**Community Partnerships**

**Suggestions on how to conduct a Key Informant Interview[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Who are the key informants?** Theyare individuals who know the community. They may also be leaders themselves and often influence community issues. They have spent enough time in the community to have gained unique knowledge about the place and its members.

Interviewing them is an excellent way to learn about the community and brainstorm about potential partners. Some of the benefits of identifying and talking with these informants are:

* You can learn about other individuals and organizations working on similar topics.
* You can familiarize yourself with coalitions you might choose to join.
* You can obtain support for potential partnerships.
* You can learn more about the community, local groups/organizations, and leaders.
* You can ask about the politics of the community, who gets along with whom, lessons learned, concerns, success stories, etc.

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| Before the interview |
| * Learn about the person if possible. * Write a list of questions to ask. * Familiarize yourself with other individuals and organizations addressing similar or related topics. E.g., Inclusive education, inclusive sports, persons with intellectual disabilities rights, teachers’ training and professional development, and youth leadership. * Gather background information about people with intellectual disabilities, inclusive sports, and inclusive education in your country/context. * In summary, prepare yourself. |
| During the interview |
| * Introduce yourself and your Program using the suggested script below:  1. Explain the purpose of the interview. 2. Let them know that you understand they are influential community leaders. 3. Tell them who referred you to them. This can help you build trust and credibility. 4. Be honest, polite, and get to the point. 5. Be respectful of other persons’ time. 6. Explain the SO UCS project, including:  * An overview * Possible benefits to the community and schools. * Ask if they know about other people or organizations that may be interested in getting involved. * Ask what resources each person or group can bring to the project.  1. Ask for help with introductions to get to know the leaders and organizations they recommended. |
| Sample script for beginning a Key Informant Interview |
| Hello! Good morning/afternoon.  My name is [your name], and I work with Special Olympics [name of your Program].  ​We are developing an educational project named Unified (Champion) Schools, which briefly consists of a strategy for schools [Pre-K through university] that intentionally promotes meaningful social inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities to create accepting school environments.  We are in the process of getting to know the community and the leaders so we can establish potential partnerships. Your name was given to us by [name of referring contact] because you are a key community leader.  I want to give you more information about the project, get your thoughts on it, and find out if you are interested in supporting us. Also, we would appreciate it if you could suggest other people and organizations that might want to get involved.  Is this a good time [date and time proposal] to meet? If not, can you please give us other options?  Kind regards,  [Your name and signature] |

1. Adapted from GENE (2007). Making Community Partnerships work: a toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-1)