

Environmental Profile

The environmental profile provides information on the environment in which the target audiences lives, works, and plays, and in which the program will operate. It helps fill out the “picture” of the target audience.

Step 1: Managing the Environmental Profile

Who is responsible for creating the environmental profile? _____

What funds are available for the research? _____

What secondary data are already available? _____

What resources are needed/who will conduct the research? _____

(See also worksheet on *Managing Research*.)

What is the schedule for conducting the research? _____

Step 2: Outline the Information Needed

Information for an environmental profile can be divided into several broad areas. Develop a guide with specific questions which you think will give you the most valuable clues into how your target audience is affected by their surroundings. The list below will provide some general ideas. As you develop a question guide, check off the categories completed:

■ Geographic Environment

- Residential and commercial areas?
- Schools?
- Recreational areas? (including “hang out spots,” bars/nightclubs, parks, etc.)

■ Social Environment

- General social environment, recent trends of changes?
- Local leaders’ beliefs toward issues related to youth and HIV prevention?
- Policies related to condoms and condom distribution?
- Policies related to sex and HIV education?
- Local neighborhood leadership structure (politician, business person, etc.)
- Organized groups or individuals who might oppose your program?

■ Socioeconomic Environment

- Average income?
- Average educational attainment?

- Other household information?
- Social services?
- Housing assistance?
- Other?

■ **Educational Environment**

- Number and types of schools?
- School board issues?
- School policy regarding sex education and HIV/STD education?
- In-school vs. out-of-school and drop-out rate?

■ **Media Environment**

- Number and positioning of articles and editorial with mentions of key words (such as HIV/AIDS, adolescents, sexual behavior, condoms, etc.) in mainstream and alternative press?
- Number and type of advertisements and PSAs (including CDC spots)?
- Any ongoing effort through local media monitoring?

Step 3: Select Methods, Outline Procedures

Much of the information for the environmental profile can be collected very simply from available sources. Key informant interviews are conversations with community experts — people who do not necessarily have academic degrees or hold public offices, but rather are those you think can provide reliable information about some aspect of the environment. Interviews can be in person or over the phone, and would loosely follow a prepared question guide.

Check those methods you will use to create the environmental profile:

■ **Secondary Data**

- Existing information from resource lists and databases?
- Newspaper indices or clipping services?
- Library or online databases?
- Information supplied by local chamber of commerce, school systems, or real estate firms?
- Other sources?

■ **Primary data**

- Key informant interviews with community experts
- Other methods?