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PERSPECTIVES ON ENHANCING THE RESOURCE BASE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The post-war recovery of local communities requires an integrated approach that secures immediate assets for reconstruction while laying the institutional and environmental foundations for sustainable long-term development. Recent work on Ukrainian decentralization indicates that shifting responsibilities and some fiscal powers to local governments can increase local capacity to mobilize resources and coordinate rebuilding; however, that same process may reproduce spatial inequalities if not accompanied by corrective national policies and safeguards against competitive capture of scarce funds [1].

Any strategy to enhance the resource base therefore must combine:

- realistic fiscal tools;
- targeted environmental remediation that restores productive land and infrastructure;
- digital and institutional investments that improve transparency, absorptive capacity, and accountability.

The environmental legacy of war is a foundational constraint on the resource base: widespread damage to water systems, energy infrastructure, industrial sites, and the countryside diverts capital and labor, degrades human health, and depresses local economic productivity. Comprehensive reviews document large, measurable environmental and public-health impacts from the 2022-2023 phase of the conflict, and emphasize that remediation and health-oriented recovery actions are not peripheral but central to restoring economic capacity at the community level [2].

Practically, this means that reconstruction budgets must explicitly allocate for environmental assessment, decontamination, water-supply repair, and health surveillance as part of the core recovery package – otherwise, physical rebuilding simply restores hazardous or low-value assets.

Soil degradation and contamination are examples of urgent resource-based losses that directly affect local livelihoods and fiscal prospects. Field studies and systematic analyses document severe localized increases of heavy metals, altered soil granulomere, and microbiome disruption where armored vehicles, explosions, and industrial damage occurred; these impacts threaten agricultural productivity and require staged remediation (survey, removal of ordnance and debris, targeted phytoremediation or soil replacement) before farmland can reliably generate taxable economic activity again [3]. Restoration of these natural-resource assets is

therefore a priority investment that directly replenishes the resource base local governments can tax, lease, or otherwise leverage.

Financial innovation is necessary but not sufficient. Market instruments such as municipal or green bonds can mobilize capital for infrastructure and green reconstruction, yet critical scholarship warns that such instruments can reproduce inequalities, carry fiscal risks for local authorities, and require strong governance, transparency, and regulatory scaffolding to be beneficial [4]. In practice, issuing subnational debt must be combined with capacity building in public financial management, external guarantees or blended finance to lower borrowing costs, and clear project eligibility criteria to avoid shifting unsustainable contingent liabilities to local taxpayers.

Digital governance and administrative modernization are powerful multipliers for resource mobilization and value-for-money in the post-war period. Evidence from recent large-scale digital government transformation efforts shows that when local administrations adopt well-designed e-services, transparent accounting systems, and digital procurement, they improve service continuity and attract both donor and private finance by reducing information asymmetries and corruption risks [5]. For recovery this implies investment in interoperable tax and asset registries, digital land-use and demining maps, and procurement platforms that permit conditional, traceable disbursement of reconstruction funds at the local level.

Institutional balance is the third pillar. Decentralization reforms increase local initiative and can speed reconstruction, but without national coordination and redistributive mechanisms they risk producing uneven recovery trajectories: wealthier or more connected communities attract investment while peripheral or heavily damaged localities fall further behind. Scholarly analysis cautions that decentralization must be paired with mechanisms that equalize capacity (conditional transfers, targeted grants for severely affected areas, and upward accountability for donor funds) to prevent competitive disadvantage

Practically, national recovery frameworks should enshrine predictable intergovernmental transfers for destruction-adjusted needs and set binding performance and transparency requirements for subnational borrowing.

From these observations follow several operational implications for policy and local practice. First, recovery budgets must integrate environmental remediation as an explicit, funded step prior to asset re-occupation or re-investment; otherwise nominal asset restoration will conceal latent ecological liabilities [2]. Second, financing strategies should combine short-term grants, donor-backed guarantees, concessional loans, and carefully structured green or social bonds – but only when issuance is embedded within strengthened public financial management and legal limits that protect local fiscal sustainability. Third, digital public infrastructure (tax registries, procurement platforms, geospatial

demining/land maps) must be prioritized to accelerate resource mobilization and to demonstrate transparency for international partners and markets [5]. Fourth, environmental and agricultural recovery must be prioritized both for humanitarian reasons and because restoring productive land is a direct pathway to re-establishing the tax and economic base of communities [3].

In conclusion, strengthening the resource base of local communities in the post-war context requires a truly multidisciplinary strategy. While urgent repairs and the provision of social services are indispensable in the early phase of recovery, long-term sustainability depends on a balanced combination of environmental remediation, prudent financial mechanisms, digital governance, and coordinated intergovernmental redistribution. Effective recovery will only be possible if environmental assessment and remediation are treated as integral parts of reconstruction, if financial instruments are applied cautiously under strong safeguards, if digital systems ensure transparency and continuity of public services, and if national frameworks provide equitable support to communities facing unequal levels of destruction. Taken together, these measures create a coherent foundation for restoring local resources and building a more resilient and equitable system of community development.

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