

## Unitus and NIS Sparta Partner to Create Breakthrough Management Training Program to Support Next Generation of Microfinance Leaders

**Seattle, WA and New Delhi, India, 9 June 2009:** Unitus, Inc., an international nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing global poverty by accelerating access to microfinance and NIS Sparta, Asia's leading training provider, announced the launch of an innovative professional training program for microfinance branch managers. The first of its kind in the microfinance industry, this program will give practitioners access to world-class management training designed specifically for microfinance professionals.

“Through our work with 24 microfinance institution (MFI) partners, we have found professional training for branch managers to be a critical gap in the sector,” says Ed Bland, President of Unitus. “Providing management training through the Unitus/NIS Sparta program to microfinance professionals who have management responsibilities and daily contact with borrowers will improve effectiveness and retention within growing MFIs.

The Unitus/NIS Sparta Management Training Program consists of three instructor-lead courses conducted over eight days. Course curriculum is tiered and encompasses managerial and interpersonal communication, teamwork, and performance coaching. Over the course of a year, the program was designed and piloted in a collaborative effort between Unitus, its microfinance institution partners, and the training experts at NIS Sparta, who have trained emerging leaders across leading companies such as HCBC, Toyota, Chevron, Shell, Maruti Suzuki India, among many others.

“The purpose of the partnership is to enable growth of the MFI’s, by bringing together Unitus’s deep expertise in accelerating the growth of microfinance institutions and NIS Sparta’s proven track-record in performance enhancement, through training and capacity building,” says Mr. Muralidhar Rao, COO & President of NIS Sparta. “We believe that this initiative will help MFI’S achieve their mission critical goals, through enhanced effectiveness of their people and processes. We are happy to have partnered Unitus in this pioneering initiative. We believe that Microfinance Sector will require more such interventions to unlock the potential.”

“There is a great need in the microfinance industry to develop managers with first level supervisory skills,” said Samit Ghosh, Managing Director of Ujjivan Financial Services, a Unitus partner and participant in the pilot training program, “Being a nascent industry, a large number of branch managers and department heads are promoted from within and need to be trained and equipped to effectively execute the responsibilities of leading a team. Unitus and NIS Sparta, working with us to customize the training program for microfinance institutions, have done an excellent job. We intend use this program extensively at Ujjivan.”

The Unitus/NIS Sparta Management Training Program is available to all microfinance organizations through Unitus. Interested organizations can inquire about the program by contacting Unitus at [training@unitus.com](mailto:training@unitus.com) or calling +91 80 4112 0008.

### About Unitus:

Unitus, an international nonprofit organization, fights global poverty by accelerating the growth of microfinance—small loans and other financial tools for self-empowerment—where it is needed most. Unitus partners with young, high-potential microfinance institutions helping them build capacity, attract capital, and unite with the greater partner network to achieve rapid, sustainable growth. In just 7 years, Unitus has helped its

partners serve more than 7 million families throughout India and Southeast Asia, East Africa, Mexico, and South America. Unitus received Fast Company's Social Capitalist award in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Unitus is a 501(c)3 with offices in Seattle, Washington and Bangalore, India. For more information, please visit [www.unitus.com](http://www.unitus.com).

### **About NIS Sparta**

NIS Sparta is Asia's leading training, education and learning solutions and a Reliance ADA Group company. The company partners organisations in achieving their mission critical goals through enhanced effectiveness of their people and processes, using proven methodologies. In the education domain through its platforms such as NIS Academy and NIS L.I.V.E., NIS Sparta offers knowledge and skill based programmes, to students, first time employment seekers and working executives.

Over the last 18 years, NIS Sparta has provided training and consulting solutions to over 10,00,000 professionals, in over 550 organisations, across 10 countries in 18 languages. For more information, please visit [www.nissparta.com](http://www.nissparta.com)