff compiling the summary can just put a tick (š or + or some other symbol) next to the comments of respondent #2. Similarly, if respondent #6 saw everything she was supposed to see in illustration 3, the interviewer or note-taker could just write "visuals OK" (or some similar abbreviation that the two-person team has agreed upon before beginning to summarize the results).

Figure 39. Sample Illustration, Pretest Round Two

"You cannot get AIDS from used clothing." The fact that someone as knowledgeable as a nurse was purchasing the clothing—from an identifiable used clothing vendor—helped respondents understand that, contrary to beliefs that surfaced during the FGDs, this practice would not spread AIDS.

(From a pretest in a sub-Saharan African country)

In subsequent rounds of pretests, an efficient way to note recommended changes is to use an Identification of Changes and Modifications Sheet. (See Appendix C, Form 7.)

Review by Gatekeepers. Once the individual messages have reached the desired level of understanding through pretesting and revision, the entire material should be reviewed by the organization(s) collaborating on the project, other institutions interested in using the material, and anyone else with authority to approve the material. These gatekeepers often control the distribution channels for reaching the target population. If they do not like the material or do not believe it to be credible or scientifically accurate, it may never reach the target population. It is therefore important to have gatekeepers review the materials before they are finalized. It is good policy also to show them the pretest summary forms, to help them better understand the perceptions of those for whom the materials are intended, and perhaps prevent them from blocking distribution of the materials later on. Keep in mind that these gatekeeper reviews are not a substitute for pretesting the materials with target population representatives, or for obtaining technical clearances from medical experts.[22]

Figure 40. Sample Questions for Group Pretests

Questions specific to each page:

1. What information is this page trying to convey?
2. What does the text mean in your own words?
3. If there is a picture, what does it show? Is it telling you to do anything? If yes, what?
4. Do the words match the picture on the page? Why or why not?
5. What do you like/dislike about this page?
6. Are there any words in the text you do not understand? Which ones? (If so, explain the meaning and ask respondents to suggest other words that can be used to convey that meaning.)
7. Are there any words that you think others might have trouble reading or understanding? (Again, ask for alternatives.)
8. Are there sentences or ideas that are not clear? (If so, have respondents show you what they are. After explaining the intended message, ask the group to discuss better ways to convey the idea.)

General questions about material in its entirety:

9. Is there anything you like/dislike about this booklet—use of colors, kinds of people represented, choice of foods used, etc.?
10. Does the material ask the reader to do anything? What? Are the messages effective? Why or why not?
11. We want the materials to be as easily understood by others. How can we improve the pictures?
12. What other suggestions do you have for improving this material—pictures, words, or both?

D. Group Pretests

Group pretests are sometimes used as an alternative to individual interviews, but are recommended primarily for literate audiences. Literate persons are often more self-assured and not as likely to be influenced by other members of the group when reviewing materials, and can provide valuable information when testing materials intended for audiences with more schooling. Group pretesting is particularly effective for materials containing primarily textual messages and materials such as film scripts, audiocassettes, or videos.

Group pretests can also help project staff determine if existing materials developed by other groups meet project objectives. It may be possible to borrow and pretest ideas from materials developed for other regions and adapt them, but staff must be sure to include messages that meet the needs of the new audience, as indicated by local audience research.

As with FGDs, a pretest group should include 8 to12 people who represent the target population. The pretester should explain that the group's suggestions will be used to improve the materials. The pretester then asks each group member to take a turn reading a section of the material aloud. The pretest team listens for words that the readers have difficulty reading or understanding. After one respondent reads a section (one paragraph, for example), the pretester asks the whole group to discuss the section and make suggestions for improving it. The pretester may ask some general review questions to make sure that all main points and concepts presented in the material are understood. Likewise, pictorial messages may be tested by asking members of the group what they see, having them read the accompanying text, and discussing whether the message and illustration address the same topic and reinforce one another.

Figure 40 lists some sample questions for pretesting existing textual materials. An expanded version is found in Appendix C, Form 5, and Appendix C, Form 6 illustrates one possible Group Pretest Answer Sheet. These questions are similar to those used in individual pretests when selecting the alternate method that uses the Pretest Question Guide.

If the project requires preparing materials for other audiences, such as peer educators, counselors, health workers, and/or policy-makers, it may be necessary to test longer, primarily textual materials. Make copies of the new material for all participants and, if possible, deliver it to them prior to the pretesting time. Not allowing these audiences advance time to read and absorb the content, any pretests will be superficial and will not provide meaningful feedback for project staff.

Note: Appendix D includes a second set of "Job Aids" on pretesting. Like the FGD Job Aids, they are designed to help program staff prepare for pretests and recall key actions to follow when pretesting print materials. After becoming thoroughly familiar with this chapter, field staff may want to tear out the relevant Job Aid(s) to use as reminders when pretesting with representatives of the target population.