

Essential Element 7: Developing Messages for Urban Adolescents

This Essential Element will help you learn more about developing effective messages for your audience in the appropriate language. Here are some suggestions for working through this element:

- *Read the text from beginning to end.*
- *Complete **Worksheets #12 and #13** using data from your program and your audience. Examples of each Worksheet are included to show how the program in Zanbe answered the questions.*
- *Having completed **Essential Element 1 and Essential Element 4** will provide you with the information you need for **Essential Element 7**. If you have not worked through **Essential Element 1 and Essential Element 4**, make sure you have reliable information about your intended audience. This information can come from reports, documents and statistics from government ministries, international and local NGOs or research institutes. You may also look at media consumption studies and other research done about your intended audience in your city or in your country.*
- *Refer to the resources the end of this Essential Element as needed.*

What is the Purpose of this Essential Element?

The purpose of this Essential Element is to:

- Develop a creative brief that summarizes the key information for the creative developers using **Worksheet #12: Creative Brief**.
- Collect the terminology that your intended audience uses with **Worksheet #13: What Youth Say**.
- Learn about the importance of pretesting.

Why is this Important?

Key message points outline the core information that will be conveyed in all messages and activities. Message design cuts across all strategic approaches. Messages must thus reinforce each other across these approaches. When all approaches communicate the same key message points, effectiveness increases.

The process of developing good messages and materials starts with research and data, determining what you want to achieve (objectives), with whom (audience segmentation) and where (channels). If you are not clear about any of these steps, you can refer to **Essential Element 1, Essential Element 3, Essential Element 5 and Essential Element 6** in this I-Kit.

All of this information is necessary to develop concepts or draft materials to review with your intended audience to make sure messages will be understood.

What are the Key Steps?

When developing messages for urban adolescents, there are a number of key steps to follow:

1. Develop a Creative Brief
2. Understand the Language Used by the Intended Audience
3. Pretest to Get the Language and Visuals Right for Urban Adolescents

1. Develop a Creative Brief

A creative brief is a tool that provides the creative developers (i.e., advertising agency, script writers and graphic designers) with guidance on *what* the message needs to say to help them determine *how* the messages will be written and disseminated through mass media, community-based approaches, interpersonal or electronic channels. A clearly written creative brief will be better understood and lead to more effective messages than a vaguely written creative brief, which leads to confusion and poorly designed messages.

The creative brief summarizes the key information for the creative developers regarding the:

- Intended audience
- Desired behavior
- Barriers preventing the behavior change
- Benefits that outweigh the obstacles
- Tone of the message and the media channels to use
- Other creative considerations the team should know about

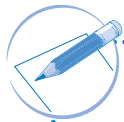
It is called a creative *brief*, so it should be brief. Creative developers are not interested in reading a 20-page document. Keep it to one page, or two at maximum. If you want to provide more background information about your SRH issue, you can provide a supplemental background document.

An important component of a creative brief is that it must highlight two important aspects:

1. Call to action: this is what you want your intended audience to do. For example "use condoms every time," "call the helpline" or "go to the Bright Star Clinic for more information."
2. Key benefit: this is the benefit that your intended audience will get from doing what you want them to do. It needs to resonate with your key audience, not with you, your program or the community leaders where your program is running.

An example of a key benefit for a young person using condoms could be to "stay healthy and achieve your dreams." Telling them, however, that using a condom every time will keep their community healthy is not enough of a motivation for a young person.

Worksheet #12: Creative Brief will help highlight the important components of a creative brief and look for the call to action and key benefit for your intended audience.



WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF

Purpose: To develop a creative brief that summarizes the key information for the creative developers.

Preparation:

Gather the following data to help you fill out this Worksheet for your program:

- Primary and secondary research findings ([Worksheet #1](#)) from **Essential Element 1**.
- Audience profiles ([Worksheet #6](#)) from **Essential Element 4**.
- Key channels ([Worksheet #10](#)) from **Essential Element 6**.

Directions:

1. Answer the questions in this Worksheet using your data.
2. Refer to the [Worksheet #12: Zanbe Example](#) to help you complete this blank Worksheet with the information relating to your program.

1. **Intended Audience.** Describe who you want to reach with your communication message and be as specific as possible.

2. **Call to Action.** What do you want your target audiences to do after they hear, watch or experience this communication?

3. **Barriers.** What beliefs, cultural practices, pressure and misinformation stand between your audience and the call to action?

4. **Benefits.** What the intended audience perceives as the benefit of the behavior.

WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF (CONTINUED)

5. **Key Messages.** These are the reasons why the benefits outweigh the barriers—that what you're "promising" or promoting is beneficial to the intended audience.

6. **Tone.** What *feeling* or *personality* should your communication have? Should it be authoritative, light or emotional? Pick a tone or tones that would be appropriate.

7. **Media.** What channel(s) or form will the communications take? For example, television, radio, newspaper, poster or flyer, or all of these? Others? Choose the channels that are more appropriate to your program

8. **Openings.** What opportunities (times and places) exist for reaching your audience?

9. **Creative Considerations.** Anything else the creative team should know? Will the material be in more than one language? Should they make sure that all nationalities are represented? Etc.

NOTE: All creative briefs should also be accompanied by a page summarizing the background.

WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF (CONTINUED)

TIME TO REFLECT

Before you move on, take a moment to reflect on your experience with this Worksheet. What are the three key pieces of information you learned from filling out this Worksheet?

1.

2.

3.

WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF

Zanbe Example

This example is based on the Zanbe Let's Talk About It! program introduced in Part 1 of the I-Kit. The program managers wrote this creative brief for the development of the mass media campaign to increase usage of modern contraceptive methods and services at the Bright Star City Clinics in Zanbe. They used Nadia as their primary audience to help them develop the brief. Additional insights are provided in the text bubbles.

1. Intended Audience. Describe who you want to reach with your communication message and be as specific as possible.

Young women, 10 to 19 years old, who are:

- *Living in Zanbe.*
- *Low-income.*
- *Out of school.*
- *Sexually active, seeking to prevent or delay first or second pregnancy.*
- *Not regular users of a modern contraceptive method.*
- *Interested in getting FREE or low-cost contraception and SRH services within the next six months, possibly without partner/family knowing.*

2. Call to Action. What do you want your target audiences to do after they hear, watch or experience this communication?

Go to the Bright Star clinic to talk to a counselor about the contraceptive methods available.

All of your SBCC messaging should include a call to action and that action must be feasible for the intended audience. Telling the audience to visit a local health service is a very tangible and important call to action.

3. Barriers. What beliefs, cultural practices, pressure and misinformation stand between your audience and the call to action?

Nadia is worried about side effects because her friends say that contraceptives can make you fat or infertile, or give you cancer.

Here, consider how Nadia perceives the barriers to contraception, not how you do. It is important to understand her thinking and mentality, so that you can design messages that will make sense to her.

4. Benefits. What the intended audience perceives as the benefit of the behavior.

Avoiding a pregnancy will help her to return to school so she can get a better job and provide for her daughter.

Here, it is important to consider how Nadia perceives the benefits of contraception (not how you do). Nadia values school and wants to get a good job someday. The benefit of contraception for her is the ability to achieve those dreams.

WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF (CONTINUED)

Zambe Example

5. **Key Messages.** A key message is a statement that ties together the benefit of the behavior (in the audience's eyes) and the call to action.

Preventing an unintended pregnancy now by using a modern contraceptive method will guarantee that you can fulfill your dreams. Go to the Bright Star clinic to talk to a counselor about the contraceptive method that is right for you.

Benefit

Call to action

6. **Tone.** What feeling or personality should your communication have? Should it be authoritative, light or emotional? Pick a tone or tones that would be appropriate.

Friendly, informative, entertaining, contemporary and supportive

7. **Media.** What channel(s) or form could the communications take? For example, television, radio, newspaper, poster or flyer, or all of these? Others? Choose the channels that are more appropriate to your program.

- *Radio: serial drama, talk shows and discussion groups*
- *IPC sessions with peer educators*
- *Outreach to influencing adults*
- *Community-based activities (e.g., street theater in market place)*
- *Mobile phone messaging*
- *Outdoor billboards and transit ads*

8. **Openings.** What opportunities (times and places) exist for reaching your audience?

Out-of-school young women may work at home or be employed as maids, barmaids and food vendors in low-income jobs, so we need to identify appropriate ways of reaching them, such as door-to-door outreach, peer-to-peer communication or radio. Their work hours may be early in the morning and later at night, so they may have more time free in the middle of the day.

WORKSHEET #12: CREATIVE BRIEF (CONTINUED)

Zambe Example

9. **Creative Considerations.** Anything else the creative team should know? Will the material be in more than one language? Should they make sure that all nationalities are represented? Etc.

- *Language: English, Tokonan*
- *Low literacy levels*
- *Messages should appeal to the intended audience and be sensitive to conservative values in the larger community (i.e., do not appear to be promoting sex).*
- *All materials need to have the Bright Star City Clinic name or logo.*
- *There is a cultural taboo about discussing SRH and this needs to be considered when developing messages and choosing appropriate language.*

TIME TO REFLECT

Before you move on, take a moment to reflect on your experience with this Worksheet.

What are the three key pieces of information you learned from filling out this Worksheet?

1. *If Nadia is worried about side effects, should the messages be focused on that or focus on the benefits of what she can accomplish if she delays pregnancy with contraception?*
2. *How can we address the cultural taboo against discussing SRH with young people?*
3. *Reaching out-of-school young women is challenging. Radio seems promising for reaching both in and out-of-school youth.*

2. Understand the Language used by the Intended Audience

Language is a key element for any group of individuals and is often the best way that we express ourselves. Individuals may express themselves differently depending on with whom they are talking. For example, urban adolescents may talk a certain way and use certain words when they are with their peers, another way when they are with their health care provider and another way with their parents or relatives.



When talking about SRH issues, it is important to know what words resonate most with your intended audience. For instance, we often use the term “family planning” when talking about contraception, but many young people are not thinking about their future families just yet. “Contraception” is often a more appropriate term for youth than family planning.

Youth often prefer to use terminology among their peer group that is unknown among adults or outsiders. Sometimes this is referred to as “slang.” It is helpful to know how your intended audience communicates, the language they use and the meaning behind it so that you can find ways to incorporate this

language into your messages. You can find out this information by listening carefully during focus group discussions or interviews with your intended audience. Depending on the focus of the SBCC program, you may have a specific list of terminology to discover. Try this using [Worksheet #13: What Youth Say](#).



WORKSHEET #13: WHAT YOUTH SAY

Purpose: To collect the terminology that your intended audience uses.

Preparation:

- Review primary and secondary research findings to identify initial ideas for appropriate language.
- Assemble a small group, such as four to six people, that represents your intended audience. You will need to conduct separate groups for each segment of your primary and secondary intended audiences.

Directions:

1. Write down key terminology relevant to your program in the left-hand column.
2. For each term listed in the left-hand column, ask the group of people to list the words and phrases they use with “peers” in the second column and with “adults” in the third column.
3. Refer to the [Worksheet #13: Zanbe Example](#) to help you complete this Worksheet with the information relating to your program.
4. When you have completed the Worksheet, continue reading the rest of this Essential Element as it contains important information about messaging.

Make sure that the terminology you choose makes sense to and connects with your audience. Young people may want to hear their own slang when talking about sexual health or they may not. You can confirm what they want by pretesting your materials with your intended audience.

Terminology	What youth say . . .	
	with peers	with adults

WORKSHEET #13: WHAT YOUTH SAY (CONTINUED)

TIME TO REFLECT

Before you move on, take a moment to reflect on your experience with this Worksheet. What are the three key pieces of information you learned from filling out this Worksheet?

1.

2.

3.

WORKSHEET #13: WHAT YOUTH SAY

Zambe Example

This example is based on the Zambe "Let's Talk About It!" Program introduced in Part 1 of the I-Kit. During focus group discussions, the primary and secondary audiences were asked for the words they used for the SRH terms listed when they are with their peers and when they are with adults. Additional insights are provided in the text bubbles.

Terminology	What youth say ...	
	with peers	with adults
<i>Have sex</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>get laid</i> • <i>hook up</i> • <i>get it on</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have sex</i>
<i>Have sex with someone in a steady relationship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>sleep with</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>sleep with</i> • <i>lie with</i>
<i>Someone who has sex with multiple partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>player</i> • <i>hustler</i> • <i>big man</i> • <i>careless woman</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>player</i> • <i>promiscuous woman</i>
<i>Having unprotected sex</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bareback</i> • <i>raw dog</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>unprotected sex</i>
<i>Sexual partner: main boyfriend/girlfriend</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>wifey</i> • <i>boo</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>boyfriend</i> • <i>girlfriend</i>
<i>Sexual partner: casual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>friend with benefits</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>casual sex partner</i>
<i>Sexual partner: one-time sex partner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>one night stand</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>one night stand</i>
<i>Condom (male)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>wrapper</i> • <i>raincoat</i> • <i>rubber</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>condom</i>
<i>The pill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>birth control</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>birth control</i>
<i>Depo Provera (injection)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>shot, jab</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>jab</i>
<i>IUD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IUD</i> • <i>loop</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IUD</i>
<i>Implant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>implant</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>implant</i>

WORKSHEET #13: WHAT YOUTH SAY (CONTINUED)

Zambe Example

TIME TO REFLECT

Before you move on, take a moment to reflect on your experience with this Worksheet. What are the three key pieces of information you learned from filling out this Worksheet?

- 1. The terms used with peers will be helpful for peer educators to use when talking about sex and contraception among youth.*
- 2. The terms used with peers will also be helpful for providers to know, so they can understand if youth use the terms during counseling sessions.*
- 3. Terminology changes constantly, so any terms we use will be outdated soon and need to be revised to stay current.*

3. Pretest to get the Language and Visuals right for Urban Adolescents

Pretesting is an essential part of developing effective SBCC materials. Pretesting measures the reaction of your intended audience to questions about messages or draft materials before they are produced.

Ideally, you would test concepts and potential messages with your intended audience to determine which concept to develop further. After the concepts have been developed into draft materials (e.g., posters, slogans, comic books, serial drama scripts and theme songs), you would conduct a pretest with your intended audience to make sure the materials are understood, attractive, accepted, engaging and motivating.

It is similar to cooking a special dish for guests. You would taste your dish as you are making it to see if the seasoning is correct and make adjustments to add more salt or spices if needed, instead of serving the meal to your guests and realizing it is not quite right. The same is true with pretesting. By reviewing your communication messages and materials before they are finalized, it allows you to make adjustments and avoid mistakes.



Resources!

Sample questions and additional tools on pretesting can be found in the **Resources** section at the end of this Essential Element.

You may be able to re-contact youth who have participated in your previous research studies or your advisory group may be able to help recruit participants in the places where youth live or socialize. The city makes it easy to find people since they are traveling to and from work, eating out and socializing in public places. Sample questions for pretesting can be found in the **Resources** section at the end of this Essential Element.

Pretesting can be done a number of different ways, although focus group discussions or one-on-one interviews with the intended audience are the most common.



Reminder!

Reminders for Pretesting

- Even if time and resources are limited, make sure to do some kind of pretesting with your intended audience. Spending a little time and resources up front to confirm the direction before producing your materials will be less time-consuming and more cost-effective than having to redesign, reprint and record if you realize later that your materials are not understood.
- Conduct pretesting with representatives of the intended audience and conduct in a location that is convenient and comfortable.
- Reassure participants that they are not being “tested,” but that the materials are being tested to see if the messages are clear.
- Let them know there are no right or wrong answers and you are very interested in what they think. Welcome their honest feedback and suggestions to make the materials better.
- Hire experienced researchers to conduct the pretest. If resources are limited, work with your local university to have students assist with the pretesting and gain field experience.
- Present the materials objectively allowing the participants to interpret the messages and materials for themselves.
- Ask exploratory, open-ended questions to allow the participants to explain what they see and hear and avoid close-ended (yes or no) questions. Sample questions for pretesting can be found in the **Resources** section at the end of this Essential Element.

Resources for Essential Element 7



Resources for **Essential Element 7** include:

- Pretest questions
- Websites and other sources

Pretest Questions

Pretesting Element	Recommendation	Sample Questions
Attractiveness	Allow participants to compare alternative versions of materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about the pictures? • What was the first thing that caught your attention?
Comprehension	Try to focus participant on the main idea of the message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think this material is telling you to do? • What words/sentences are difficult to read/understand?
Acceptance	Explore issues that could potentially be overlooked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything about the material that you find offensive? • Is there anything about the material that you find annoying?
Relevance	Have participants confirm whether the material is appropriate for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of people should read/watch this? • In what ways are people in the material like/different from you?
Motivation/ Persuasion	Explore the effect on behavior and desires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this material make you want to do? • How likely are you to do that?
Improvement	Find out ways to enhance the material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new information did you learn? • What do you think is missing?

Websites and other sources

Select Key Messages

HC3

This is Step 4 in the HC3 Demand Generation I-Kit for Underutilized, Lifesaving Commodities in Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. The page includes setting communication objectives, positioning and developing key messages. Examples are provided for contraceptive implants, emergency contraception and the female condoms.

<http://sbccimplementationkits.org/demandrmnch/fp-step4/>