

## SELECTING AND ADAPTING RESOURCES



### Who are you working with?

Young people have different needs depending on their age and situation. The choice of topics and activities depends on the group that you are working with. What works well with one group may not be enjoyed by another. For example, young people who are surviving on the streets will need different information than their peers at school. Young people may move on from learning themselves and start working with other young people as peer educators (see resources 21, 25, 26, 31, 39 and 86).

- Do you plan to work in a school or other setting, with large or small groups?
- Are you working with children or young people directly or with teachers, trainers and street educators?
- What is the age range of the young people?
- Can everyone read?
- Is anyone disabled?
- Will you work with boys, girls or both sexes?
- Do they have different religious, ethnic or racial backgrounds?

Be clear about what you hope to do and think about which specific activities will achieve that. Always plan your programme of activities with the young people themselves.

### Which resources?

It is usually necessary to adapt resources produced by other people. The resources listed in this pack were all designed for use with a particular group in mind. It is unlikely that you will find resources that exactly meet the needs of your group, or that take into account the cultural aspects that are unique to your local situations. Here are some ideas to help you think about how to adapt materials.

Don't be influenced by where resources come from and assume that the best will come from developed countries. More sophisticated material may look good but it doesn't necessarily get the message across more effectively to your group. The best resources are often those that have been developed by or with children and young people themselves, by workers with direct access to them, and those that have been tried out first with similar groups.

Check with other groups, especially those with a resource centre, to see what materials they have, including any locally produced materials. Ask them about their experiences with the resources and try to obtain a copy. Sometimes local schools or universities, or other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), may have resources that they are willing to lend.

Think about the types of resources you select. Where could you place posters, or would small stickers make a bigger impact? Do you have a video player and room to show videos, or would it be better to make a play or puppet show around the same issue? If it is a video, check to make sure that you can obtain a copy in the video format of your country (VHS or BETA in either NTSC, SECAM, or PAL) unless you have a multi-standard video player.



Sometimes it is possible to review more expensive resources like videos and manuals before you have to pay. Ask the distributor of expensive materials for this option when you request the copy. Return the ones that are not appropriate.

**How much can your group afford to spend?** It is sometimes necessary to pay for postage even if the resources are free. Remember to allow enough time for materials to arrive. It can sometimes take several weeks.

### Right for my group?

Whether games, group activities, manuals, comics, videos or films, decide if they match your needs. Spend time looking at them and discussing them with the young people in your project and your co-workers. Reject anything that is unsuitable, even if this seems a waste of money.

**Try out the resources with a group of the young people you work with.** Discuss how well the activity went and what changes are needed. By learning together you will be able to learn from your own mistakes.

**Invite a small group (not more than 10 people) to try out the resources.**

**Choose a time that is free from distraction and explain that you want to decide on which materials to use.**

**Ask the group for some basic information about the topic addressed in the resource to see what level of information they already have.**

**Ask the group what they think they would like to learn from the resource and note this.**

**Prepare a list of questions to see if the group understand the message and feel that it is appropriate to them. For example:**

- Is the language appropriate and easy to understand?
- Is it filled with complicated, technical words that are difficult to understand? Is the text large enough to be easy to understand?
- Are the images appropriate? Are they clear?
- Do young people understand them for what they are meant to be?
- Does the activity avoid labelling people? For example, pictures showing people with AIDS with extremely wasted bodies can make people believe that all people with HIV look very ill. Posters showing young women in fashionable clothes as prostitutes with HIV incorrectly implies that all women in short skirts are prostitutes and are responsible for the spread of HIV.
- Does it avoid preaching and telling people what to do? Messages that say 'you should not do this' may make young people feel ashamed and less willing to talk about the issues openly. The best materials are those that provide clear information and enable people to make their own decisions.
- Does it build up skills and confidence? For example, when explaining how and why to use a condom, are you helping young people to gain confidence to use, or persuade their partner to use, a condom?



**Observe the reactions of the group when they are using the resource. For example:**

- Do young men and women have different reactions to the materials? If it is a video, consider showing parts of it as a way of stimulating discussion and activity. Pause at the images that you feel are controversial and ask for reactions.
- Would it be possible for everyone in your group to do the activity?



When the activity has finished, ask them what they thought about the resource, what was confusing, what they liked and disliked about the resource. For example:

- Were the instructions easy to use or do they need to be explained more clearly?
- What was the main message of this activity?
- Was there anything in the message that was confusing?
- Was the message easy or difficult to understand?
- Did you like the message?
- Was there anything that you disliked or that bothered you or that would bother or offend people you know?
- Was there anything in the message that was difficult to believe?
- Did you feel that the message was talking to someone like you? Was it aimed at someone your age?
- Was the message interesting?
- Did the activity increase your skills or make you think about your attitudes?
- Would you use the information that you have learnt?

With this information your group is now ready to decide whether to use the resource. They may decide to adapt it to their situation, add some guidelines to enable issues to be better explored when using the resource or just use the ideas in the material to make their own resources.

### **Making it ourselves**

Young people enjoy being involved in making materials (for example, pages 47 and 52-53) from the initial idea to the design and production of the final material. The activity is more likely to work well because it represents the group's concerns and uses their own words and images.

Use the human resources in the group – everyone has some skill and ideas. Make sure each young person has a role that reflects, and even stretches their abilities.

If you use professional or volunteer help from a designer or film-maker make sure this person gets involved in all stages of the group activity. Don't take away the group's ideas for processing by someone else.

Consider inviting a person with experience in the area of sexual health and AIDS. Discuss with them the different issues that have emerged. Maybe they know examples of what has worked well or not elsewhere, but remember to be clear that they need to avoid jargon or imposing their own views and that they should listen to the young people.

You don't have to produce something sophisticated, just something usable. Once you have your new resource, test it on other groups, incorporate their comments and share it with other projects, including the Hand-in-Hand Network.





## ADAPTING A RESOURCE

### Define the problem

You have done some work on reproductive health education already with a group of girls. After discussion you discover that some of them are sexually active, but they do not know how to protect themselves against HIV.

### Select possible resources

Your project works in a rural area, so you decide to use resources that are easy to transport and do not require a supply of electricity. You want to use a game about basic information about HIV transmission and decide to try the *memory game* (see page 31).

### Try the resource

You and a co-worker invite six girls to play the game at a quiet area near the village. One of the group agrees to look after the younger brothers or sisters in the girls' care so there are few distractions. Ask them three basic questions about HIV and record their answers: 1) What is HIV and what is AIDS? 2) How do you get it? 3) How can you protect yourself? After a brief explanation about how to play the game you keep silent and observe the girls playing.

### Discuss the reactions

It seems the girls were confused by some of the pictures on the memory cards. They do not understand the card showing injecting drug use. People do not inject themselves in this region. You ask more questions and your co-worker writes down feedback from the girls. Ask them the same three questions you have asked them before they played the game. Compare the answers to check if they are better informed.

### Make changes

The girls said they liked playing the game, and you could see that they asked many questions about the pictures which enabled you to explain more about HIV, but some of the pictures were confusing. You decide to reduce the number of cards in the game, excluding the ones that show injecting drug use. The girls draw their own versions of the cards which needed to be changed. It also seemed that cards showing condom use did not provide enough information, so you decide to have a separate talk about this with the girls.

### Try the new version

A different group of girls are invited to try the new version of the game. You follow the same procedure of explaining how to play, ask the same questions, and then observe the girls. When they have finished you show them new illustrations about condom use, and this seems to make things clearer for them. At the end you repeat the same questions and compare their answers. Your co-worker who has observed both groups of girls using the game also thinks that the new version is ready to be used with other young girls in the community.

