Resource Mapping Tool for Community Peacebuilding

Introduction

In low-resource contexts, successful peacebuilding often depends on recognizing and mobilizing resources beyond money. Communities typically possess a wealth of non-financial assets—from meeting spaces and transportation to skills and social networks—that can support peace initiatives without requiring external funding. This Resource Mapping Tool helps communities systematically identify, value, and mobilize these hidden resources for sustainable peacebuilding.

Purpose of This Tool

This Resource Mapping Tool will help your community:

- Discover the full range of resources available for peace initiatives
- Value non-monetary contributions equitably
- Make resource mobilization more inclusive and accessible
- Reduce dependency on external funding
- Design peace initiatives that build on existing community strengths
- Create sustainable resource-sharing systems for long-term peace

Who Should Use This Tool

- Local Peace Committees and community peace initiatives
- Community leaders and facilitators
- Women's groups and youth organizations
- Traditional and religious leaders
- Civil society organizations supporting community peacebuilding

PART 1: PREPARING FOR RESOURCE MAPPING

Planning the Process

Step 1: Form a Resource Mapping Team Create a small, diverse team to lead the mapping process:

- Include 5-8 people representing different community sectors
- Ensure gender balance and youth representation
- Include people with knowledge of different community resources
- Select members with connections to various community networks

Step 2: Define Mapping Objectives Clarify what you hope to achieve through resource mapping:

- Identify resources for specific peace initiatives
- Create a general inventory of community peace assets
- Address resource gaps in existing peace work
- Develop new resource-sharing systems
- Strengthen community self-reliance for peacebuilding

Step 3: Plan Inclusive Participation Design a process that engages the whole community:

- Schedule sessions when diverse participants can attend
- Select accessible locations for mapping activities
- Plan for childcare or family-friendly sessions if needed

- Consider separate sessions for specific groups (women, youth, elders) if cultural norms require
- Develop methods for people with disabilities to participate fully

Step 4: Prepare Materials Gather simple materials for the mapping process:

- Large paper sheets or community mapping boards
- Colored markers, sticky notes, or colored paper
- Simple symbols or pictures for low-literacy settings
- Resource category cards (see templates in Part 5)
- Documentation materials (notebook, camera if available)

Step 5: Set Ground Rules Establish principles to guide the mapping process:

- All resources are valuable, regardless of monetary worth
- Everyone has something to contribute to peace
- Resource mapping is about possibilities, not limitations
- The process should strengthen, not exploit, community assets
- Information gathered belongs to the community

PART 2: CONDUCTING COMMUNITY RESOURCE MAPPING

Mapping Physical Resources

Step 1: Create a Community Resource Map Draw a simple map of the community showing:

- Geographic boundaries and key landmarks
- Major roads, paths, and meeting points
- Different neighborhoods or settlement areas
- Natural features (rivers, forests, fields)
- Community facilities and gathering places

Step 2: Identify Physical Spaces for Peace Activities Mark places that could support peace initiatives:

- Meeting venues (community halls, schools, religious buildings)
- Open spaces for larger gatherings
- Safe neutral spaces for dialogue between conflicting groups
- Private spaces for sensitive conversations
- Spaces controlled by different community groups
- Accessible spaces for people with disabilities

Step 3: Identify Material Resources Create an inventory of material items that could support peace activities:

- Communication tools (radios, mobile phones, loudspeakers)
- Transportation (vehicles, bicycles, animal transport)
- Food provision capabilities (cooking equipment, food storage)
- Documentation materials (paper, writing tools)
- Cultural items (traditional symbols, music instruments)
- Tools and equipment for community work

Step 4: Document Availability and Access Conditions For each physical resource, record:

- Who controls or owns the resource
- When and how it can be accessed
- Any existing conditions or costs for use

- Any conflicts or sensitivities around its use
- Seasonal availability if relevant

Mapping Human Resources

Step 1: Identify Skills and Knowledge Create a skills inventory recording people with:

- Mediation and conflict resolution abilities
- Communication and public speaking skills
- Organizational and planning capacities
- Traditional knowledge of peace practices
- Artistic and cultural expression talents
- Training and facilitation abilities
- Technical skills (writing, technology, etc.)
- Language and translation capabilities

Step 2: Identify Experience and Expertise Map specific experiences relevant to peacebuilding:

- Previous conflict resolution successes
- Cross-community relationships and connections
- Experience working with diverse groups
- Knowledge of community history and past conflicts
- Understanding of conflict drivers and dynamics
- Experience with external stakeholders
- Specific peacebuilding training or exposure

Step 3: Identify Reputation and Influence Map individuals and groups with moral authority:

- Respected elders and community figures
- Traditional and religious leaders
- Youth leaders with peer influence
- Women leaders with community respect
- Individuals trusted across conflict lines
- People with connections to formal authorities

Step 4: Document Availability and Conditions For each human resource, record:

- How to appropriately engage the person or group
- Existing commitments and availability constraints
- Culturally appropriate recognition for contributions
- Any sensitivities around their involvement
- Potential roles in peace initiatives

Mapping Social Resources

Step 1: Identify Community Groups and Networks Map organized groups that could support peace initiatives:

- Women's associations and circles
- Youth groups and clubs
- Religious congregations and faith-based groups
- Traditional governance structures
- Savings groups and economic associations
- Cultural and arts groups

- Sports teams and recreational groups
- School-related associations

Step 2: Identify External Connections Map relationships beyond the immediate community:

- Diaspora connections and networks
- Relationships with neighboring communities
- Links to government officials or agencies
- Connections to civil society organizations
- Relationships with business or market actors
- Media contacts and communication channels
- Connections to donors or support organizations

Step 3: Identify Communication Channels Map how information flows through the community:

- Formal community announcements and meetings
- Religious gathering information sharing
- Market day communications
- Local radio or loudspeaker announcements
- Mobile phone and messaging networks
- Traditional communication methods
- Social media groups where applicable

Step 4: Document Access and Mobilization Approaches For each social resource, record:

- Key contact people or access points
- Appropriate protocols for engagement
- Decision-making processes of groups
- History of peace involvement (if any)
- Potential contributions to peace initiatives

Mapping Cultural Resources

Step 1: Identify Traditional Peace Practices Document cultural resources for conflict resolution:

- Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms
- Peace-oriented rituals and ceremonies
- Cultural symbols associated with peace
- Traditional stories and proverbs about peace
- Songs, dances, or arts promoting harmony
- Historical peace agreements or precedents
- Cultural values that promote coexistence

Step 2: Identify Shared Cultural Elements Map cultural factors that connect across divides:

- Common celebrations or observances
- Shared sacred or significant places
- Cross-cutting cultural practices
- Historical cooperation examples
- Shared heroes or respected figures
- Common artforms or expressions
- Shared values despite differences

Step 3: Identify Cultural Seasons and Opportunities Map temporal aspects of cultural resources:

- Traditional peace-making seasons or times
- Cultural festivals or celebrations
- Agricultural or seasonal community gatherings
- Commemorative events with peace potential
- Times traditionally reserved for conflict resolution

Step 4: Document Appropriate Use and Protocols For each cultural resource, record:

- Cultural authorities who should be consulted
- Proper protocols for utilizing these resources
- Potential sensitivities or taboos to respect
- Variations across different community groups
- Adaptations needed for contemporary use

PART 3: ANALYZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Resource Analysis Workshop

Step 1: Organize Resources by Category Create visual displays grouping resources by type:

- Physical Resources (spaces, materials, equipment)
- Human Resources (skills, knowledge, influence)
- Social Resources (groups, networks, relationships)
- Cultural Resources (traditions, practices, symbols)
- Economic Resources (local exchange systems, shared assets)

Step 2: Analyze Availability and Access For each resource category, analyze:

- Who currently controls or influences access
- Whether access is equitable across community groups
- Seasonal or temporal availability patterns
- Existing barriers to use for peace purposes
- Untapped potential for peacebuilding

Step 3: Identify Resource Gaps Through group discussion, identify:

- Missing resources needed for peace initiatives
- Resources available but not currently accessible
- Resources needing development or strengthening
- External resources needed to complement local assets
- Methods to address critical resource gaps

Step 4: Explore Resource Combinations Analyze how different resources could work together:

- Complementary resource pairings
- Resource packages for specific peace activities
- Resource chains or sequences for peace processes
- Resource-sharing arrangements between groups
- New resources that could emerge from combinations

Resource Valuation Process

Step 1: Establish Community Resource Values Work with participants to develop shared understanding of value:

- Discuss how to recognize non-monetary contributions

- Establish equivalencies between different resource types
- Create simple, fair ways to acknowledge contributions
- Consider traditional value systems already in the community
- Develop culturally appropriate recognition mechanisms

Step 2: Create a Resource Exchange Framework Develop systems for equitable resource sharing:

- Simple time-banking or service exchange mechanisms
- Resource contribution tracking methods
- Reciprocity principles for resource borrowing
- Community recognition for significant contributions
- Fair access principles for shared resources

Step 3: Address Resource Conflicts or Sensitivities Identify and plan to address potential resource challenges:

- Resources associated with historical conflicts
- Resources with disputed ownership or control
- Power imbalances in resource access
- Seasonal resource scarcity periods
- Competition for limited resources

Step 4: Document Resource Mobilization Agreements Create simple, clear documentation of community agreements:

- Resource-sharing principles and protocols
- Decision-making processes for resource allocation
- Conflict resolution mechanisms for resource disputes
- Responsibilities for resource maintenance or replenishment
- Recognition systems for resource contributions

PART 4: MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR PEACE

Planning Resource Mobilization

Step 1: Link Resources to Peace Activities Create a simple matrix connecting:

- Specific peace initiatives or needs
- Required resources for each activity
- Available community resources identified
- Resource gaps requiring external support
- Timeline for resource mobilization

Step 2: Create Resource Mobilization Roles Assign responsibilities for resource coordination:

- Resource mobilization coordinators for different categories
- Contact people for specific resource types
- Documentation and tracking responsibilities
- Resource maintenance and care roles
- External resource liaison positions

Step 3: Develop Simple Resource Request Processes Create accessible systems for peace initiatives to request resources:

- Simple request forms or processes

- Clear decision criteria for resource allocation
- Transparent allocation process
- Feedback mechanisms for resource users
- Record-keeping for resource use

Step 4: Design Resource Recognition Systems Create methods to acknowledge resource contributions:

- Public acknowledgment in community gatherings
- Visual displays of contributor names or symbols
- Certificates or tokens of appreciation
- Reciprocal benefit opportunities
- Stories and testimonials about resource impact

Implementing and Monitoring Resource Use

Step 1: Launch Resource Mobilization Begin activating identified resources:

- Community event to celebrate resource mapping
- Initial resource contribution opportunities
- First resource allocations to peace initiatives
- Public demonstration of resource exchange systems
- Recognition of early resource contributors

Step 2: Document Resource Contributions Create simple, accessible documentation systems:

- Visual tracking of contributions on community boards
- Simple written or pictorial records
- Regular public updates on resource mobilization
- Documentation of impact stories
- Photos or recordings where appropriate

Step 3: Monitor Resource Use and Impact Establish simple monitoring approaches:

- Regular check-ins with resource contributors
- Feedback sessions with resource users
- Community verification of resource use
- Tracking of peace impacts from resource use
- Identification of challenges and adaptations needed

Step 4: Adapt and Improve Systems Create mechanisms for system refinement:

- Regular reflection meetings on resource processes
- Simple ways to suggest improvements
- Conflict resolution mechanisms for resource issues
- Celebration of successes and learning
- Periodic updating of resource mapping

Sustaining Community Resource Systems

Step 1: Maintain Resource Awareness Keep resource mapping visible and current:

- Regular updates to community resource maps
- Periodic community-wide resource discussions
- Integration of resource topics in community meetings
- Sharing of resource impact stories

- Recognition of ongoing contributions

Step 2: Replenish and Expand Resources Develop resource sustainability practices:

- Care and maintenance of physical resources
- Skills sharing to expand human resources
- Network expansion to grow social resources
- Cultural transmission to preserve cultural resources
- Investment in resource development where needed

Step 3: Address Emerging Resource Challenges Create adaptive responses to changing conditions:

- Regular assessment of resource pressures
- Conflict-sensitive approaches to scarcity
- Innovative solutions to address resource gaps
- Equitable adjustments to changing conditions
- External advocacy when additional support is needed

Step 4: Link to Broader Peace Goals Ensure resource systems support long-term peace:

- Connection to community peace strategies
- Alignment with formal peace processes where relevant
- Integration with development and governance initiatives
- Documentation of resource contributions to peace
- Community ownership of resource systems

PART 5: PRACTICAL TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Visual Resource Mapping Templates

Physical Resource Mapping Template

[Simple map outline with spaces to mark:]

- Meeting places [building symbol]
- Transportation [vehicle symbol]
- Communication tools [phone/radio symbol]
- Food preparation [cooking pot symbol]
- Cultural items [cultural object symbol]
- Tools and equipment [tool symbol]

Human Resource Mapping Template

[Simple chart with columns for:]

- Skill Type [symbol]
- People with Skill [space for names/marks]
- Availability [simple calendar marking]
- Contact Method [symbol]
- Special Considerations [notes section]

Social Resource Mapping Template

[Network diagram template with:]

- Community Groups [circle symbols]
- External Connections [square symbols]

- Communication Channels [line symbols]
- Relationship Strengths [different line weights]
- Potential Role in Peace [symbol options]

Cultural Resource Mapping Template

[Seasonal circle diagram with:]

- Traditional Peace Practices [symbol]
- Cultural Celebrations [symbol]
- Shared Cultural Elements [symbol]
- Sacred or Significant Places [symbol]
- Peace Stories and Symbols [symbol]

Resource Contribution Tracking Tools

Contribution Record Sheet

[Simple table with columns for:]

- Date
- Contributor Name
- Resource Type [symbol options]
- Contribution Description
- Peace Activity Supported
- Recognition Given
- Verification Signature

Resource Exchange Vouchers

[Simple voucher template with:]

- Resource Offered
- Estimated Value/Equivalency
- Provider Name
- Receiver Name
- Date of Exchange
- Verification Method
- Signature/Mark Spaces

Community Resource Board Layout

[Visual mockup of community display board with:]

- Resource Categories Section
- Current Needs Section
- Recognition Section
- Resource Exchange Section
- Updates and News Section
- Impact Stories Section

Resource Mobilization Planning Templates

Peace Initiative Resource Plan

[Planning template with:]

- Peace Activity Name

- Activity Description
- Resources Needed [categorized]
- Community Resources Available
- Resource Gaps
- Mobilization Timeline
- Responsible Persons
- Recognition Plan

Resource Allocation Decision Guide

[Decision flowchart with:]

- Request Received [start point]
- Alignment with Peace Goals [decision point]
- Resource Availability [decision point]
- Equitable Distribution [decision point]
- Proper Use Protocols [decision point]
- Approval and Documentation [end point]

Resource Impact Documentation

[Simple form with:]

- Peace Activity Supported
- Resources Contributed
- Contributors
- Date and Duration
- People Benefiting
- Peace Impact Observed
- Stories of Change
- Future Resource Needs

PART 6: SPECIALIZED MAPPING APPROACHES

Resource Mapping in Conflict Settings

Conflict-Sensitive Resource Identification

- Map resources accessible to all conflict parties
- Identify neutral resources without negative associations
- Document resources with potential to connect across divides
- Note resources that may increase tensions if mobilized
- Map safe and unsafe pathways to access resources

Balanced Resource Mobilization

- Ensure inclusive resource contribution from all groups
- Create balanced recognition across conflict lines
- Establish neutral management of shared resources
- Develop transparent, trusted allocation processes
- Create joint responsibility for resource protection

Safe Resource Documentation

- Use non-threatening terminology in resource mapping

- Consider privacy and protection in documentation
- Create secure storage for sensitive resource information
- Develop "do no harm" protocols for resource use
- Establish emergency measures for resource protection

Resource Mapping for Specific Peace Activities

Dialogue and Mediation Resources

- Neutral meeting spaces acceptable to all parties
- Respected mediators or facilitators
- Cultural protocols for respectful engagement
- Communication tools for preparation and follow-up
- Documentation and agreement resources

Youth Peace Engagement Resources

- Youth-friendly spaces and gathering points
- Activity materials appealing to young people
- Skills and talents of youth themselves
- Social networks and communication channels
- Mentors and adult allies for youth initiatives

Women's Peace Initiative Resources

- Women-accessible spaces and times
- Childcare support for participation
- Women's traditional peace roles and practices
- Women's networks and communication channels
- Female leadership skills and capacities

Peace Education Resources

- Educational spaces and materials
- Storytelling and cultural transmission methods
- Historical knowledge and peace precedents
- Teaching and facilitation skills
- Learning resources from multiple perspectives

Specialized Mapping for Low-Resource Contexts

Ultra-Low-Cost Resource Mapping

- Stone and stick mapping on cleared ground
- Body mapping techniques using people as symbols
- Verbal mapping through storytelling circles
- Walking tours with stopping points for discussion
- Memory mapping through shared recollection

Mapping with Limited Literacy

- Symbol-based recording systems
- Color-coding for different resource types
- Picture-based documentation methods
- Oral recording and memory techniques
- Tactile mapping for vision impairments

Crisis Resource Mapping

- Rapid assessment techniques for urgent needs
- Focused mapping of immediately available resources
- Alternative resource identification in disruption
- Emergency mobilization protocols
- Adaptive use of resources in crisis

PART 7: CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES

Case Study 1: Women's Peace Hut Resource Mapping

In rural Liberia, women's groups conducted resource mapping to support Peace Huts—community spaces where women mediate conflicts and address violence. Rather than seeking external funding, they mapped available resources including:

Physical Resources:

- Unused land donated by a respected elder
- Building materials contributed by community members
- Simple furniture made by local carpenters
- Cooking equipment shared from households

Human Resources:

- Traditional mediation knowledge from elder women
- Construction skills from men supporting the initiative
- Organizational capacity from women's group leaders
- Youth energy for building and maintenance

Social Resources:

- Women's marketing associations providing network support
- Connections to district officials through respected members
- Relationships with religious leaders for legitimacy
- Communication channels through market day gatherings

Cultural Resources:

- Traditional women's peace rituals integrated into mediation
- Stories and proverbs used in conflict resolution
- Cultural symbols of women's authority in domestic matters
- Traditional agreements reinforced by cultural practices

Results: The resource mapping enabled establishment of Peace Huts with minimal external support. Using locally-available resources created community ownership and sustainability. The Peace Huts became self-sustaining through small gardens and contribution systems, while successfully resolving hundreds of conflicts.

Case Study 2: Youth Peace Council Resource Mobilization

In an urban area with high youth unemployment and gang violence, a youth peace initiative conducted resource mapping focused on young people's often-overlooked assets:

Physical Resources:

- Underutilized community center spaces during off-peak hours
- Sports equipment from various youth groups
- Mobile phones for communication and documentation

- Artistic materials from school contributions

Human Resources:

- Artistic talents (music, art, drama) among youth
- Sports skills and leadership from team captains
- Technology knowledge from school-educated youth
- Experience of former gang members in understanding conflict

Social Resources:

- Extensive peer networks across different neighborhoods
- Connections to teachers and school administrators
- Relationships with younger children who respected older youth
- Social media networks and communication channels

Cultural Resources:

- Popular music and dance styles with positive messages
- Street art traditions that could promote peace
- Sports rivalries that could be channeled positively
- Youth cultural events with convening power

Results: The mapping revealed abundant resources controlled by youth themselves. A Youth Peace Council mobilized these resources to create peace-themed sports tournaments, arts events, and peer mediation. Using their own resources gave youth ownership of the peace process and challenged perceptions that youth were merely problems or beneficiaries rather than peace agents.

Case Study 3: Resource Mapping Across Conflict Lines

In a region divided by farmer-herder conflicts over land and water resources, facilitators conducted careful resource mapping with both communities:

Physical Resources:

- Neutral meeting places acceptable to both groups
- Shared water points with potential for cooperation
- Underutilized land areas for potential shared projects
- Communication tools accessible to both communities

Human Resources:

- Respected elders from both communities with historical relationships
- Religious leaders trusted across community lines
- Women from both groups with trading relationships
- Youth with cross-community friendships from school

Social Resources:

- Market day interactions providing regular contact
- Interdependent economic relationships and trade
- Religious gatherings with cross-community participation
- Historical alliances and cooperation precedents

Cultural Resources:

- Shared cultural celebrations and festivals
- Common religious values emphasizing peace

- Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms recognized by both groups
- Historical peace agreements and their symbols

Results: The resource mapping identified previously unrecognized assets for peace. By focusing on shared or complementary resources, communities established a joint natural resource management committee and revitalized traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The process highlighted mutual dependencies and common interests, changing conflict narratives and creating practical cooperation.

PART 8: TROUBLESHOOTING AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Common Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: Limited Participation in Resource Mapping

- **Solution**: Begin with smaller, diverse core group to demonstrate value
- **Solution**: Use existing gatherings to conduct mapping components
- **Solution**: Offer specific examples of resources to prompt discussion
- **Solution**: Create non-threatening framing about community strengths

Challenge: Difficulty Valuing Non-Financial Contributions

- **Solution**: Develop simple equivalency systems based on time or effort
- **Solution**: Use storytelling to illustrate impact of non-financial resources
- **Solution**: Create visual recognition systems that publicly acknowledge contributions
- **Solution**: Build on traditional values around community support and reciprocity

Challenge: Resource Identification Reveals Conflicts

- **Solution**: Establish clear conflict sensitivity protocols before mapping
- **Solution**: Focus initially on non-contested resources
- **Solution**: Use separate groups for sensitive resource discussions
- **Solution**: Develop conflict resolution processes specifically for resource issues

Challenge: Resource Mobilization Benefits Some Groups More Than Others

- **Solution**: Create transparent tracking of resource contributions and benefits
- **Solution**: Establish equity principles for resource allocation
- **Solution**: Actively seek contributions and participation from marginalized groups
- **Solution**: Regularly review distribution patterns and adjust as needed

Challenge: Initial Enthusiasm Fades Over Time

- **Solution**: Start with small, visible resource mobilization successes
- **Solution**: Create regular renewal and updating of resource mapping
- **Solution**: Establish rotation of coordination responsibilities
- **Solution**: Develop storytelling about resource impact to maintain motivation

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can we map resources without creating expectations we can't meet? A: Be clear from the beginning that the process is about identifying what the community already has and how to use it more effectively for peace, not about generating new external resources. Focus on the value of existing assets and how they can be better mobilized.

Q: How do we handle power imbalances in resource control? A: Acknowledge these realities openly while looking for resources that are more equitably accessible. Work with influential

resource controllers to demonstrate the community-wide benefits of more inclusive resource use. Start with resources that have fewer power sensitivities.

Q: How can we value very different types of contributions fairly? A: Involve the community in creating locally meaningful equivalencies between different resource types. Focus on the impact of contributions rather than their market value. Consider traditional systems of exchange and reciprocity that may already exist in the community.

Q: What if people don't want to share their resources? A: Respect individual choices about resource sharing. Focus first on community members most willing to contribute, creating positive examples. Ensure clear agreements about how resources will be used, maintained, and returned if applicable. Build trust through transparent tracking and recognition.

Q: How do we sustain resource mapping and mobilization long-term? A: Integrate resource discussions into regular community meetings and decision-making. Create simple, sustainable documentation systems that don't require special materials or skills. Develop a rotating resource coordination role. Regularly celebrate and recognize contributions to maintain motivation.

Conclusion

Resource mapping reveals that even in low-resource contexts, communities possess significant assets for peacebuilding when viewed through a different lens. By systematically identifying, valuing, and mobilizing existing resources—physical, human, social, and cultural—communities can reduce dependency on external funding while building more sustainable, locally-owned peace processes.

The resource mapping process itself often becomes a peacebuilding activity, bringing diverse community members together around shared goals and highlighting interdependencies. As communities discover and mobilize their own peace resources, they simultaneously build confidence, capacity, and social cohesion—essential foundations for lasting peace.

This Resource Mapping Tool provides practical approaches adaptable to various contexts, from rural villages to urban neighborhoods, stable settings to active conflicts. By starting with existing community strengths rather than focusing on deficits, resource mapping creates new possibilities for peace action even in the most challenging circumstances.