

PROJECT OVERVIEW**«Leaders of Accessibility»**

Preparing people with spinal cord injury for advocacy work and engaging them in community Resilience Centers across the Ternopil, Volyn, and Rivne regions through the peer-to-peer approach.

25–30

people with SCI — participants of the advocacy online school

10–12

paid advocates in Resilience Centers

≥15

accessibility audits and appeals to local authorities

≥18

joint inclusive activities

PROBLEM

In small communities of western Ukraine, people with spinal cord injury (SCI) are systematically excluded from decision-making on recovery and accessibility. There is a shortage of trained community advocates from among persons with disabilities, of sustainable engagement mechanisms, and of paid roles. Resilience Centers rarely plan activities involving people with disabilities.

GOAL

To strengthen the leadership, civic participation, and resilience of people with SCI in the Ternopil, Volyn, Rivne, and Khmelnytskyi regions by preparing them as community advocates for accessibility and inclusion and integrating them into the work of local Resilience Centers through the peer-to-peer approach.

OBJECTIVES

- train 25–30 people with SCI as community accessibility advocates through an online school;
- select and support 10–12 of them as paid advocates in Resilience Centers;
- conduct ≥15 accessibility audits and appeals to local self-government bodies;
- organize ≥18 joint inclusive activities for people with disabilities and community residents.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Local self-government bodies, community Resilience Centers, residents of small towns in the Ternopil, Volyn, Khmelnytskyi, and Rivne regions, IDPs, veterans, and their families and close circles.

BENEFICIARIES

Direct: 25–30 people with spinal cord injury (prioritizing women with SCI and IDPs), of whom 10–12 become paid advocates; mentors. Indirect: visitors of Resilience Centers (IDPs, veterans, local residents), local self-government bodies, and the wider communities of four regions.

ACTIVITIES

- selection and onboarding of participants in 3 regions (September 2026);
- advocacy online school — 3 modules (September–November 2026);
- competitive selection and employment of 10–12 advocates (November–December 2026);
- advocacy work: audits, appeals to local authorities (December 2026 – February 2027);
- joint inclusive activities — ≥18 sessions;
- mentoring support and coordination of the advocate network across three regions;
- final conference, recommendations for local authorities, and scaling of the model.

RESULTS

10–12 people with SCI become active community advocates and continue cooperation with Resilience Centers. Local authorities receive concrete accessibility recommendations. A regional network of accessibility advocates is formed. A scalable “training → employment → participation” model is piloted.

IMPACT

The project will foster the inclusion of people with spinal cord injury in community recovery processes, reduce their social isolation, and help build a culture of inclusive governance at the local level.

Duration: 6 months**Budget:** CAD 49,973 (request to CFLI)

All projects online

