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Washington DC, January 29, 2009, —The Rockefeller Foundation announced that it has awarded a \$250,000 grant to Agora Partnerships, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting poverty and inequality by supporting developing world small business entrepreneurs. Agora provides entrepreneurs with strategy advice, market connections, and access to venture capital to help improve their communities. The organization works with businesses that are too large to benefit from micro-credit and too small to be eligible for traditional bank lending. Since its launch in 2005, Agora has worked with over 200 companies and thousands of individual entrepreneurs in Nicaragua.

The Rockefeller Foundation grant will be used to help Agora Partnerships scale its model throughout Central America. The ultimate aim is to create a model that can be replicated globally and that can support the emerging field of social impact investing. The Rockefeller Foundation grant will also enable Agora Partnerships to continue to attract private investment into socially responsible small and growing businesses in the region.

“Agora Partnerships is an exciting example of innovation in the global impact investing industry that is pioneering new ways to make investments that solve social and environmental challenges while delivering financial return to investors,” said Rockefeller Foundation Managing Director Antony Bugg-Levine. “We are pleased to support Agora Partnerships whose management team exemplifies the combination of business savvy, determination and collaborative spirit that will allow the impact investing industry to flourish.”

“We are honored to be recognized by the Rockefeller Foundation for Agora’s potential to create system-wide change in the way developing world entrepreneurs access opportunity,” said Ben Powell, Managing Partner and co-founder of Agora Partnerships. “This grant will enable Agora to bring capital and expertise to more entrepreneurs committed to using business to improve their communities. We look forward to working with Rockefeller Foundation to expand the entire field of impact investing.”

This grant also builds on the support the Rockefeller Foundation has provided to the Aspen Network for Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), an alliance among leading intermediaries, funders, and experts that aims to alleviate poverty and improve lives by providing growth finance and technical assistance to small and growing businesses in developing countries. Agora Partnerships sits on the steering committee and is a founding member of ANDE.