

Some Important Things to Consider:

Activities intended to implement health policy changes need to be aligned, planned and organized accordingly to ensure its success and efficacy. When working with the Pacific Island communities, careful consideration of cultural, traditional practices and customs are heavily emphasized. Although the governmental structures in the USAPI possess similarities with many western governments, the USAPI are close-knit communities that have strong ties to its traditional methods of governance. For example in Palau and Yap, incorporated in their governmental structure is the Council of Chiefs, where traditional leaders hold influence and power. Since health policy changes tend to affect and intersect multi-sectors of the government, earning the support of traditional chiefs increases the chance of success for a health policy. Below is a non-exhaustive list of things to consider when working to pass and implement a health policy.

NOTE: Depending on the resources and needs of the community, some of items on this list may not be applicable. Likewise, some additional consideration/s may be needed that is/are not included in this list.

✓	Things to Consider:	Description or Example:
	Major State and/or National Holidays	Some major holidays may affect the timing of policy-making related activities; knowing major holidays in advance fosters better planning and time management 📅 Sample of National Holidays Calendar
	Governmental/Organizational fiscal start and end dates	Knowing the fiscal schedules of departments/agencies could help avoid times of the year when internal departmental structures tends to be at their busiest
	Major businesses in the region and their owners	Consider businesses that could positively and negatively be affected by the proposed policy; anticipate the potential opponents as well as proponents of the policy; finding a resolution between opponents <i>before</i> introduction of the policy ensures higher percent of success once in the legislative process
	Cultural gender-specific roles and family structure	Understand gender roles in your country/jurisdiction in terms of decision making, financial responsibilities, family structure, etc. and how these might be affected by the policy you are working on (e.g. getting support of women's groups in matriarchal societies)
	Roles of Traditional/Cultural Leaders and Religious Leaders vs. Political Leaders	Know who are the important stakeholders in the community and get the appropriate religious and cultural support to minimize potential oppositions to the policy in the future
	Popular products and practices between age-groups in the country/jurisdiction	Anticipate opposition or supports from different community members relating to the proposed policy (e.g. betel nut related policies, etc.)
	Popular or influential individuals	Engage other individuals that could influence political leaders' decisions or sway the community's opinion (i.e. getting the support of the Mayor's familial members on a certain issue, etc.)

✓	Things to Consider:	Description or Example:
	Rising media trends that reaches out to a large portion of the population	Raise awareness on a particular issues to gather support and educate the community through new communication mediums; wider dissemination of the information about the policy may be necessary (i.e. social media, etc.)
	Major religions and congregations	Maintain sensitivity to the religious practices and community values; make sure a particular policy doesn't offend traditional values and principles
	History of the political formation of the country	Maintain sensitivity to the different political and cultural dynamics between different regional or ethnic groups in the country/jurisdiction
	Language barriers	Consider how to educate other members of the community who may have some language barriers but want or need to know more about a particular policy
	Other special interest groups	Aside from business owners, identify other groups in the community who may or may not be supportive of a particular policy and find out ways to gain support
	Collaboration techniques	Identify points that could pull different groups to work together towards a particular policy
	Agencies or departmental organization charts	Know who the important people to talk to; be aware of certain unwritten communication protocols when relating to or communicating with department directors, managers, etc.
	Resources within easy reach, within average reach and within high reach	Know the local community assets; Consider doing a political and community mapping to maximize resources; (most important for resource-limited settings)
	Limits of the policy	Discuss if a particular policy is intended to be implemented in the Local/State Level only or for the entire Country/ National Level
	Chairperson/s of the relevant legislative committees	Be aware of the chairperson/s of the legislative committees relevant to a particular policy; getting the necessary buy-in and support of a legislative champion is important in the success of a particular policy
	Cultural hierarchy systems in place	Be sensitive and learn of any existing cultural hierarchical systems that might be in place; practice culturally-sensitive approaches on how to navigate traditional social systems
	Current year's legislative calendar and special dates	Know in advance the calendar or timeframe of the legislature in order to plan advocacy-related activities in tandem of the legislative calendar; introduction of health policies may need to be synchronized with any significant political activities

Figure 6. Things to Consider: the Intended and Unintended Consequencesⁱ

Additional Recommended Readings:

- 📖 [Health Impact Assessment: International Best Practice Principles](#) (by IAIA, 2006)
 - Pgs. 1-4: Covers Principles of Health Impact Assessment defined as combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population and identifies appropriate actions to manage those effects.

- 📖 [Case Scenarios in the USAPI \(Success Stories and Lessons Learned\)](#)
 - To learn more about success stories and lessons learned from the different Public Health initiatives in the USAPI. The examples are drawn from the four main areas of the Commitment: Tobacco, Alcohol, Physical Activity and Nutrition.

ⁱ Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands directors. Personal Interview. 16-25 July 2013. (Note: These “things to consider” is a compilation based on feedback of the recommendations and lessons learned from the members and directors of the Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands.)