



## 5 key mobilization strategies in minority community contexts

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Effective community mobilization is quite an undertaking to say the least. Many of us have come to know it by following some basic yet often complicated steps. We do our best by convening a community mobilization committee made up of concerned community members and volunteers and we work with them to vision, set priorities, identify assets and develop strategies and action plans with local partners. If all things work out, we have helped build capacity with those who are involved and moved the needle, even a little bit, towards some kind of social change.

How many of us however, work with minority groups? And are there additional steps and considerations to think about when engaging them in community mobilization?

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) has been working over the past 20 years with minority English-language communities in Quebec and has created a community mobilization model. This model promotes 5 key strategies towards successful community mobilization unique to this minority group. They are:

**Networking:** Supporting the minority group in “getting to know” majority stakeholders and vice versa. Spending extra time networking and building relationships between minority community members and majority stakeholders is well worth the time. It also can reduce and even in some cases eliminate stereotypes, myths, judgements and criticisms -which we know can drastically hinder community mobilization efforts.

**Representation:** Minority groups can be “overlooked” as active participants on policy and decision-making committees, tables and structures. Helping them identify important structures for representation and advocating that they participate on them is key so that their needs and priorities are heard and integrated into mainstream/majority development.

**Knowledge Development:** Helping minority groups understand “who they are” through developing knowledge and evidence on their needs, priorities and assets is very important –such as research, socio-demographic information, qualitative and quantitative information and data. Many governments and majority stakeholders lack this type of information to help them in planning and decision-making. Minorities need

be become experts on their own community and not assume government and majority stakeholders have sufficient knowledge about them.

**Partnerships:** Developing partnerships and pilot projects between minority and majority groups and stakeholders is a nice way to begin “building bridges” in a very concrete and energizing way. It helps both sides in formally working together, often for the very first time. Together, they can test and innovate how something might work to better engage, serve and support minority needs. This is often a good starting point.

**Outreach:** Most government and community stakeholders rely on minority groups and organizations to help them in reaching out to minority population groups who are often hard to reach due to culture and linguistic barriers. Helping minority groups in their outreach efforts to community members can reinforce their role and importance with majority stakeholders and better engage those most vulnerable requiring support, resources and services.

The 5 key strategies are depicted in the model below:



To download a full version of the Community Mobilization Model for English-speaking Minorities please click <https://chssn.org/pdf/community-mobilization-model-En.pdf>