

# GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

## BACKGROUND

Mykola Ruban, an internally displaced person and wheelchair user from Ukraine's Lugansk Region, was forced to leave his home and move to the Donetsk Region due to ongoing conflict in the eastern region of the country.

Ruban had been a performer with the Lugansk Regional Cossack Equestrian Theater until a severe car accident ended his career. But it didn't stop his interest in physical and social engagement, so Ruban turned to competitive wheelchair dancing, sports, and other activities that people who use wheelchairs can participate in.

## INTERVENTION

Advancing Partners & Communities grantee United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Wheels, through the TEAM Ukraine project, works with internally displaced people with disabilities to help them gain economic stability in their new regions.

In June 2016, Ruban received a confidence boost during a business training led by UCP Wheels' implementing partner, the National Assembly of People with Disabilities.



Ruban participating in a practical session during the manicure courses.

Throughout the training, which introduced entrepreneurs to new trades, Ruban got to know other participants, many of whom worked as nail technicians. Their enthusiasm for their work piqued Ruban's interest in the field, and with encouragement from his fiancé, Rita, he pursued training.

## OUTCOMES

Thanks to training and emotional support from community case managers, Ruban obtained nail technician certification, and immediately began practicing his new skills on friends and acquaintances. His most influential customer,



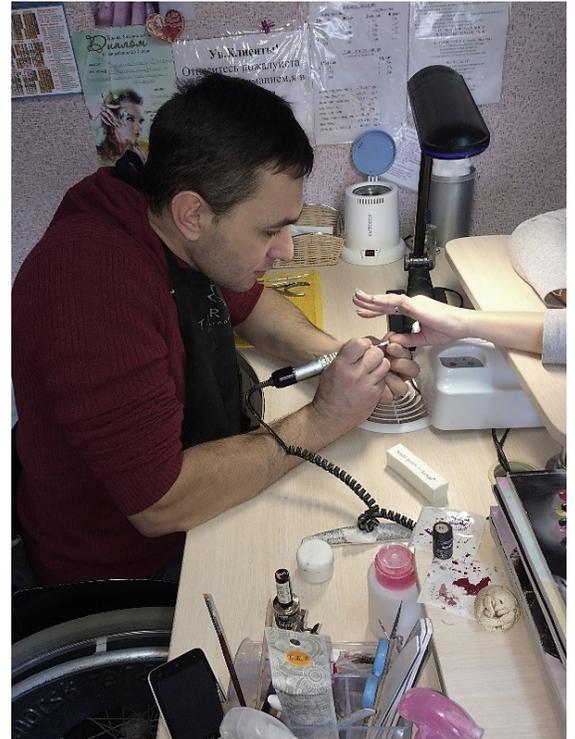
**Ruban purchased equipment from the mini-grant provided by the TEAM Ukraine project.**

however, was Rita. Her advice helped Ruban master the techniques of a manicure, modeling, nail lengthening, and correction.

Ruban plans to open a manicure and pedicure salon, and with funding from the USAID-UCP Wheels program mini-grant, which he used to buy equipment, tools, and materials, he is well on his way.

Ruban also donates his time to the disabled community. He drives for the Professional Rehabilitation of the Disabled People organization, and is a website administrator for the Donetsk Regional Organization of People with Disabilities. The latter is another post-accident skill that has helped him shape a new life.

Ruban's perseverance and optimism in the face of pain and adversity are inspiring. He recovered from a life-altering accident, completed business trainings, pursued a new career and activities, and gives back to his new community.



**Ruban in action.**