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# IEC Material Production Guidelines

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## Section 1: Introduction

Health promotion and health education activities rely on a variety of well designed and effective IEC materials to help ensure success. From experience, certain fundamentals pertaining to the development of IEC materials are obvious. Every brochure, poster, videotape or other piece of IEC material is the product of a decision, supported by research, to deal with a specific health concern, and to be well received and persuasive among a specific audience.

The success and impact of IEC materials depends largely on the understanding of the target audience by the *IEC material design team*. Working with target audience members throughout the development of IEC materials, and in developing usage strategies for those materials, helps ensure that IEC materials meet the needs of the intended target audience.

This brief paper offers a set of fundamental guidelines for IEC material development teams to follow in the planning, design (or adaptation) and production of IEC materials. It suggests a clear, six-step approach, with each step supporting the next, which IEC material design teams should endeavor to follow. This approach includes:

1. Selecting the most appropriate IEC material

- Types of IEC materials
- Strengths and limitations of different IEC materials
- Selecting IEC materials should be based on knowledge of the target audience
- Criteria for selecting IEC materials
- Mixing IEC materials for more impact

2. Developing a creative brief

- The importance of a creative brief
- Elements of a creative brief

3. Preparing draft / prototype IEC materials — (*or adapting existing materials*)

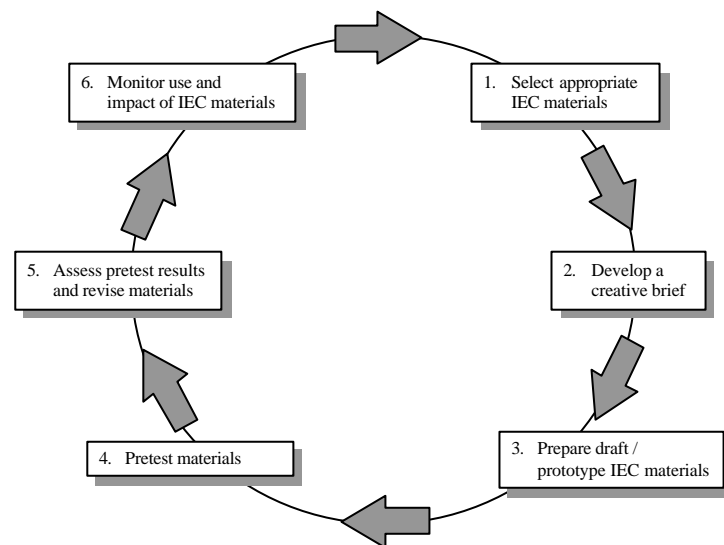
- Guidelines for developing new IEC materials, or selecting / adapting existing IEC materials
- Qualities of effective IEC materials

4. Pretesting draft / prototype or adapted IEC materials

- Pretest variables — what to look for
- Steps for carrying out the pretest

5. Assessing pretest results and revising IEC materials

- Changes in materials
- Number of pretests



6. Monitoring the use and impact of IEC materials

## Section 2: Selecting the Most Appropriate IEC Material

Health promotion messages are not necessarily expressed with equal ease or effectiveness by all IEC materials. Some materials may be more effective in transmitting one type of message better than others. Some materials are best suited for transmitting general information, while others are better at creating an image or atmosphere. Brochures are useful in getting health information into the client's home and hands, while mass media such as television and radio are more suited towards creating an emotional atmosphere or general awareness of the health issue by the target audience. Flipcharts used by a skilled health worker are effective instruments to encourage the adoption of a preferred behavior by the target audience. The final decision in selecting IEC materials should be based on what the target audience prefers, and has access to.

### • Types of IEC Materials

For purposes of discussion will focus on two areas or types of IEC materials:

- ⇒ **Graphics and audio-visuals** — which would include brochures, posters, display boards, videotapes, slides, flip charts.
- ⇒ **Mass media** — which would include radio, television, movies, newspapers, and magazines.

### • Strengths and Limitations of different IEC Materials

Not all IEC materials are created equal. Listed below are some of the strengths and weaknesses of IEC materials which should be kept mind when selecting IEC materials for production.

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<b>Graphics and Audio-visual</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attracts the attention of the client</li><li>• May be distributed / used in a variety of settings</li><li>• Provides basic information on health service and benefits</li><li>• Demonstrates steps of behavior (i.e., preparation and use of medication, methods for preventing mosquito breeding, basic hygiene for food handling safety, etc.)</li><li>• Can provide complex information</li><li>• Is reusable</li><li>• Supports interpersonal health education sessions</li><li>• May be produced locally</li><li>• Provides instant feedback when used by health workers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training is essential for proper use of materials by health workers</li><li>• If not presented by health worker, does not generally influence behavior change.</li></ul>

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- Gives credibility to the health worker
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## Mass Media

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Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reaches many people</li><li>• Creates a demand for health services by the target audience</li><li>• Reinforces important messages delivered through interpersonal communication by health workers</li><li>• Provides status to the health service program</li><li>• Uses influential opinion leaders to influence target population</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May have limited rural distribution</li><li>• For television and radio requires access to electricity</li><li>• Requires substantial financial support</li><li>• Difficult to coordinate with service delivery</li><li>• Difficult to tailor messages to specific audiences</li></ul>

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- **Selecting IEC materials should be based on knowledge of the target audience**

When considering the different IEC materials to use, IEC material development teams should refer to the preferences and characteristics, and knowledge and attitudes of the target audience. In order to select the most effective IEC material for use in health promotion activities, the development team needs to be able to answer the following questions:

- ⇒ Which material or materials best fit the audience's learning style / preference?
- ⇒ What are the literacy and educational levels of the target audience?
- ⇒ Are there any culturally-specific values and beliefs that might impact on the acceptance of certain material types or designs?
- ⇒ What are the communities impression's of past, similar health promotion and health education programs and products?

Members of the target audience can help answer these questions and ensure that a proper selection of IEC materials is made. In some cases this information may have already been collected and analysed by others involved in health promotion / health promotion. These sources should be investigated and studied. If not, original investigations may be required. Individuals with experience in carrying out health education / health promotion activities among the target audience should be sought out and interviewed. Some of the basic approaches that can be employed in gathering information about target audience preferences and characteristics, knowledge and attitudes, include:

- ⇒ **Observations**

Visit the community for which the IEC materials are intended. Visit social gatherings, health centers and hospitals, and any other site where IEC materials might be used. Observe how people react to the materials, and how they interact with each other concerning the materials. Record the observations and discuss them with a variety of community members, health workers, and health education / promotion workers.

### ⇒ **Informal Conversations**

Informal conversations are an unstructured way for the IEC material design team to gain valuable insight into the nuances of a community. Listen to what people have to say, paying careful attention to key comments or anecdotes. Look and listen for preferences in language, symbols, colors, costumes, etc.

### ⇒ **Surveys**

Surveys may include questions on community demographics as well as the knowledge and attitude by the target audience as to specific health issues (i.e., what is perceived to be a health problem, its cause and solution). Survey community members and others who may be able to provide information about the target audience.

### ⇒ **In depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews provide detailed information about the community from its members. This form of qualitative research is characterized by extensive probing and open-ended questions, and should be conducted one-on-one between a community member or respondent and a trained interviewer. Also interview health workers, TBA and VHV who are working or have worked in the community.

### ⇒ **Focus Groups**

Like in-depth interviews, focus groups are characterized by extensive probing and open-ended questions. Unlike in-depth interviews, though, they rely on group interaction. Focus groups are the most widely used form of qualitative research. A skilled moderator guides a group of community members through increasingly focused issues related to the research topics (i.e. health beliefs and behaviors, barriers to health care access, cultural influences, or review of health-related IEC materials).

## • **Guidelines for Selecting IEC Materials**

The following should be carefully considered when selecting IEC materials for production.

### 1. Information collected from the target audience investigation will help to indicate the following:

- ⇒ Which channels the target audience prefers and has access to — electronic, print, interpersonal.
- ⇒ Which channels are most effective for communicating messages to the target audience.
- ⇒ Where the target audience is in the stages of behavior adoption (i.e., have accepted the idea of family planning, but are not sure as to what method to use) and what channels might be most effective in moving them along.

2. Match the ability of the IEC material to deal with specific message content by applying the following guidelines:
  - ⇒ Does the IEC material lend itself to the content of the message? For example, radio can be effective for some content, but less so for messages that require supporting visuals.
  - ⇒ Is the image or message to be conveyed more visual or more audio based? Or is it a combination of both? Does it rely primarily on written words?
  - ⇒ Can the chosen material provide the message frequency or reach that is needed?
3. Determine production difficulties and costs as follows:
  - ⇒ Some materials are more costly than others in production. They either require more professional expertise, more costly production equipment, or more personnel. Radio production costs are considerably less than television. Even if there is financial support for the production phase, is there money to continue to air the messages?
  - ⇒ Some channels will take much longer than others to get operational. Production time constraints may be important.
4. Analyze frequency and reach of the IEC materials as follows:
  - ⇒ Different materials have different audience reach and coverage. While television and radio can reach thousands of people at the same time, individual focused print materials can only reach a limited number of individuals at the most. Select the material, *or combination of materials*, that best meets program needs.
5. Identify the logistic efforts needed as follows:
  - ⇒ Different materials have different logistical demands. Some materials require much more effort to distribute or deliver than others. Distributing thousands of posters to hundreds of health centers is more demanding than sending out audio-cassettes or video tapes to radio and television stations.

- **Mixing IEC materials for more impact**

The message load of a health promotion or health education program is usually greater than any single IEC material can handle. The success of a health promotion interventions, therefore, depend to a great extent on an adequate, creative and efficient mix of various IEC materials. It should not be assumed that one material type is best, nor should the IEC material development team simply select the IEC material that they happen to prefer or are familiar with. Planning for the use of different IEC materials in a strategic combination gives the health promotion intervention the greatest chance of having a positive impact. Such a combination might include:

- ⇒ materials for home use — leaflets, calendars, t-shirts
- ⇒ materials for health center use — flip charts, posters, leaflets, display boards
- ⇒ materials for community display — posters, banners, stickers

⇒ materials for mass media — radio and television spots, newspaper and magazine articles



## Section 3: Developing a Creative Brief

After collecting information on the target audience, determining what would be the best IEC materials to be used, and *before* beginning the actual design of IEC materials, the IEC material development team should prepare a "creative brief" for each material to be prepared. The creative brief serves as a guide, assisting those who will carry out actual material design and production whether it be an "in-house" effort, or in collaboration with an outside production firm. The creative brief should define objectives of the IEC material, identify obstacles to be expected in its use or acceptance, develop draft messages or advice and support statements, define the tone of the messages, and list any other necessary creative considerations such as different language versions or social conditions.

### • The Importance of a Creative Brief

The creative brief serves as crucial link between formative research carried out among the target audience, and developing appropriate and effective IEC materials. It helps translate target audience background information (formative research results) into actual materials, and ensures that health promotion interventions reflect and address the concerns and needs of the target audience. In short, the creative brief serves as a map or guidebook between the IEC material development team and the "creative people", those who will draft the scripts, design the posters and prepare display materials.

### • Elements of a Creative Brief

A creative brief should provide the following information:

- ⇒ **Target Audience.** Describe who is intended to be reached with the IEC material? What are their characteristics — that may affect the way they react to the IEC material? Do other groups make up a secondary audience?
- ⇒ **Communication Objective(s).** What will the IEC material make the target audience feel, think, believe, do, or not do?
- ⇒ **Obstacles.** What beliefs, cultural practices, pressures, and misinformation stand between the target audience and the objectives of the IEC material?
- ⇒ **Key Message / Advice.** Emphasize the benefit of doing, thinking, or feeling what the IEC material will promote? Why should they follow this advice?
- ⇒ **Support Statement/Reasons Why.** Why does the key promise outweigh the obstacles?
- ⇒ **Tone.** What feeling should this communication have? What tone works best with the target audience? Are they emotional about this issue? Religious? Do they listen more to authority?
- ⇒ **Creative Considerations.** What additional points need to be considered while designing the IEC material?

## Section 4: Preparing draft / prototype IEC materials (*or adapting existing materials*)

Health promotion programs can quickly generate massive quantities and types of IEC materials. Many government and NGO offices continue to increase their holdings of IEC materials. stockpiles. If requested, it is usually possible to use another organizations IEC material collection, thus avoiding the time and expenses involved in designing and producing original materials. If incorporating text or visuals from copyrighted material, permission must be obtained from the original, authors or artists.

Most new health promotion initiatives vow to "not reinvent the wheel" and to adapt existing IEC materials. Adaptation generally requires less time and resources than starting from the beginning. Often, a piece of the material contains some useful information but is not written at an appropriate reading level. Or it may contain suitable visuals or graphics, or a unique approach to presentation, without the appropriate message. The effort that went into developing such materials can be enhanced by adapting them to meet the needs of a new target audience.

### • **Qualities of Effective IEC Materials**

Effective IEC materials should attempt to:

1. **Create a distinct look and personality** — Effective IEC materials are vivid, having an appealing personality that helps them stand out from other materials. They should stimulate the target audience with a distinctive look and sound, making them stand out from the "clutter" of competing materials and messages. Messages and design all must speak with the same voice — in design, color, text and narrative.
2. **Stress the most compelling benefit.** Effective IEC materials should address real needs and problems facing the target audience. The information they provide should be specific and single-minded. The main message and benefit to the target population should be clear.
3. **Generate trust.** IEC materials that are simple, direct, and technically correct generate trust in what they say. Credibility should never be replaced by creativity.; a straightforward design is a better basis for trust than extravagant or fancy IEC materials. Trust is generated by tone, presentation, believable images, and a solid information foundation.
4. **Appeal to both the heart and the head.** A decision on the part of the target audience to try something new is not made entirely in the mind — trials are often decided in part by an emotional response. Thus, effective IEC materials and messages should be designed to appeal to both the heart or emotions, and the head or reason.

### • **Guidelines for developing new IEC materials, or selecting / adapting existing IEC materials**

The guidelines for the design and development of new or original IEC materials is, in essence, the same as that for adapting existing materials. Emphasis must be made in developing a material that is clear; clear in text / narrative, visuals and format. When designing new IEC materials, or adapting all or parts of a piece of an existing IEC material, the following questions should be asked:

- ⇒ Does the material selected fit the audience's learning style (i.e. oral, written, audio, visual, or audiovisual)?
- ⇒ Is the content limited to no more than a few concepts?
- ⇒ Are concepts and messages presented in a simple and organized manner?
- ⇒ Are appropriate, culturally specific values and beliefs represented in the messages?
- ⇒ Are visuals, photographs, and images culturally relevant?
- ⇒ Do visuals, photographs, and images correspond with the message in a way that is clear to the target audience?
- ⇒ Is text written or narrated at an appropriate reading/comprehension level?

Answers to these questions must come for the target audience (see Section 5: Pretesting Draft / Prototype or Adapted IEC Materials). Conferring with the target audience during the design phase of IEC material production will ensure that IEC materials and usage strategies are suitable.

The following guidelines may be useful in adapting IEC materials to become appropriate for a program and its audience. The questions can help identify specific areas that need modification — text / narrative, visuals and format. These questions are provided as examples of issues to be explored through focus groups, in-depth interviews, or other pretesting methods.

## ***Text / Narrative***

### **1. Examine the draft key message or advice put forward in the creative brief.**

Determine whether the proposed material contains too many messages. For textual material, each paragraph should contain just one message or action. Posters and leaflets should not become cluttered with too much information. Electronic media should not be overloaded with too many visual and audio messages. In examining messages, ask the following:

***Rule of thumb:*** *Include only a few concepts and only information that enables the user to follow the message.*

- Are the proposed messages and supporting information technically accurate?
- Do the proposed messages provide too little, too much, or adequate information for the target audience?
- Are proposed messages presented in logical order?
- Are the proposed messages or advice feasible for the target audience?

### **2. Examine how the text or narrative is written.**

Text or script should be written with the intended target audience in mind. Keep it at an appropriate level, based on information collected during the formative research stage. In short, keep text and narratives simple and understandable. Ask the following questions:

- Is the reading level understandable to the intended target audience?

***Rule of thumb:*** *Use short sentences and words. Use active language. Use words and phrases familiar to the target audience. In narratives, be sure the pace and intonation are appropriate.*

- Does the information use appropriate local idioms / slang? Is the audience's preferred language used?
- Are statements community specific?
- Are statements made in an active voice?

### 3. Determine whether text or narrative matches or corresponds to visuals.

Visuals should complement, not compete with, text or narrative. They should enhance and help clarify the message being delivered. This is especially true for target audiences with a low-literacy level. The following questions need to be addressed:

- Does the text or narrative clearly describe what occurs in the visual?
- Do the visuals compete with or overpower what is written or spoken?

**Rule of thumb:** Use visuals that reinforce text and / or narrative. Visuals should make sense to the target audience. Visuals and text should be clearly related.

### 4. Determine whether the message is believable / credible to the target audience.

When developing or adapting material, audience preferences — uncovered via formative research — should be taken into account when fine-tuning messages. The message source should be known and credible to the target audience.

- In the case of electronic media, is the narrator a respected peer or credible community member?
- Will the target audience view the message as believable and practical?
- Is the message suggesting a behavior change that is possible for the target audience?

**Rule of thumb:** Make messages believable and practical. Promote behaviors that are appropriate in the cultural, social and economic setting.

## Visuals

### 1. Decide whether visuals correspond with text / narrative.

Visuals must be culturally appropriate and should enhance the message being delivered. not compete with it.

- Do the visuals correspond to what is said in the text or narrative?
- Do the visuals provide additional information about how to adhere to the message being delivered?
- Are the visuals appealing, not abstract or cluttered?

**Rule of thumb:** Choose photographs or drawings that are clear and easy to understand. Use visuals that show specific examples of the behavior described. Cartoons and drawings should be life-like. Avoid diagrams, graphs and other complicated visuals.

### 2. Illustrate the important points.

Visuals should highlight only the most important points made in the text, in order not to confuse the learner.

- Do the graphics or photographs illustrate the most important concepts?
- Do the visuals enhance rather than confuse the message?

**Rule of thumb:** Limit the number of visuals in order to emphasize the most important points. Place them in a logical sequence.

### 3. People and places should represent the intended target audience and their culture.

For greater impact of the IEC material, members of the intended target audience should be able to identify with the message. Visuals can assist in this process by reflecting culture and ethnicity.

- Do images of people look like members of the intended target audience?
- Do geography and setting represent where the target audience lives and works?
- Are people shown doing things that are realistic in the lives of the target audience?
- Are the images familiar and acceptable to members of the target audience?

**Rule of thumb:** Illustrations and symbols should reflect the ethnic and cultural background of the intended target audience. Place people in everyday settings, using familiar belongings and wearing familiar cloths.

## Format

### 1. Make materials inviting, visually appealing, and easy to follow.

Especially in the case of low-literacy audiences, if text appears too dense, members of the intended target audience are less likely to read it. The placement of graphics and text is very important in making material appealing.

- Are graphics and text clear and easy to read?
- Is the type big enough to be easily read from a distance (for posters)?
- Is the typeface appropriate for the reader?
- Are colors attractive?
- Are people / situations represented realistically for the intended target audience?

**Rule of thumb:** Do not overcrowd printed materials. Leave space between text and visuals to allow the eye to move easily from one to the other. Place related messages and illustrations together. Use colors appropriate and acceptable to the target audience.

## Section 5: Pretesting Draft / Prototype or Adapted IEC Materials

The pretesting of draft IEC materials is an important step in the development process. Without pretesting, IEC materials stand the chance of becoming inefficient and detached from the needs of the target audience. The materials will reflect the ideas and opinions of people who think they know the audience sufficiently enough to decide what material is okay for them.

When this happens IEC materials are neutralized, or transmits useless information, makes the wrong appeal, does not motivate, has no persuasive power, cannot modify negative attitudes, or does not build upon positive existing practices.

Pretesting draft materials can help determine whether the IEC material and message is acceptable to the intended target audience, the general community, and individuals charged with using or distributing the material — health workers, VHV and TBA.

People see, hear, and interpret messages according to their various backgrounds, education, and knowledge. For this reason the IEC material development team cannot assume that their messages will be perceived the way they intend. If, however, IEC materials are pretested, revised, and "approved" by members of the target audience, it is likely that the finished materials will be culturally appropriate, convey the intended message, and stimulate behavior change. Pretesting of draft IEC material ensures that the material is "right" from the audience's perspective.

**Definition:** What is pretesting? What do we pretest?

Pretesting is testing the draft materials or concepts and messages with representatives of your target audience *before* the materials are produced in their final form.

You should pretest the materials for the media; concepts; symbols, and slogans.

### A Note About the Draft Material

- Even though you are pretesting a draft and not the final version of your material, the draft must come as close as possible to the final version. This way those that are interviewed have an opportunity to judge a piece of material that closely resembles the final product.
- This point means that if you are pretesting a poster, the draft of the poster must be of the approximate size as the final poster, have similar colors (markers or washable inks), and have the same background elements (houses, decorations, trees, or whatever will make up the context of the final product).
- If the draft material is a radio spot, it is sufficient to do an in-house production of the spot, which should contain the same elements as the final version. If it includes music, use the same or very similar music; if several characters are in a dramatic format or in a straightforward information format, at least gender and age of the voices should be the same; if it contains sound effects, use the closest possible to the ones you will have in the end product.
- If it is a video spot, ask the producer to give you an animation of the story board, which consists of taping sequentially the drawings of the story boards.

### • Pretest variables — what to measure

Five variables should be measured during the pretest of draft IEC materials: Comprehension, Attractiveness, Acceptance, Involvement, and Inducement to Action.

1. **Comprehension.** Understanding IEC materials and messages is essential as a prior condition to acceptance and behavior change. Comprehension measures not only the clarity of the content, but also the way in which it is presented. Complicated or technical vocabulary may be responsible for the target audience's failure to understand the message. Or, perhaps the target audience fails to understand the message because the typeface is too small, making it difficult for the target audience to read the message.
2. **Attractiveness.** IEC materials should be attractive. If an IEC material is not attractive individuals may not pay much attention to it. Attractiveness can be achieved through the use of sounds — music, tone — in the case of radio; visuals — color and illustrations — in the case of graphics; movement, action, illumination, and animation in the case of video.
3. **Acceptance.** The messages must be acceptable to the target population. If communication material contains something offensive, is not believable, or generates discord among the target audience, the audience will reject the message conveyed.
4. **Involvement.** The target audience should be able to identify with the IEC materials. They should recognize that the message is directed toward them. People will not pay attention to messages that they consider do not involve them. Illustrations, symbols and language should reflect the characteristics of the target audience.
5. **Inducement to action.** The materials should indicate clearly what the health promotion intervention wants the target audience to do. Most IEC materials promote a message that asks, motivates, or induces members of the target audience to carry out or cease a particular action. Successful IEC materials transmit a message that can be done by the target audience.

- **Steps for Carrying out the Pretest**

1. **Preparing draft material for the pretest**

- ⇒ Draft scripts, narratives, texts and artwork / storyboards should be prepared based on creative briefs.
- ⇒ Review all draft materials with a technical team / content specialists. Make sure the technical content of the message has no errors, and is in line with procedures and processes promoted by concerned agencies.

2. **Do an "in-house" pretest**

- ⇒ Even before you go out to the field, you should first make an in-house pretest of the material, especially with the health education team.
- ⇒ Check with staff inside the office or based in the field who belong to the target audience. This will help to catch errors before the pretest is taken out to the field, and to identify comprehension errors. Correcting these errors at this time will allow the pretest to be narrowed down to the most salient issues.

### 3. **Determine the sample for those audience segments with whom the material is to be pretested.**

- ⇒ Make sure the pretest sample has the same characteristics as the intended target audience. For example, in the case of an IEC material on family planning aimed at rural women of reproductive age who already have several children, possible criteria might include women between 25 and 45 years old, married or in union, with at least two children, and having the intention of not getting pregnant again.
- ⇒ It is preferable to select several sites having the same characteristics and not concentrate on a single site.
- ⇒ After the characteristics of the respondents have been defined, the pretest team can visit those sites where a large number of such individuals will presumably be found and select individuals using screening questions.
- ⇒ While there is no preset formula, experience shows that sample sizes of between 50 and 200 are best depending on the number of audience segments, complexity of the problem, and the amount of the available budget and resources required. It is, however, always better to pretest materials using a well-selected sample, even if it is very small (20-30 persons), than to not pretest at all.

### 4. **Select techniques and design guidelines / instruments to be used in the pretest**

- ⇒ The pretest may be conducted individually or in groups.
- ⇒ Design pretest focus group guidelines or individual interview instruments.

### 5. **Select and orient interviewers**

- ⇒ Persons conducting the pretest should be experienced. If such individuals don't exist, then outside staff may need to be contracted. These may include university staff and students, or research specialists from NGOs.

**Note:** It is advisable for those people who have produced the materials to have a role in their pretests. Their exposure to audience reaction to their material can be very persuasive in demonstrating the value of pretesting.

- ⇒ Interviewers must understand that the IEC materials to be pretested are only drafts, and that the IEC material development team will not be hurt by "negative" pretest results.
- ⇒ The instrument to be used in the pretest should be explained to the interviewers. Instructions should be provided regarding the criteria for selecting those to be interviewed and the use of a screening questionnaire. Procedures to be followed in conducting the pretest interview when done individually and when done in focus groups should be explained. Interviewers should practice first among themselves in training.

### 6. **Test the pretest guidelines and instruments**

- ⇒ It is also advisable that the pretest instruments be tested to assess whether they will achieve the pretest objectives and whether they are easy to implement. Interviewers should conduct three or four interviews and subsequently analyze the results with the person in charge. For



focus groups, a single trial focus group to test both the guidelines and the proper implementation of that focus group should be sufficient.

#### **7. Make the necessary logistical arrangements**

⇒ The IEC material development team will need to organize logistics, such as transportation, meeting places, permits, and authorizations so that everything will be clearly understood before the initiation of field work.

#### **8. The pretest process.**

Conduct the interview by using the instrument for pretesting that was developed by the IEC material development team.

## Section 6: Assessing pretest results and revising IEC materials

It is safe to assume that if 70 percent of the target audience understands the IEC material and message, would consider taking the action recommended, and finds the IEC material attractive, acceptable, and believable, then the materials are successful. However, if the IEC material is understood or accepted by less than 70 percent, the IEC material development team must consider making changes to the design of material and message.

There are no absolute guidelines to accomplish this. The IEC material development team must look for a balance among all the criteria used to measure the effectiveness of the material.

### • Changes in materials

The changes most commonly suggested by the pretest have to deal with changes or modifications of either the form or the content.

#### Form

- ⇒ Music: make rhythm, tempo in accordance with content and tone of message.
- ⇒ Color: improve combination, tone, intended impact, intensity.
- ⇒ Tone of the message: place more or less emphasis on emotional content.
- ⇒ Typeface used: make darker, bolder, bigger, higher or lower in contrast.
- ⇒ Eliminate distracting attention overload.
- ⇒ Make more accurate representation of persons or things (proportion and perspective).
- ⇒ Rearrange text and visual distribution of elements.
- ⇒ Change names, roles, or personalities of characters.

#### Content

- ⇒ Change words that cannot be understood.
- ⇒ Give greater clarity to what the target audience is supposed to do.
- ⇒ Express a single idea and eliminate superfluous information.
- ⇒ Avoid using abstract concepts or figures that the user may not relate to the message.
- ⇒ Make the benefit stand out clearly.
- ⇒ Change technical terms that are obscure, confusing, unnecessary.
- ⇒ Clarify concepts that were thought to be clear.
- ⇒ Make the behavior easier to grasp, simpler to understand, more appealing to try.

Some changes may be minor and unimportant. It may well be decided that they do not merit the trouble (high expense, too much time, or any other additional reason required to make changes).

### • Number of Pretests

There is no set rule for the number of pretests to carry out. As the IEC development team becomes more familiar with pretesting dynamics, however, a feeling for the number of pretests required will be

developed. In actuality, the number of focus groups or individual interviews will to a certain extent be determined on the basis of budget and resources. In general, however, the number of pretesting sessions per IEC material is dictated by the nature of the material to be pretested and by how well the first draft answered the pretest variables as perceived by the target audience.

By the second focus group, or in the case of doing individual pretesting, when the first round of 10 people are interviewed, interviewers should stop and collect the overall information thus far gathered and ask the following questions:

- ⇒ Is there a clear rejection of the material? If so, why?
- ⇒ Is there a general consensus that the material is ugly, culturally insensitive? If so, why?

Is there a gross incomprehension of words, of a specific drawing, symbol? Which ones? Why? If so, which can be changed according to the suggestions given, so that interviewers can continue with further pretesting interviews or focus groups?

## Section 7: Monitoring the use and impact of IEC materials

Monitoring of IEC materials refers to the review and supervision of distribution and usage activities. Findings are used to improve distribution systems, the use of materials by health workers, and the future design of materials. Monitoring is a tool to identify and correct problems early enough to make changes and maximize the impact of the IEC materials.

### What does monitoring do for you?

- ⇒ It shows you what links in the delivery system are not functioning as expected.
- ⇒ It reveals if the materials have been delivered in time, to the correct people, at the correct place.
- ⇒ It lets you correct the delivery plan when you find it is in error or inadequate.
- ⇒ It reveals if sites where materials are displayed need to be changed.
- ⇒ It shows if broadcast media should be aired at more appropriate times
- ⇒ Distribution of print materials. Are posters up, but not where the target audience can see them? Have flip charts reached the health centers where the health workers have been trained in their use?

### What should be monitored?

- ⇒ Mass media broadcasts. It is important to be sure that radio and television spots are actually broadcast on the days and times with the frequency and in the order agreed upon. This requires individuals to monitor mass media—listen to the radio stations or watch television during the time slots contracted.
- ⇒ Exposure. Are the numbers of target audience that were predicted actually hearing radio spots? Seeing the posters? Or watching the television announcements?

### Interim Effects

Monitoring can also be used to look at the interim effects of using IEC materials in support of a health promotion program. If materials are properly designed and used, a change in the following should be recognized.

- ⇒ **Knowledge.** Does the desired percentage of the target audience can recall the key messages presented in the IEC materials? If not, messages may need to be broadcast more often, on other stations, or at a more appropriate time. Likewise, print materials may need to be more widely placed.
- ⇒ **Reaction.** Is there evidence that the target audience is reacting negatively to the messages or the behavior promoted by the IEC material? If so, it may be necessary to change certain factors in the messages, or in the broadcast schedule.
- ⇒ **Target Behavior.** Assuming knowledge is high and reaction positive, begin to look at changes in behavior for the target audience. The reporting of target behavior is included in monitoring in order to provide timely feedback with regards to the impact and effect of the IEC materials.

Monitoring is done in many ways using multiple forms of follow-up. Among the most common methods are the following:

- ⇒ Regular audits of materials at distribution points.
- ⇒ Listening to broadcasts to ensure media messages are aired at the contracted hours.
- ⇒ Regular field trips to health centers and hospitals to check on availability of IEC materials.
- ⇒ Observations at service health centers and hospitals to check usage of materials.
- ⇒ Focus group discussions to investigate the impact of promotional messages and to detect possible confusion.