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Booklet

EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES

Local Solutions for Rights—
based Communities

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Local Solutions for Rights-based Communities

This Booklet has been prepared within the training programme “EUcation – Urban Governance for Human Rights and EU Integration”, implemented by the Lviv Bureau of European Integration, Lund University and Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and funded by the Swedish Institute.

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What is EUcation?

EUcation is a training programme with a focus on urban governance for human rights and EU integration. EUcation is built on the partnership between Lviv Bureau of European Integration, Lund University and Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and funded by the Swedish Institute. EUcation started in December 2024 and ran for a period of two years.

How did the idea of EUcation come about?

The idea behind EUcation came from the colleagues at Lviv Bureau of European Integration, who identified a clear need in strengthening the capacities of local government in terms of EU accession and human rights, and leveraged the idea through an earlier engagement with colleagues at Lund University and Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

EUcation's target audience

EUcation training programme was open for participation by staff of the local government in Lviv and staff of relevant municipal institutions in Lviv. This target audience was chosen due to the key role local governments play in ensuring that human rights are reflected in people's daily lives.



What did participants learn during EUcation?

During the EUcation training programme, participants learned about the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), relevant human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), but also topics relevant to the functioning of the EU and the EU accession processes. During EUcation, participants learned how to apply HRBA principles in the projects that they are either implementing or planning to implement as part of their work in the local government. To help participants work with the HRBA principles, a template (Annex 1) was developed.

What is this booklet?

This booklet has been developed as a collection of the practical examples of project cases which EUcation participants strengthened further by closer consideration of the principles of HRBA. The booklet also provides an explanation of what a HRBA in the context of local governance is, zooming in on the principle of legality, with the CRPD as an example.

The content of the booklet is largely based on the templates filled out by the participants, as well as consequent project presentations, which participants prepared for the training held in April 2026 in Gdansk, Poland, together with further input provided by the participants during the booklet's development.

We hope this booklet encourages staff working in municipal administrations and municipal institutions to LEARN → APPLY → REFLECT → SHARE



What is a Human Rights-Based Approach?

Many of the reforms required under the EU acquis, especially those related to fundamental rights, accessibility, equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountable governance, are ultimately implemented and experienced at the local level. A Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) provides a practical framework for translating these standards and values into everyday municipal policies, services and development initiatives, making it an important tool for local governments contributing to Ukraine's EU accession process.

A HRBA is a way of doing everyday municipal work so that human rights shape decisions, services, policies, budgets, procurement, projects and working methods. It is not a separate human rights activity added on top of ordinary work. It is a way of asking what the municipality is trying to achieve, how the work is carried out and whether the result enables people to exercise and enjoy their human rights.

A HRBA starts from a simple legal relationship. The municipality is a duty bearer: it exercises public power and has obligations under the human rights conventions binding on the State. The residents on the other hand are rights holders: they are persons with rights that public authorities must respect, protect and fulfil, not only users of services or people with needs. They must also be able to know their rights, participate in decisions that affect them, raise concerns and hold public authorities accountable.

Four interconnected sets of principles help translate this relationship into municipal practice:

- **Principles of legality and localization**
 - Municipal work must be guided by the human rights that the State has undertaken to respect, protect and fulfil, while taking account of the actual conditions in the local community.
 - **How to apply principles of legality and localization in practice:** Identify the relevant rights, obligations and human rights principles, then use local evidence and knowledge to decide what needs to change and which municipal tools can be used to bring about such change.
- **Principles of participation and inclusion**
 - People affected by a municipal decision, service or project should have a meaningful opportunity to influence it, including people who are often excluded from decision-making.
 - How to apply principles of participation and inclusion in practice: Involve the relevant rights holders from the beginning of activity, project, effort, i.e. when the problem is defined, and continue their involvement through design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Principles of transparency and accountability**
 - People should be able to understand what the municipality is doing, why decisions are made and who is responsible, and they should be able to challenge shortcomings when they experience that their rights are not respected.

- How to apply principles of transparency and accountability in practice: Provide accessible information, explain decisions, communicate who is responsible and ensure that concerns and complaints can be received, addressed and followed up.
- **Principles of equality and non-discrimination**
 - Everyone has human rights, but achieving equality does not always mean treating everyone in the same way.
 - **How to apply principles of equality and non-discrimination in practice:** Ask what stereotypes and prejudice may influence municipal work, who benefits from a decision or service, who may be excluded or disadvantaged by it, and what needs to be done differently so that everyone can exercise and enjoy their rights on an equal basis.

These principles should guide the whole work process, not only the final design of an activity, project or initiative. For example, a municipality should ask not only whether a new bus stop meets technical standards, but also who can actually reach and use it; not only whether residents were consulted, but whether those most affected were able to influence the solution; and not only whether information was published, but whether the people concerned could access and understand it.

The initiatives featured in this booklet show how a HRBA can strengthen very different areas of local government's work, from public transport and urban planning to employment, communication, healthcare access and cultural participation. Often the purpose of applying HRBA is not to create an entirely new project, but to look at existing or planned work through a human rights lens to improve it.



How can HRBA improve municipal work?

HRBA is grounded in legal obligations, but that is not its only value. Using a **HRBA can also help municipalities do their everyday work better.**

- HRBA provides a form of **quality assurance** that can make municipal policies, programmes and activities more effective, fair and sustainable: by looking more closely at who a policy, service or project is meant to work for, what may prevent it from working, and what needs to change to achieve the intended result.
- HRBA helps municipalities **understand the problem before deciding on the solution**: participation can reveal barriers that are difficult to see from inside an administration; looking specifically at **equality** can show who is being missed; **legality** can clarify what outcome the municipality should be working towards – together, these perspectives can lead to solutions that are better aligned with the actual problem, rather than solutions based mainly on assumptions about what residents need.
- HRBA can also make better use of **time and public resources**: identifying an accessibility problem, an excluded group or a weakness in a proposed service early in the process is usually easier than correcting it after a project has been completed; learning from monitoring and evaluation can improve the next decision or project – HRBA work process is therefore intended as a continuous cycle in which experience from one initiative strengthens the next.
- HRBA can also strengthen the **relationship between the municipality and residents**: when people can participate meaningfully, understand why decisions are made, know who is responsible and see that their concerns are taken seriously, public sector becomes more transparent and accountable.

In this sense, HRBA does not ask municipalities to choose between **human rights and effective local government**. It uses human rights to help define what good local government should achieve and provides practical principles for getting there¹.

¹ This account of HRBA builds on Bruce, Anna ; Sjöwall, Johanna. / *Human Rights Based Approach for Local Governments – Why, What and How?*. Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy, ICLD, 2026. Available at RWI at: <https://rwi.lu.se/publications/human-rights-based-approach-for-local-governments/>.

What are the principles of legality and localisation?

The EU accession process has a strong legal dimension, requiring reforms to be aligned with European and international standards. The principles of legality and localisation are therefore particularly relevant, as they help municipalities translate these standards into concrete local action and ensure that reforms related to fundamental rights are implemented in ways that respond to local realities and needs.

The principle of legality means that human rights law actively guides municipal work. For a municipal employee, the starting point is not only “Are we following national law?” but also “Which human rights are at stake here, and what do they require us to do?”

Municipal employees are usually accustomed to working with national legislation, regulations, technical standards and local policies. Applying a human rights-based approach also requires working directly with international human rights conventions and, where relevant, material that explains how they should be understood, such as General Comments from UN human rights committees². These sources may be less familiar and capacity building may therefore be needed to make them usable in everyday municipal work.

But this is also what makes legality so important. Human rights law does not simply tell us that accessibility, participation, equality or education are important. It tells us what the rights concerning accessibility, participation, equality, and education among others actually mean, what residents are entitled to, and what public authorities are required to do. Without this legal anchor, human rights can easily become broad ambitions or good intentions rather than standards that guide decisions and against which results can be assessed.

All levels of government are duty bearers. Local authorities therefore need enough knowledge of the human rights conventions relevant to their areas of responsibility to use them when problems are analysed, priorities are set, policies and projects are designed, resources are allocated and results are assessed. This does not mean that every municipal employee needs to become a human rights lawyer. It means building the knowledge and working methods needed to find the relevant human rights standards, understanding what they require and translating them into local action.

Legality also means more than complying with national legislation or technical standards. These are essential parts of municipal work, but the State's international human rights obligations may require more. Human rights law can therefore help municipalities ask not only whether their work complies with existing national rules, but also whether laws, policies and practices themselves are sufficient to realise the rights that the State has undertaken to respect, protect and fulfil.

² General comments Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Available at OHCHR at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd/general-comments>.

To do this, it is useful to look for three things in the relevant human rights convention: **the right**, such as education, health or political participation; the obligations attached to it, such as removing barriers, providing reasonable accommodation or ensuring participation; **and the principles that guide how the right should be understood and implemented**, such as autonomy, inclusion, equality, respect for difference and accessibility.

Legality is closely connected to localisation. Human rights law provides the rights, obligations and principles that set the direction and the standard. Local knowledge and evidence show what the barriers look like in a particular neighbourhood, service or project and help identify what will work there. There may therefore be different local ways of realising a right, but the human rights standard helps the municipality assess whether the chosen solution actually contributes to the realisation of human rights for residents.

A simple legality check can be done by answering the following questions:

- What human right is at stake?
- What does the relevant human rights convention say that right requires?
- Which human rights principles should guide our response?
- What does the local situation tell us about the barriers?
- What can the municipality do to make the right effective in practice?

Applying the principle of legality: example of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

As discussed previously, the EU accession process requires reforms to be grounded in human rights standards. The previously introduced HRBA, and in particular its principle of legality, helps municipalities put these standards into practice. In this booklet, we focus on addressing key issues facing Ukraine, including the rights of persons with disabilities and the inclusion of veterans. The CRPD³ serves as an important example of how the principle of legality can be applied in practice, translating international human rights standards into concrete guidance for accessibility, participation, equality and inclusion in local governance.

3 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, spells out what human rights mean in the lives of persons with disabilities. It does not give persons with disabilities a separate set of rights. Persons with disabilities have human rights like everyone else. What the CRPD does is make explicit what national, regional and local governments need to do so that those rights can actually be exercised and enjoyed on an equal basis with others. Before the CRPD, persons with disabilities were already covered by general human rights law, but disability was often missing from the way those rights were understood and put into practice. The CRPD changes this by connecting human rights directly to the barriers and conditions that affect whether these rights can be enjoyed in practice. It covers virtually every area of life, including accessibility, access to justice, living independently and being included in the community, education, health, work, political participation, and cultural life, recreation and sport. This breadth matters. Persons with disabilities are not only patients, recipients of care or users of social services. They are students, workers, family members, voters and participants in community and cultural life, entitled to the full range of relationships, opportunities and choices that human rights protect.

Instead of asking only what a person cannot do, the CRPD asks what prevents the person from doing it and what needs to change. The barrier may be physical, such as steps at the entrance to a building. It may concern information or communication, such as information that cannot be read or understood by everyone. It may be built into a procedure or service. Or it may come from attitudes and assumptions about what persons with disabilities can or should do.

Article 9 of the CRPD⁴ provides a concrete example. It is not enough for a project on a barrier-free route or an accessible bus stop to simply identify Article 9 as applicable and relevant. Applying legality means asking what Article 9 requires in that particular situation. Which barriers need to be identified and removed? Whose accessibility requirements have been considered? Were persons with disabilities involved in identifying barriers and testing the solution? Does the solution support autonomy and participation in ordinary community life? The CRPD reference becomes useful when it starts shaping the choices the municipality makes and the action that is taken.

Article 3 of the CRPD sets out general principles that guide how all the rights in the Convention should be understood and put into practice. These include inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence; non-discrimination; full and effective participation and inclusion; respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity; equality of opportunity; accessibility; equality between men and women; and respect for the evolving capacities and identities of children with disabilities.

These principles are not simply broad values. They help tell public authorities **how to apply the Convention in practice**.

Autonomy, for example, means recognising persons with disabilities as decision-makers in their own lives. Applying it means asking whether a policy or service increases people's possibilities to make choices and act on them, rather than making decisions for them, and whether support to make decisions according to one's own heart and mind is available.

Participation and inclusion mean that persons with disabilities belong in ordinary community life and should be able to influence decisions that affect them. Applying these principles means involving persons with disabilities in identifying problems, designing solutions and assessing whether those solutions work.

Respect for difference means recognising disability as part of human diversity rather than treating it as something that people must overcome before they can participate. Applying it means designing municipal environments, services and practices around human diversity rather than around an assumed "standard" resident. It also involves ensuring that prejudice and stereotypes do not influence work with disability and persons with disabilities, and in particular, avoiding making assumptions about how a person experiences and feels about their impairment.

⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Available at OHCHR at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>.

Diversity within disability means recognising that persons with disabilities are not all the same. Their experiences can also be shaped by gender, age and other parts of their identity and situation. The CRPD gives particular attention to women and children with disabilities and also recognises that some people may face discrimination on more than one ground. Applying this principle means asking whose experiences are being considered, who may be missing, and whether a policy or service works for different persons with disabilities rather than assuming that one solution will work for everyone.

Accessibility makes clear that recognising a right on paper is not enough if people cannot exercise it in practice. Applying it means identifying and removing barriers in the physical environment, transport, information, communication, services and procedures.

The other Article 3 principles work in the same way: they guide how the rights and obligations in the Convention are understood and what implementation requires in a particular situation.

What does the CRPD mean for local government?

The CRPD is binding on the State as a whole. Its obligations therefore apply not only to national ministries but also to regional and local authorities when they exercise public functions.

This is especially important because many of the things that determine whether persons with disabilities can exercise their rights are decided locally. Streets, public spaces, transport, schools, healthcare and social services, municipal information, cultural activities, employment practices and many other parts of everyday life are shaped by municipal decisions.

The CRPD therefore requires more than avoiding discrimination. Public authorities must take active steps to make rights effective. Depending on the issue, this may require changing a policy or procedure, removing accessibility barriers, using universal design, training staff, raising awareness, collecting relevant data, allocating resources or including human rights and accessibility requirements in procurement and planning.

A particularly important obligation is to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, when legislation and policies are developed and implemented and in other decision-making processes concerning issues that affect them. Participation is therefore not simply a useful way of improving a municipal project - it is part of what implementing the CRPD requires.

For a municipal employee, a useful CRPD check is therefore:

- Which CRPD rights and principles are relevant to what we are doing?
- What barriers currently prevent persons with disabilities from exercising those rights?
- What can and must the municipality change?
- How do we make sure that the solutions are in line with the rights and principles in the CRPD?
- Have persons with disabilities been actively involved in identifying the problem, developing the solution and assessing whether it works?

The CRPD provides an important legal framework for many of the initiatives presented in this booklet. The principle of legality within HRBA explains how the Convention and other international human rights standards should be brought into everyday municipal work.⁵

⁵ This account of the CRPD builds on Anna Bruce, 'The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' in Laura Carlson, Panos Kapotas (eds), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Equality and Discrimination Law* (Edward Elgar forthcoming 2027)

Relevance to Ukraine's EU Accession Path

Municipalities play a crucial role in Ukraine's EU accession process, as many of the reforms required under the EU acquis, including those related to accessibility, non-discrimination and the protection of fundamental rights, are implemented and experienced at the local level.

Initiatives featured in this booklet respond directly to the EU recommendations on the rights of persons with disabilities by improving the accessibility of public infrastructure and applying HRBA to service delivery. Through barrier-free design and the active participation of children, parents, experts on accessibility and disability human rights, NGOs and local authorities, the initiatives advance inclusion, equal access to public spaces, and community-based participation. These are key areas where the European Commission expects continued progress from Ukraine under Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) as seen in the Ukraine Reports, assessing Ukraine's progress in reforms across all 31 negotiations chapters.

The 2025 Ukraine Report⁶, published by the European Commission on November 4, 2025, highlights the challenge faced by Ukrainian authorities in implementing accessibility policies and upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. Thus, the Report suggests the need to not only increase efforts to ensure the accessibility of buildings and other infrastructure but also highlights the accessibility of products and services which needs to be further enhanced in line with the European Accessibility Act.

Within the EU, a comprehensive set of equality strategies have been adopted by the European Commission. The strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030⁷ is one of such five strategies laying an important foundation for building the union of equality. This strategy has been guided by the CRPD, to which the EU has been a party since 2010 and to which its Member States are also parties. It is also closely linked to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights⁸, particularly Article 21, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability, and Article 26, which recognises the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in community life.

⁶ Ukraine 2025 Report, European Commission, November 4, 2025. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/ukraine-report-2025_en

⁷ Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030, European Commission, 2021. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3e1e2228-7c97-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁸ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>.

The strategy together with the Communication “Enhancing the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030”⁹ provide a framework for i) implementing EU rights and action; ii) removing barriers to empower persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in society and the economy on an equal basis with others; and iii) engaging with stakeholders and delivering results. These are relevant for EU accession countries, as they provide important benchmarks for aligning national legislation, policies and institutional practices with EU standards on equality, non-discrimination and the rights of persons with disabilities as part of the accession process.

⁹ *Enhancing the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030*, European Commission, May 6, 2026.
https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ab0bcea9-6b3a-48c1-875c-1cc687fba6d0_en?filename=EC%20Enhancing%20the%20disability%20strategy%20up%20to%202030.pdf



Practical examples of project cases

The next chapter of the booklet features a collection of ten practical examples of project cases that EUcation participants further strengthened through closer consideration of the principles of HRBA. Each project is presented by first introducing the challenge it sought to address and the main aspects of the project/initiative, including: 1) what it is about, 2) how it is to be implemented, 3) who the target audience is, and 4) with whom it is to be carried out.

This is followed by the participants' perspectives on applying HRBA to their initiatives/projects, highlighting which HRBA principles were already reflected in the project/initiative prior to learning about HRBA, which principles were strengthened through its application, which principles were introduced following the participants' learning about HRBA, and the overall added value of applying HRBA to the projects/initiatives.

Finally, each case outlines the progress the project has made and its future direction.





Legend

Nº exact location (specific address) **Nº** approximate location (within the district)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND “FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT BARRIERS”
Shevchenkivskyi District Administration</p> <p>2 A TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR BUILDING PEOPLE-CENTERED MINDSET IN EVERYDAY WORK: SHIFTING FROM TECHNICAL TASKS TO RESIDENT-FOCUSED APPROACH
Halytskyi District Administration</p> <p>3 ACCESSIBLE STOP: SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT
Chernihivska Street, Lychakivskyi District Administration</p> <p>4 ENSURING BARRIER-FREE AND SAFE ACCESS TO THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY IN LVIV
Shevchenkivskyi District Administration</p> <p>5 BARRIER-FREE RIASHIVSKA STREET: TRANSFORMING RIASHIVSKA STREET INTO A SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE URBAN SPACE FOR ALL
Riashivska Street, Zaliznychnyi District Administration</p> | <p>6 FAINE MISTO WITHOUT BARRIERS – CULTURE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE
Faine Misto Festival, Lviv</p> <p>7 MUNICIPAL PLATFORM FOR YOUTH CAREER DEVELOPMENT: “FIRST CAREER STEPS”
Lviv City Council</p> <p>8 STEPLESS: INCREASING SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH LIMITED MOBILITY BY CREATING BARRIER-FREE ENTRANCES TO PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS
Frankivskyi District Administration</p> <p>9 BARRIER-FREE ROUTE TO SERVICES: DEVELOPMENT OF A BARRIER-FREE ROUTE CONNECTING KEY SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES
Sykhivskyi District Administration</p> <p>10 TRAINING PROGRAM ON ETHICAL AND BARRIER-FREE COMMUNICATION: DIGNIFIED COMMUNICATION AS THE BASIS OF TRUST AND EQUALITY
Dzherelo Centre, 86A Chervonoï Kalyny Avenue, Sykhivskyi District Administration</p> |
|---|---|

1. Inclusive Playground “Friendship Without Barriers”

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Shevchenkivskyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: All children, including children with disabilities and children with diverse special needs, parents and accompanying persons

Partners: Lviv City Council Department for Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Department of Design and Architecture Fundamentals, representatives of the local community and business partners

Status: Planned

Key results: It is envisioned that this inclusive children’s playground will become part of a city-wide network of accessible public spaces in the city of Lviv, where every child can play, develop, and be part of the community.

Challenge

Many public playgrounds remain inaccessible to children and parents with disabilities, limiting children’s opportunities to play, develop, interact with others and participate equally in community life.

In the Shevchenkivskyi District of Lviv, this challenge highlights a broader need to ensure that all children can use public spaces and exercise their rights on an equal basis.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

The “Friendship Without Barriers” project was initiated as an initiative to create an inclusive playground accessible to all children, including children with disabilities and children with different special needs.

The planned playground is located near an avenue that is planned to be developed according to accessibility principles, the “Lake on Pancha” project and a public park frequently visited by families with children. Therefore, the future playground is intended to become part of a broader barrier-free environment in the district and complement existing and planned public spaces.

The project envisions inclusive play equipment, accessible entrances and paths, lowered access elements, safe soft surfacing suitable for wheelchair users, tactile and sensory elements, additional landscaping and lighting.

An important part of the initiative is the creation of an inclusive and educational environment. Informational signs and interactive boards at the playground will help children and parents better understand inclusion, respect, personal boundaries and different needs. The playground will also create opportunities for communication between parents, including parents of children with disabilities, so that they can share experiences, support one another and build a stronger local community.

The playground is intended not only as a place for play, but also as a space for social integration, where children with different abilities can play together and families can learn more about inclusive practices.

At present, the project is at the stage of developing the concept and design of the playground. Through Lviv City Council Department for Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility, cooperation with Lviv Polytechnic National University's Department of Design and Architecture Fundamentals is currently being planned. Students will be involved in developing a conceptual sketch and design for the inclusive playground, helping to explore creative and practical solutions for the future space.

The initiative also envisions involving local children and parents in identifying needs and providing feedback during the development of the project.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

Even before the EUcation training, the project already incorporated the principles of participation, non-discrimination and equality. The idea for the "Friendship Without Barriers" project in Shevchenkivskyi District emerged from the desire to create an inclusive children's playground accessible to all children, including children with disabilities and children with different special needs. From the very beginning, it was important that the playground would/should be accessible and comfortable for all children, regardless of their abilities and needs.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes. The EUcation training helped look at the project more broadly – not only as an initiative to create accessible infrastructure, but as a space based on human rights, participation, equality and respect for the dignity of every child.

The principle of participation became more important during the further development of the project. The project envisages involving children and parents, including children with disabilities and their parents, through surveys, consultations and the collection of feedback during the development of the playground concept. It is also important that the playground creates opportunities for parents to communicate, share experiences, and support one another. Students and experts are also planned to be involved in discussing and developing specific elements of the project, in order to incorporate different perspectives and professional expertise.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

After the EUcation training, more attention was given to the principles of accountability, empowerment, and transparency, adding them to the principles of participation, non-discrimination and equality that were already incorporated into the project.

More attention has been given to clearly defining responsibility for the development, implementation, and further monitoring of the project, as well as ensuring that residents have opportunities to provide suggestions and feedback. In addition, the project envisages information boards and interactive panels that will help children and parents better understand issues related to inclusion, respect, personal boundaries and different needs.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes, definitely. Applying the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) made the project more meaningful and helped broaden the understanding of its potential. It also helped to better understand how human rights principles can be translated into practical solutions at the local level.

HRBA helped broaden the vision of the project – from simply creating an accessible children’s playground to creating a space based on equal participation, dignity and inclusion. Particular importance was given to involving the people who will directly use the playground from the early stages of its development, as well as creating opportunities for communication, sharing experiences and mutual support among families.

Results

The project aims to create an accessible and inclusive playground for children and families in the Shevchenkivskyi District and to contribute to a stronger culture of inclusion in the community.

The playground is planned as part of a wider development of an accessible and family-friendly public environment in the area. Its location near the planned accessible avenue, the “Lake on Pancha” project and the existing park creates an opportunity to connect several public spaces into a more coherent barrier-free environment.

At this stage, the project has not yet become part of a completed city-wide barrier-free network. However, its future integration into a wider network of accessible public spaces is one of the intended directions of development.

2. A Training Programme for Building People-centered Mindset in Everyday Work: Shifting from Technical Tasks to Resident-focused Approach

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Halytskyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Employees of municipal enterprises and structural units

Partners: Human Resources Management Office

Status: Implemented

Key results: The long-term goal of the project is to contribute to better cooperation within the municipality, while improving experience of interaction between the city and its residents.

Challenge

Local governments are essential for providing public services that residents of cities and municipalities rely on daily. Inaccessibility of services compromises their delivery. Whether or not residents receive information about services contributes to whether services are accessible or not. Furthermore, inaccessibility of services is also partly attributable to unclear and inconsistent information. Ensuring that communication channels exist, remain open and responsive to all residents, and that these provide clear information, have an impact on accessibility of services. If this challenge is not addressed, it is likely that access to services is limited and unequal, which jeopardizes the overall trust in municipal institutions.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

To address the challenge, Halytskyi District Administration had an idea to create a training programme aiming to enhance communication skills of municipal enterprises' and structural units' employees and embed a people-centred mindset across the city administration. In the context of local governance, a people-centred mindset means changing the perception among municipal staff regarding their role as merely contributing to "task execution" to providing "service for people". With improved communication skills and widely shared people-centred mindset, municipal staff would improve communication with residents by being responsive to the needs of each resident as well as ensuring that information about services reaches everyone. Ultimately, this would contribute to a more inclusive and accessible service delivery.

To realise the initiative, colleagues from the Human Resources Management Office were asked to cooperate as they are experienced in staff training with a focus on competency development. In addition, they are in position to embed the training at the core of municipality and ensure that the training is in line with city-wide HR policies and can be applied across municipal institutions.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

Our work was based on ensuring accessibility and inclusion, taking into account the needs and interests of different groups of residents, as well as cooperation with relevant stakeholders. We also focused on participation, transparency, accountability, and achieving concrete results that improve the quality of services and people's everyday lives. The training helped us recognize that many of these principles were already part of our approach and showed us how to apply them more systematically from a human rights perspective.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Training helped look at our project from a broader and deeper perspective. It encouraged us to think more carefully about the needs, rights, and interests of different groups of people and to explore these aspects in greater detail. We became more attentive to how our decisions and activities affect people and how we can make the project even more inclusive, participatory, and people-oriented. It also encouraged us to focus more consciously on achieving meaningful and sustainable results for the community.

The principle of participation is incorporated into the project by involving different stakeholders and taking their needs, opinions, and feedback into account. We aim to create opportunities for people to express their views and contribute to decision-making processes. Their feedback helps us better understand real needs, improve our activities, and ensure that the project responds to the needs of the community.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

After the training, we paid more attention to accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. We started to look more closely at how openly we communicate with residents and stakeholders, and how effectively we respond to their needs and feedback.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes, definitely. The HRBA approach added value by providing a more structured way of looking at our project from the perspective of people's rights, needs, and interests. It helped us identify aspects that might otherwise receive less attention and encouraged us to think more critically about the impact of our decisions.

The HRBA approach strengthened the project by helping us look beyond the planned activities and focus more deeply on the people who are affected by them. It encouraged us to better identify different needs, consider possible barriers, and ensure that the project is more responsive, transparent, and focused on meaningful results for the community.

Results

By engaging a centrally anchored Human Resources Management Office the initiative has a potential of being available to staff from across the municipality. In the short-term, the training seeks to shift perception among municipal staff from “task delivery” to “service for people”. In the long-term, the initiative aims to contribute to better cooperation within the municipality and higher efficiency, while improving experience of interaction between the city and residents as well as delivering services that are grounded in equality and accessibility.



3. Accessible Stop: Small Change, Big Impact

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Lychakivskyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Patients of medical facilities, older persons, parents with strollers, children and district residents

Partners: Nearby medical facilities and other institutions, NGOs, experts and residents; departments of the City Council

Status: Ongoing

Key results: Ensuring the accessibility of the bus stop and creating a barrier-free space to support patients' integration into the urban environment and enable district residents to use the space conveniently

Challenge

The daily lives of many residents of cities and municipalities depend on safe, reliable and accessible public transportation, as it helps to realise other rights such as the right to education, the right to health, and the right to work. Different nodes in the complex public transportation system need to meet certain accessibility standards. Public stops are an important node in such system, and without accessible and inclusive public transport stops, an accessible low-floor bus would not be able to be utilised by a person with limited mobility.

The public transport stop at Lychakivska Str. 26 in Lviv, located right next to the hospital, did not provide a sufficient level of passenger safety and lacked crucial accessible infrastructure such as lowered curbs, tactile paving, and ramps. If these were in place, more residents would be able to use a public transport stop without barriers. Furthermore, as the stop used to combine both bus and tram stops, it used to be highly congested. Together with the navigation, which was difficult to comprehend, and design, which did not meet modern urban standards, accessibility of one public stop had a direct impact on around 800 passengers daily on weekdays (and 500 on weekends), serving 240,000 users per year, including vulnerable groups, hospital staff, and patients.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

To make the stop accessible, safe and inclusive, the Lychakivskiy District Administration decided to develop a project to redesign the public transport hub. This comprehensive redesign included reorganisation of the stop into separate tram and bus stops, which would reduce congestion, and improve passenger safety and transfer convenience. Furthermore, to make navigation clear, stop shelters, timetable boards, directional signage, and tactile guidance would need to be installed.

To provide barrier-free boarding for older persons, parents with strollers, persons with reduced mobility and others, the boarding platforms would be elevated to match the floor height of the trams. These and other changes were based on universal design principles. These principles guide the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design¹⁰.

To make the stop inclusive, outdoor chairs, benches, waste bins, and plant containers would need to be installed, making the environment of the stop accessible and suitable for short-term rest and everyday use for everyone. Additional landscaping, with planted trees, shrubs, and lawns would improve the environmental quality, as well as make it more comfortable, for instance by providing shade during the days of scorching summer heat. With all the changes envisioned, the project was divided into several implementation stages over several years.

In order to implement this initiative, a wide range of partners have been involved, including different departments of the City Council and civil society organisations, public activists, and local residents. The Medical centre, whose many patients use the public transport due to its proximity, has also been involved in the project.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about the principles of HRBA and applied them to your project, which principle/s did you think already guided your project?

Even before we systematically learned about the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), our Medical and Educational Quarter (MEQ) project was already guided by the principles of participation, equality and non-discrimination. From the very beginning, our team placed equal access and comprehensive accessibility at the heart of the project, with particular attention to patients, veterans and people with reduced mobility.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes. After gaining a deeper understanding of HRBA, our team significantly reconsidered and strengthened the practical application of these principles within the Medical and Educational Quarter.

By involving accessibility experts and civil society organisations, our team made stakeholder engagement more systematic and expert-driven. This helped create a spillover effect: the development of a pilot eco-friendly public space on Chernihivska Street encouraged residents to co-finance improvements to utility infrastructure and the restoration of historic balconies.

¹⁰ The Principles of Universal Design, The Center for Universal Design. <https://design.ncsu.edu/research/center-for-universal-design/>

Local businesses also became active partners in the development of the Quarter. Small businesses co-financed improvements to pavements near their premises, while major developers fully funded the restoration of a structurally unsafe wall of the Military Hospital.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

After learning about HRBA, our team began to apply the principles of accountability and new forms of participation more systematically. We started to view accessibility not simply as a technical standard, but as a shared commitment and responsibility of the municipality, businesses and residents.

Our team strengthened the practice of open and transparent communication with the community throughout all stages of project implementation. This includes providing clear information about the mobilisation and use of funding from multiple sources, including grants, the municipal budget, business contributions and co-financing from residents. We also introduced public discussions and presentations of proposed public-space concepts before the start of renovation works. This allows planned changes to be discussed and aligned with the needs of residents and other users of the Quarter.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes. This approach has brought significant added value by helping to unite the community and different institutions around a shared, human-centred vision.

Applying HRBA helped us rethink accessibility in urban space not simply as a technical requirement, but as a matter of fundamental human rights, dignity and equality. This values-based approach strengthened trust within the community and enhanced our team's credibility among international partners, contributing to our ability to attract substantial grant funding.

Results

The public transport stop at the core of this project is the hub of nine urban bus routes, three tram routes, and six suburban bus routes, connecting central and residential districts of the city with communities around the city. By gradually ensuring that each stop together with its surrounding built-in environment is transformed, the city becomes more accessible for all. This stop also forms part of the larger flagship project aiming to create barrier-free routes in 15 cities in Ukraine in alignment with the national government program "Movement without Barriers"¹¹, by making different components of the built-in environment, such as sidewalks, barrier-free.

¹¹ Флагманський проект "Рух без бар'єрів", Available at Ministry for Recovery, Infrastructure and Transport of Ukraine: <https://mininfra.gov.ua/dialnist/bezbaryerni-marshruty>.

4. Ensuring Barrier-Free and Safe Access to the Healthcare Facility in Lviv

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Shevchenkovskyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Persons with reduced mobility, older persons, parents with strollers

Partners: Lviv Municipal Enterprise “Institute for Spatial Development”

Status: Planned

Key results: Upon receiving funding, the project will focus on improving the physical accessibility of sidewalks along the Zamarstynivska street leading to the hospital, which is visited by approximately 550 residents daily.

Challenge

Accessible pedestrian infrastructure is a precondition for accessing services and enjoying human rights. A critical component of pedestrian infrastructure is sidewalks which are conduits for getting to work, hospital, school and places where residents can participate in social, political, economic, and cultural community life. If sidewalks are lacking or not well maintained, multiple risks for residents’ safety will arise. It is also highly likely that many residents will be excluded from accessing a range of services.

In the Shevchenkovskyi District of Lviv, Zamarstynivska street is an important route connecting residents with various public and everyday services, including the healthcare facility located on the street. The healthcare facility is visited by residents from different parts of the city, including people with reduced mobility and other accessibility needs. In some parts of the street, the sidewalk’s concrete was damaged, while in other parts, there were no sidewalks at all. Although the accessibility of the healthcare facility was improved, less accessible route to the hospital created an accessibility problem for diverse groups of residents such as persons with reduced mobility, older persons, and parents with strollers among others. The safety issue also meant that people’s right to health was directly at risk.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

To address this challenge, Lviv Municipal Enterprise “Institute for Spatial Development” developed design and estimate documentation for the comprehensive reconstruction of the pedestrian route along Zamarstynivska Street leading to the healthcare facility.

The reconstruction would follow the principles of universal design and barrier-free access, including lowered curbs, tactile paving and accessible ramps, in accordance with applicable Ukrainian accessibility standards and building regulations¹². This would contribute to improved accessibility for diverse groups of residents such as persons with reduced mobility, older persons, and parents with strollers among others.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about the principles of HRBA and applied them to your project, which principle/s did you think already guided your project?

The principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion were already guiding our project. From the beginning, we aimed to ensure equal and safe access to the healthcare facility for all residents, particularly persons with reduced mobility, older people and parents with strollers

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes. HRBA helped us to look at the project more systematically and to understand accessibility not only as an infrastructure issue, but also as a matter of equality, participation and the right to access healthcare and public services. As the project is still under development, we see the application of these principles as an ongoing process that we will continue to strengthen as the project progresses.

We broadened our approach to participation by identifying additional stakeholders who could contribute to the project, particularly civil society organisations with expertise in accessibility and inclusion. This helped us to consider more systematically whose knowledge and experience could contribute to the further development of the project.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

We started paying greater attention to accountability, transparency and broader participation in the development of the project. We recognised the importance of involving not only institutional stakeholders, but also civil society organisations with relevant expertise in accessibility and inclusion.

During the training, we identified relevant civil society organisations and contacted them to seek their input and explore possible cooperation. Representatives of the healthcare facility and the City Council's Mobility Department had already been involved in discussions about the project at an earlier stage. We will continue to develop stakeholder engagement as the project progresses.

¹² Technical solutions are based primarily on the Ukrainian State Building Standards DBN V.2.3-5:2018 "Streets and Roads of Settlements". The project also contributes to the implementation of the "Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Environment in the Lviv Urban Territorial Community until 2030".

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes, definitely. HRBA helped us to see the project not simply as the reconstruction of a sidewalk, but as a contribution to people's rights, equality and access to healthcare. It also encouraged us to consider more carefully whose needs should be taken into account and who should have an opportunity to contribute. As the project develops, we will continue to apply these principles in its further planning and implementation.

Results

While the project is yet to be funded, partnerships have been explored with various internal and external stakeholders. City staff held meetings with the representatives of the healthcare facility, got in touch with several civil society actors, and developed design and estimates with the support of colleagues from other parts of the City Council. Initiating these partnerships is crucial as it will help to ensure that the project is carried out qualitatively and is grounded in real needs of residents.

Once the funding is secured, this project will create improved physical access to the healthcare facility which is visited by around 550 residents daily and 11 500 residents every month. The project will ensure safer movement for all residents using the street to go about their daily lives. The project can be a model for replication in other districts where similar accessibility problem exists.



5. Barrier-free Riashivska Street: Transforming Riashivska Street into a Safe, Inclusive and Accessible Urban Space for All

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Zaliznychnyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Persons with disabilities, veterans, older persons, parents with strollers, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport passengers

Status: Planned

Key results: Once funding is secured, the project aims to contribute to improved accessibility of the urban space in the Zaliznychnyi district, contributing to a higher quality of life among district's residents and its visitors.

Challenge

Urban spaces should be safe and accessible for everyone. In reality, numerous elements of urban environments lack adequate safety and accessibility, preventing residents from fully participating in city life and, consequently, from fully exercising their human rights. One element of urban spaces is streets, which serve as connections that enable people to reach workplaces, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, shops, and recreational spaces among others. When streets lack features such as safe sidewalks, protected cycling lanes, tactile paving, pedestrian crossings, adequate lighting, or step-free access, they create barriers for many residents. These shortcomings disproportionately affect persons with reduced mobility, older adults, parents with strollers, and other groups of residents, limiting their independence, mobility, and equal access to opportunities and services.

Having realised that a street in their district lacked adequate safety and accessibility, the staff of the Zaliznychnyi district administration decided to develop a project. The project sought to improve accessibility and safety of the street, while engaging the residents of the district in this project.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

The initiative aims to transform the street into a safe, inclusive, and barrier-free urban space for all residents, including persons with disabilities, veterans, older persons, parents with strollers, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport passengers. By bringing about improved accessibility and safety, the project will ensure equal access to vital urban space. This should also contribute to more social inclusion as all residents can use the urban space safely to reach workplaces, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, shops, recreational centres and other facilities.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

Even before the training, we tried to take into account the opinions of residents, their needs and real problems. We also tried to ensure the accessibility of solutions and explain to people why a particular change is necessary.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

After the training, we began to pay more attention to ensuring that residents did not just receive ready-made solutions but had the opportunity to participate in their formation. We also strengthened information and communication with stakeholders to better understand the needs of different groups of people.

3. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

It helped to better see the problem through the eyes of the people for whom we implement projects. Thanks to this, decisions become more understandable, practical and focused on the real needs of residents.

Results

With the need to secure funding from diverse sources, the project is envisioned to be implemented gradually. Furthermore, to realise the project, partnerships will need to be established with diverse stakeholders within the City Council and beyond, such as NGOs and non-organised residents.

Once the funding is secured, this project will contribute to improved accessibility of the urban space in the Zaliznychnyi district. Together with enhanced safety, this will contribute to higher quality of life among district's residents and its visitors. The project also has potential for being replicated in other districts of the city, as well as contributing to broader city and national efforts of creating barrier-free public transport and infrastructure.

6. Faine Misto without Barriers – Culture Accessible to Everyone

The Project at Glance

Implementer: The UNBROKEN Charitable Foundation

Target groups: Persons with disabilities; particularly persons with reduced mobility

Partners: ““Faine Misto” Festival” NGO and Icelandic initiative “Ramp Up”

Status: Implemented

Key results: The project makes the Faine Misto festival a fully accessible space for persons with disabilities and creates a replicable model of accessible festival infrastructure to be used in other areas of the cultural sector.

Challenge

Accessible spaces are a precondition for people’s participation in economic, social, political and cultural life. Hindered participation due to lacking access to employment, housing, and cultural events among others contributes to social exclusion. To address this, efforts to boost social inclusion by improving accessibility across a wide range of areas of life, including social and cultural life, need to be made.

While some efforts have already been put into making public spaces and events more accessible in Ukraine, large cultural events, such as festivals, often lack comprehensive and systemic accessibility solutions. Limited accessibility of such events excludes diverse groups of residents from full participation in the social and cultural life of the community, thereby undermining the enjoyment of their human rights. Physical and structural barriers, due to missing integrated barrier-free infrastructure and a lack of adapted viewing areas, limit or completely hinder access for persons with disabilities, particularly people with reduced mobility, to viewing areas, infrastructure and essential services at large festivals.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

Having realised this challenge, the staff at the UNBROKEN Foundation decided to develop a project which increases social inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with reduced mobility. The initiative developed aims to create a fully accessible and inclusive environment at the Faine Misto festival.

Creating barrier-free infrastructure and applying accessibility solutions at the Faine Misto festival would help to ensure equal access, dignity, and full participation of persons with disabilities (including rightsholders that use the services provided by the UNBROKEN) and other groups with reduced mobility in this large public event. This would also contribute to larger efforts to improve social inclusion, create more barrier-free community spaces, and raise awareness about inclusiveness and accessibility in Lviv.

To implement the project, the team at Unbroken Foundation partnered with the “Faine Misto” Festival” NGO, and an Icelandic initiative “Ramp Up”. Combined the partners had sufficient coordination capacity, extensive festival management expertise, and knowledge of international know-how in barrier-free environment design. Persons with disabilities and rehabilitation community representatives have also been engaged in the project to ensure user-centred design and testing.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants’ perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

Before explicitly applying the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) framework, our project was already fundamentally guided by the principles of Equality and Non-discrimination, Participation and Inclusion, and Human Dignity.

Because our core objective was to create a barrier-free environment at the Faine Misto festival for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, ensuring equal access and safeguarding dignity were inherently built into our mission. Furthermore, our approach was user-centred from the outset, as we directly involved persons with disabilities and rehabilitation community representatives in testing and design.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes, learning about HRBA allowed us to deepen and institutionalize these principles rather than treating them merely as best practices. We expanded participation beyond basic user-testing. We engaged rightsholders (persons with disabilities, including service users from the UNBROKEN Centre) as active co-designers throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of the festival infrastructure.

We moved from basic physical accessibility measures to a comprehensive inclusion model. This meant ensuring that all aspects of the festival - from sanitary zones and viewing platforms to information channels and stage access - offered equal quality of experience and autonomy for people with reduced mobility.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

After learning about HRBA, we explicitly integrated the principles of Accountability and Rule of Law and Empowerment.

We established clear feedback mechanisms during the festival, allowing rightsholders to report accessibility issues in real time. We also held project partners - such as the “Faine Misto” Festival” NGO and technical teams - accountable to international accessibility standards (leveraging the expertise of our Icelandic partner, "Ramp Up").

Instead of treating persons with disabilities as passive beneficiaries of accessible infrastructure, we empowered them as key decision-makers and advocates. By raising public awareness about inclusiveness at a major festival, we empowered rightsholders to claim their rights to cultural life and public space participation across Lviv.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes, applying HRBA added immense value to the project in several ways:

- *Involving rightsholders directly ensured that technical accessibility solutions (such as ramps and pathways) were practical, effective, and truly met user needs.*
- *HRBA shifted the narrative from "charity" to "human rights." It transformed a festival infrastructure initiative into a powerful public advocacy platform for barrier-free community spaces in Lviv.*
- *Framing accessibility through a rights-based lens strengthened cross-sector collaboration between the UNBROKEN Foundation, the "Faine Misto" NGO, international experts ("Ramp Up"), and local government stakeholders.*

Results

To achieve this, the project has been divided into five implementation stages over the period from January to August 2026, including the stage of fundraising and resource mobilisation and the follow-up stage to analyse the feedback from the festival participants.

The project makes the Faine Misto festival a fully accessible space for persons with disabilities, including persons with reduced mobility to participate equally in a large public event. Improved inclusion and visibility of persons with disabilities in public life also fosters stronger community integration and reduces social exclusion. This project creates a replicable model of accessible festival infrastructure, encouraging other events in Lviv, Ukraine, and beyond to adopt barrier-free standards and strengthen inclusive practices in the cultural sector.

7. Municipal Platform for Youth Career Development: “First Career Steps”

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Lviv City Council

Target groups: Young people with diverse lived experiences such as internal displacement

Partners: Universities, NGOs, executive bodies of the City Council Status: Ongoing

Key results: From 2010 to 2026, more than 15,000 young people completed internships and practical training through the “First career steps” programme. In 2025, 146 young people completed internships at Lviv City Council, 26 of whom subsequently joined the City Council team as employees.

Challenge

Local governments have a multifaceted role as employers, service providers and duty bearers. As some of the largest employers in their communities, they have an important role to play in exemplifying inclusive and accessible employment practices. They are also responsible for ensuring that residents can enjoy their human rights and can contribute to creating a wider normative shift around standards such as accessibility, equality and inclusion.

However, translating these responsibilities into practice can be challenging, not least when it comes to creating meaningful employment opportunities for young people, and for youth from underrepresented groups. Barriers in recruitment, accessibility, workplace environments and access to opportunities can prevent young people from gaining valuable work experience. Developing internship and training programmes grounded in inclusion and accessibility can therefore have a direct positive impact on participants, while also strengthening local governments' role as model employers and influencing how employment standards are understood by other employers and residents in communities.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

To create meaningful employment opportunities, the City Council launched the “First career steps” programme 16 years ago. The programme opens for participants three times a year and offers internship with a specific department under the supervision of a mentor who is either the head of a department or a specialist. The programme targets young people with diverse lived experiences such as internal displacement. It is implemented in cooperation with universities and youth organisations which help in disseminating information about the opportunity among their students and members.

Having run the “First career steps” programme for 16 years, the City Council has gained a lot of valuable experience in helping young people gain their first work experience. Based on the experience, it has also been realized that the programme needs to develop further, including through digitization, expansion of the educational component through teaching management approaches such as a Human Rights-Based Approach, and establishment of an alumni community. The purpose of this is to make the experiences gained through the programme more enriching for diverse groups of participants and improve their capacity to contribute to the realization of human rights.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants’ perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

The principles of openness and equality have always been a natural foundation for us. Even before we were introduced to the HRBA, we had structured “First Career Step” as a single competitive platform where every student, regardless of their university or major, had an equal chance to secure an internship with the City Council.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes, we have moved from intuitively ensuring equal opportunities to consciously creating an inclusive and barrier-free environment at every stage of the internship.

A striking example was the adaptation of the program for a blind student: we created conditions under which she not only completed her internship but also became a full-fledged colleague who, together with her colleagues from the Lviv City Council’s Department for Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility, assessed city facilities for accessibility for people with limited mobility.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

We have systematically integrated the principles of accountability, empowerment, and transparency through digitalization and educational initiatives.

We are implementing the principle of empowerment through our “Ambassadors” and by building a community of alumni, giving young people the role of project co-creators—now they themselves recruit students from higher education institutions and among their own circle of acquaintances and friends. We’ve strengthened accountability through an open feedback system and transparent selection criteria, which makes the path from application to employment at City Hall clear to everyone.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Yes, this has radically changed the quality of interaction within the internship program. The program has become an effective bridge between students and the city. It helps young people overcome the barriers to their first job while also meeting the city council's need for qualified personnel. Proof of this value: in the past year alone, 146 young people completed internships, and 26 of them have already become our colleagues and are working within the Lviv City Council.

Results

Only in 2025, 146 young people completed the “First career steps” programme. 26 of them have been employed by the City Council following the completion of the programme. The programme proved to be effective in terms of outreach and bridging such existing gaps as local government's need in skilled staff members and employment gaps which young people face when trying to secure their first employment. Efforts are also being made to further develop the programme, not least in terms of how accessible and inclusive it is. The inclusion of HRBA is part of this effort. This programme presents a replicable model that other local governments can implement. Furthermore, programmes like this can help to make youth voices heard when city policies are developed and decisions are made.



8. StepLess: Increasing Social Inclusion of People with Limited Mobility by Creating Barrier-free Entrances to Private Establishments

The Project at Glance

Location: Frankivskyi District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Parents with strollers, persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair and/or are veterans, older persons; local business owners, the general public (local residents)

Partners: Lviv City Council Department for Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility, Department of Architecture and Urban Development, Communication Department, UNBROKEN Foundation, local businesses and an Icelandic initiative “Ramp Up”.

Status: Ongoing

Key results: In 2025, barrier-free entrances were installed at eight private establishments, and a sidewalk was renovated in accordance with accessibility requirements. This contributed to increased social inclusion and raised awareness among residents about universal design.

Challenge

Most cities were developed at a time when accessibility was not sufficiently considered in urban planning and design. As a result, many urban environments today continue to present significant barriers to various groups of residents. Narrow building entrances and pavements, uneven surfaces, cobblestones, steps, and other features of the built environment can make it difficult or impossible for residents to move around independently and participate fully in everyday life. Improving the accessibility of these spaces is therefore not only a matter of physical access, but also of social inclusion and equal participation. Addressing these barriers can help to reduce social isolation and enable more residents to access public spaces, services, workplaces, cultural venues, and other parts of the community life.

Making cities more accessible can also contribute to local economic and social development. When more residents can move freely around their communities and access businesses, services, employment, and cultural activities, they are better able to participate in and contribute to the life of the city. While these challenges have existed for many years, they have become particularly urgent in the context of the war, which has contributed to a growing number of persons with disabilities and increased the need for cities to adapt their built environments to the needs of all residents.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

The team at the Frankivskyi District Administration decided to act on the challenge by developing a project to create barrier-free entrances to such private entities as a barbershop, a pharmacy, a bank, shops, a medical centre and an optician among others. The project also seeks to reconfigure other elements of the urban environment. The initiative thus targets parents with strollers; persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair and/or are veterans; older persons; and other residents and visitors whose access to these entities is hindered by inaccessible entrances. Furthermore, as the project concerned private entities, local business owners were also targeted by the project, as well as a wider community of residents.

The initiative built on a partnership among several city departments, including the Lviv City Council Department for Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility, Department of Architecture and Urban Development, and Communication Department among others. External partners included UNBROKEN Foundation, local businesses, and an [Icelandic initiative “Ramp Up”](#).

Applying HRBA to the project: participants’ perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

When we learnt about the principles of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and applied them to our project, the principle of legality and the rule of law had already been at the heart of our project. The project was based on the principles of the national legislation of Ukraine in the fields of accessibility, inclusion and non-discrimination.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes, we have developed these principles. When we learnt about the HRBA during our studies, we applied the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Convention on Human Rights to our project.

We took the initiative to ensure that the issue of “Providing accessible entrances to businesses, institutions and organisations, regardless of their form of ownership” was included in the 2026 Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the creation of a barrier-free environment in the Lviv City Territorial Community for the period up to 2030 (document approved by Resolution No. 7862 of the Lviv City Council session of 30 April 2026).

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

Once we had learnt about the HRBA, we began to apply the principles of empowerment and transparency to the project.

By applying the principle of ‘empowerment’, we have moved from a model of ‘helping people with disabilities’ to a model of ‘creating the conditions for people to fully exercise their rights’. The project raised awareness of accessibility standards by providing a clear example of change. In line with the principle of ‘transparency’, information about the project was presented in clear, simple and accessible language, using visual materials, via the Lviv City Council’s official communication channels and social media.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

Taking part in the training exercises with our Swedish partners has undoubtedly added value to our project. We have come to realise that accessibility is not just about technical solutions and infrastructure, but first and foremost about people, their rights and opportunities.

Results

The project was divided into six implementation stages, including selection of locations, technical design development, negotiations with local business owners, making funding agreements, conducting a tender process and construction, and a public launch. The funding to a large degree came from the city budget, but also the Icelandic partner initiative “Ramp Up”, and local businesses.

In 2025, barrier-free entrances were installed at eight private establishments, and a sidewalk was renovated in accordance with accessibility requirements. For 2026, the aim is to scale up by creating 56 more barrier-free entrances. With these, the project contributed to increased social inclusion of residents who otherwise might have been excluded from accessing different spaces where social, economic, cultural and other activities take place. Moreover, the project raised awareness among residents and local business owners about universal design, which, among its seven principles, includes the principles of “equitable use”, “flexibility in use”, and “simple and intuitive use”¹³. The project also proved to be a scalable replicable model of stepless solutions to be used in other parts of Lviv, Ukraine, and beyond.

¹³ The Principles of Universal Design, The Center for Universal Design. <https://design.ncsu.edu/research/center-for-universal-design/>

9. Barrier-free Route to Services: Development of a Barrier-free Route Connecting Key Social Infrastructure Facilities

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Sykhivsky District Administration, Lviv City Council

Target groups: Persons with disabilities, including persons with reduced mobility and/or who are war veterans, older persons, families with children

Partners: Lviv City Council Department of Architecture and Urban Development, NGOs, UNICEF

Status: Ongoing

Key results: 60% of the work to create an accessible, barrier-free route has been completed, providing 6,800 square meters of accessible space. Safe and independent access to essential social and healthcare services for local residents has been improved, particularly for persons with disabilities, veterans, older persons, and parents with strollers.

Challenge

In urban environments, interconnectivity between facilities and services is essential, as residents navigate their daily lives by accessing multiple services and participating in diverse community activities. When these connections are non-existent or inaccessible, it directly affects residents' opportunities to independently plan and carry out their everyday activities.

The initiative Barrier-free route offers a way to address this challenge by taking a comprehensive approach to urban accessibility. Rather than focusing on each obstacle in isolation, Barrier-free route considers how the wider urban environment, including paths, facilities, and potential barriers, affects people's ability to move between and access essential destinations.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

In the Sykhivsky district, interconnectivity between key social infrastructure facilities was hindered due to unsafe pedestrian crossing that had potholes, damaged surface and sidewalks, and lacked curb ramps among others. To address this, the team at the Sykhivsky District Administration decided to develop a project which would ensure accessibility between six key facilities such as a clinic, a district administration office, administrative service centre (ASC), a sports complex, a church, and a cinema. As part of the project to develop a barrier-free route in the district, pedestrian pavements have been upgraded with smooth and safe surface, eliminating barriers that existed previously due to level differences and damaged areas.

The decision was also grounded in the understanding that approximately 15 000 residents use the route between these facilities on a daily basis. Among residents who use the route, a significant number is persons with disabilities, including persons with reduced mobility and/or who are war veterans; older persons; and families with children.

The project has been implemented in partnership with the key facilities between which the route operates, but also UNICEF.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants' perspectives

1. When you learned about HRBA and applied it to your project, which principles do you think were already present in the project?

Even before the training, our project focused on creating a barrier-free pedestrian route and ensuring equal access to key social services for persons with disabilities, veterans, older people, and parents with children.

The project already incorporated the principles of non-discrimination and equality, participation, accessibility, and accountability. We understood that creating a barrier-free environment must respond to the real needs of people with reduced mobility.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this? Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA? How did you start applying this/these principles?

The training helped us move from viewing accessibility primarily as an infrastructure issue to understanding it as a human rights issue.

We strengthened the “Nothing About Us Without Us” principle and recognised the importance of directly involving persons with disabilities, veterans, and other target groups in auditing the route, identifying barriers, and discussing possible solutions.

We also strengthened our focus on transparency, accountability, and communication with residents. We now place greater emphasis on collecting feedback and using it to adjust the next stages of the project according to users' actual needs.

3. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

HRBA helped us realise that a good barrier-free route is not simply about a new sidewalk or a lowered kerb. It is about enabling people to independently and safely exercise their right to access healthcare, administrative, social, and other essential services.

The approach shifted our focus from simply asking “What needs to be built?” to also asking “Who are we building it for, and does this solution really meet their needs?”

As a result, the project has become more people-centred, inclusive, and practical.

Results

The work is done in phases, as the funding for the entire scope of work is yet to be secured. With more work ahead, 60 % of the barrier-free route has been completed, providing 6,800 square meters of accessible space. The project creates a replicable model for how a barrier-free route solution creates comprehensive interconnectivity of various services and activities and thus contributes to the enjoyment of residents’ various rights.



10. Training Program on Ethical and Barrier-Free Communication: Dignified Communication as the Basis of Trust and Equalit

The Project at Glance

Implementer: Resilience centre of the Dzherelo Centre for Social Services and Rehabilitation

Target groups: local authorities; ASCs staff; social and healthcare workers; educators

Partners: local government and NGOs working with persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups

Status: Ongoing

Key results: With the ambition of offering the course to all residents in Lviv, the project's ultimate aim is to tackle disability stigma and invisible barriers that persons with disabilities encounter.

Challenge

Challenges faced by persons with disabilities extend beyond material and physical barriers to include deeply rooted attitudes and stigma. Disability stigma is often overlooked in projects and other interventions because, unlike barriers in the built environment, attitudinal barriers are less visible and more difficult to identify and address.

Yet, these barriers have profound consequences for persons with disabilities, affecting their ability to seek and access essential services and to participate fully and equally in different areas of life. Addressing accessibility therefore requires not only changes to built environments, but also efforts to challenge attitudes, perceptions, and practices that can exclude or marginalise persons with disabilities.

Initiative: what, how, for/with whom

The team at the Dzherelo's Resilience centre in Lviv provides support to residents in their recovery, including through psychological counselling, peer support groups, family counselling, and support for PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) recovery among other. Having a clear understanding of the challenge related to disability stigma, the team has come up with an initiative to develop and implement a training course for local authorities, ASCs staff, social and healthcare workers, and educators to build their practical skills for interaction with persons with disabilities. The key modules of the course would cover direct communication with persons with disabilities based on dignity, equality, respect, and appropriate language; ethical representation in social and traditional media; and ethical interaction with users of assistive technologies. The ambition is to offer the course to all residents in Lviv.

By realising this initiative, a culture of dignity and inclusion would be further embedded in the city. This would also reduce stigma towards persons with disabilities, while improving quality of interaction between frontline professionals, i.e. duty bearers, and residents, i.e. rights-holders.

The initiative is to be implemented in partnership between the Dzherelo Centre for Social Services and Rehabilitation, local government a disabilities and vulnerable groups. Such partnership brings together practice, expertise and decision-making capacity, builds on consideration of the real needs of rights-holders and use of the “Nothing about us without us”¹⁴ principle.

Applying HRBA to the project: participants’ perspectives

1. When you learned about the principles of HRBA and applied them to your project, which principle/s did you think already guided your project?

From the start, our project was based on non-discrimination, equality, and respect for human dignity. Our main goal was to break old stereotypes and build a respectful, equal attitude toward people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

2. Did you develop this/these principle/s further after having learned about HRBA? If yes, can you say something about how you did this?

Yes, we are actively strengthening the principle of participation. We are trying to involve more people with different lived experiences in building and refining the program. Also, after testing the first module in June with social protection staff, we focused on collecting their feedback to continuously adjust the course to their real needs.

3. Which principles did you start applying to the project after you learned about HRBA and how?

We started using accountability and empowerment more actively. Based on direct feedback from participants, we added more practical advice and simple communication rules that staff can easily use in their daily work alongside general concepts.

¹⁴ The motto “nothing about us without us” reflects the principle of meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making on matters that concern or affect their lives. It underscores that persons with disabilities are rights holders and should be actively and effectively involved in relevant decision-making processes, rather than having decisions made on their behalf without their participation. General comment No.7 on Article 4.3 and 33.3 - the participation of persons with disabilities in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no7-article-43-and-333-participation>.

4. Did working with HRBA add value to your project? If yes, how?

In our opinion, yes. Through feedback, we learned that having a practical component is very important for frontline staff who completed the first block of the course. Gathering this feedback allows us to hear their needs directly and adapt the course to fit what they actually require in their work.

Results

The initiative is implemented in four stages, with needs assessment and course development with the involvement of experts and persons with lived experience being the first stage.

The course has potential of being scaled up to be available for a larger number of local authorities, ASCs staff, social and healthcare workers, and educators. By offering the course to rights-holders, who have rights to access different services from the local government, the residents become empowered in understanding what is the proper way of service provision and when such is done inappropriately. The project's ultimate impact is in tackling disability stigma and invisible barriers that persons with disabilities encounter.

Conclusion

The initiatives presented in this booklet demonstrate that local governments are not only implementers of policy, but also key actors in advancing Ukraine's path towards European Union membership. The experience of Lviv shows how aspects of EU accession, in particular accessibility, are ultimately realised through decisions made at the local level. The projects featured in this booklet also show a potential of replicating certain solutions, while ensuring that they are tailored for specific challenges.

The experiences of project participants show that applying HRBA to their ongoing and planned projects added value to their work and that they intend to continue applying this approach. The experiences also show that the principles of equality and non-discrimination were most commonly incorporated into projects before participants began applying HRBA systematically. However, applying these principles as part of HRBA helps address broader dimensions of equality and non-discrimination, for instance, by developing a deeper understanding of the stereotypes and prejudices that hinder the realisation of equality and non-discrimination and how these shape the design of accessibility solutions. Similarly, applying the principle of participation as part of HRBA broadened the understanding within the projects about who is affected, leading to larger and more diverse participation of rights holders. Participants' experiences also show that, after learning about HRBA, many projects began integrating the principles of accountability and transparency. Projects also began engaging more actively with the principle of legality by making greater use of human rights instruments such as the CRPD. Overall, the experiences show that applying HRBA helped participants view their projects through a comprehensive set of principles aimed at strengthening the realisation of residents' rights and enhancing municipal staff's role as duty bearers.

Across the projects, accessibility has been approached not merely as a technical question of infrastructure, but as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights and full participation in community life. The strong focus on the rights of persons with disabilities, the inclusion and participation of veterans and other groups facing barriers, illustrates how local authorities can translate European values and international human rights standards into tangible improvements in people's everyday lives. As Ukraine continues its accession process, the experiences from Lviv provide practical examples of how municipalities can contribute to building inclusive and resilient communities and adhering to human rights for everyone.

Annex 1- EUcation initiatives template

1. What is your initiative about? (describe in up to 150 words)

2. Which objective does it contribute to achieving? (Select one that applies)

- ☐ All transport in Lviv is barrier-free (previously discussed in Group 1)
- ☐ Lviv is accessible for persons with disabilities (previously discussed in Group 2)
- ☐ Increased social inclusion/involvement in Lviv (previously discussed in Group 3)
- ☐ Barrier-free spaces for all groups of community are created in Lviv (previously discussed in Group 4)
- ☐ Raised awareness of issues related to inclusiveness and accessibility in Lviv (previously discussed in Group 5)
- ☐ Other, please specify

3. Who are you planning to implement this initiative with?

- ☐ By myself
- ☐ With other EUcation participants, please specify with whom
- ☐ With colleagues in my organisation/department/unit, please specify which organisation/department
- ☐ With civil society/academic partners or others outside of my organization that have knowledge and expertise I will need, please specify

4. Describe steps of realising this initiative.

5. To implement the initiative, do you need to agree with your manager/ colleagues to support your case institutionally? (Select one that applies)

- ☐ Yes, need to agree with my manager
- ☐ Yes, need to agree with my colleagues
- ☐ Yes, need to agree with my manager and colleagues
- ☐ No

6. To ensure that your initiative integrates a Human Rights Based Approach/PLANET principles, please answer to the following: (respond to each question with up to 100 words)

1. Who outside of your organization will you need to include in the work for reasons of self-representation of the target group (Nothing About Us Without Us), and how will you include them? (Participation)
2. What human rights conventions regulate the initiative? (Legality)
3. How will you ensure that the division of responsibilities for the work is clear, as well as that inhabitants who have concerns with the initiative have ways to express them? (Accountability)
4. Does the initiative target those who are far away from enjoying human rights, how can we include the most vulnerable within the target group? (Non-discrimination and equality)
5. How can the initiative build the capacity of rightsholders to know about their rights and claim their rights? (Empowerment)
6. How can accessible information about the initiative be provided? (Transparency)

Filled out by

First and last names:

Position:

