A VERY BASIC EXPLANATION OF HOW A BRIDGING DIVIDES MAP WOULD WORK

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A map of resources to respond. Image taken from Peace Direct map – peacebuilding organizations represented in clusters across the country. https://www.peaceinsight.org/conflicts/usa/
What the Map Tells Us

With this limited overlap you can see that Texas, South Dakota, parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota have high levels of polarization and low levels of local peacebuilding organizations registered with Peace Direct. If this map were the full picture, it might suggest more targeted outreach to supporting local peace initiatives, local elected leadership, local police departments or election offices in these areas.

What it Does Not Tell Us

There are many ways that the map above is either insufficient, misleading or inaccurate. At this scale, the clusters of peacebuilding organizations make it look like, for example, Virginia and Massachusetts, states with higher polarization, have no peacebuilding organizations, but in reality several of the 33 organizations grouped in the bubble in Pennsylvania are actually in other states. Additionally, Peace Direct’s list of organizations is a partial catalogue of resources available to respond to polarization, and the map above identifies headquarter locations of offices, not the location of community building work. Also importantly, these organizations represent a great variety of work. Some organizations bring groups together in dialogue, others monitor media. Being able to visually distinguish between organizations based on key factors will help identify not only if there are any resources, but if there are relevant resources for a problem that may arise. Finally, on the “risk” side – while still a very inexact science, considering where polarization might result in incidents of violence ahead of the 2020 elections, layering in several different indicators of higher risk will help us see a larger picture.

Priorities and Increased Functionality:

- **Increasing the Groups Included**: The map currently includes 2,600 entries from Listen 1st Coalition, Bridge Alliance, Peace Direct and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation. The map could offer a more accurate picture of depolarization resources.
- **Capturing and Categorizing Work**: Each entry includes up to 26 pieces of information: the name*, description of the organization, address, twitter/Facebook/website/contact info, information on how to get involved*, some resources/podcasts the organization provides, the network (or networks) to which the organization belongs*, the type of presence (physical offices, long-term activities etc.), the type of organization* (non-profit, academic, government etc.), and the goal of the work* (bridging ideological divides, supporting elections, or youth etc.). Those entries with * have filterable tags so that you can make a map that only shows those groups.
- **Using the Map to Bring Together the Network**: In addition to showing the organizations on the map, the user can export the list of organizations to an excel document with description of the organizations, information on how to contact the organizations, and the city/state. Other functionality could include creating the ability to send an email to local organizations in the network welcoming new organizations to the network and functionality requested by users during beta testing.
- **Offering Multiple Ways to Think about Higher Risk Areas**: Layering in information on the location of ‘hate’ organizations, ‘hate’ incidents, political prejudice, terrorist incidents, mass shootings and political events and including a heat map option to view this data will help to offer different pictures of potentially higher risk areas. Functionality here could include the use of machine learning models of thinking about risk and include things like online hate organizing.
- **Other Data**: Depending on demand, the map could include information on, for example, demographics, voting or media usage.

With these, among other important improvements, this map can help community building organizations increase their network, coordinate or collaborate, and focus resources on areas of higher need with gaps. Around a politicizing event like the 2020 elections, this map can serve as a data point in early warning and in creating a national early response network to political or violent incidents. In a world of limited resources, this allows us to be greater than the sum of our parts.