

The Catalyst Field *Guide*



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Executive *Summary*

This Field Guide documents five years of the Reckitt Catalyst, a hub for social innovation delivered by Reckitt in partnership with Yunus Social Innovation (YSI), Health Innovation Exchange (HIE) and Acumen America. It captures the program's framework, strategies, and impact as a path towards integrating business and impact.

Since 2020, the Catalyst has connected nearly 100 entrepreneurs to the expertise, networks and capital needed to scale. Operating under the principle that resilient and thriving businesses are dependent upon resilient and thriving communities, the Catalyst is working toward a 2030 goal of supporting 200 social innovators and reaching five million people with better access to health and hygiene.

How the model works

The Field Guide traces Reckitt's shift from disparate CSR sponsorships to a coherent impact portfolio, the Catalyst: aligning initiatives with areas of genuine business expertise, linking brands to specific SDGs, and grounding activity in a Theory of Change connecting inputs to measurable outcomes. Global ambition is paired with local deployment: teams are empowered to pilot, prove and expand solutions that fit their own markets with the support of the global impact team.

Three structures turn that strategy into practice: the Academy pairs social entrepreneurs with Reckitt mentors; the Community of Practice connects founders across cohorts and years; and strategic partnerships with governments and business open pathways for ventures to navigate policy change and regulatory barriers.

Connecting business and impact

With emerging markets projected¹ to grow from 37% to roughly 50% of global GDP by the 2030s, the Guide sets out three ways the Catalyst helps Reckitt deepen impact by building sustainable and resilient partnerships: brand partnerships that rethink corporate support from donation to genuine commercial partnership; distribution innovation that reaches underserved communities through non-traditional channels; and value chain integration that turns waste streams into social and environmental value.

¹ Reckitt, "Focus on Emerging Markets", 2026

Outlook

Lasting impact requires treating local entrepreneurs as agents of change rather than program recipients, and integrating impact into core business drivers. As the Catalyst continues toward its 2030 targets, the practices captured here are offered as a working template — with its trade-offs and open challenges alongside successes.

Introduction

At a bus-stop on the edge of Lagos, Nigeria, a bright orange toilet block is delivering change, one flush at a time.

Flanked by staff members in matching orange polo shirts, Jife Williams, CEO and co-founder of MN Environmental Services, the company behind the facility, leads a delegation of dignitaries and local authorities inside the converted shipping container.

Williams also noted two other collaborators, without whom the facility would not have been possible.

Eight thousand kilometres away in India, Namita Banka, the entrepreneur behind social enterprise Banka Bio, was watching on from afar, knowing that the biodigesting technology that her company developed for use in Indian sanitation facilities was being used in Nigeria.

Connecting the two was the Reckitt Catalyst, a hub for social innovation, supporting female and under-represented

founders to scale access to health and hygiene.

Delivered by Reckitt in partnership with Yunus Social Innovation (YSI), Health Innovation Exchange (HIEx) and Acumen America, the Catalyst is developing a new model for corporate social innovation, through partnerships between social entrepreneurs and corporate intrapreneurs.

Since 2020, the Catalyst has connected nearly 100 entrepreneurs to the expertise, networks and capital needed to scale.



Jife Williams (centre) at the opening of the MN Environmental Services public toilet facility in Lagos, Nigeria.



Namita Banka (centre) founder and managing director of Banka Bio which provides the biodigesting technology for waste management.

This Field Guide now brings the insights and practical methods developed through the program to a wider audience.

This publication extends the core program logic; that by uplifting social enterprises, more lives can be impacted through access to better health and hygiene. Sharing the tools and methods behind the program, while acknowledging its challenges and limitations, is intended to inspire others to implement these - and contribute to achieving impact at scale.

Backed by the insights of those on the ground, the Catalyst Field Guide contains practical examples of achieving impact through targeted support.

Because while each user of the orange shipping containers around Lagos improves their own health and those immediately impacted, the behavioural shift is what ensures this impact remains sustainable.

"We don't only provide access to clean toilets," Williams said.

"We are saying there needs to be a shift in behaviour. And the only way to do that is to continue to share information, in our facilities and also with the communities."

From Corporate Social Responsibility to *meaningful* social impact

Chapter One

In brief - Strategies to embed *corporate-impact* partnerships

1.1

Align impact goals
with *business expertise*.

1.2

Set a global ambition,
but empower *local teams*.

1.3

Connect impact mission
to *business drivers*

The Reckitt Catalyst exists to increase access to health and hygiene by supporting 200 innovators and reaching five million people by 2030.

This commitment comes with the mandate to integrate social impact and business excellence, supporting the organisation as a global health and hygiene leader.

“The Catalyst is about working with local health and hygiene innovators and helping them grow through Reckitt’s expertise, brands, and global reach.” Sheila Redzepi - Chief Communications and Corporate Affairs Officer at Reckitt said.

“By combining the rigour of business with the passion of impact, we can help deliver better health in more hands.”

On the ground, this has meant rethinking existing sponsorships and brand partnerships. Ioannis Dostas, former General Manager South Africa for Reckitt and now Global Vice President for Dettol, was one of the first to take this on when the program launched in South Africa.

“I tried to push the teams into turning some of those purpose programs into action for some of the brands,” he said.

“We wanted to do something to also have a social impact.”

1.1 From programme to portfolio

Realising the shift required moving from disparate initiatives to a portfolio of impact, and tying this into Reckitt’s business structure.

First, a focus on the areas in which Reckitt held legitimate expertise. For example, there was a natural alignment with access to water and healthcare.

Second, with the areas of greatest need identified, attention turned to linking the iconic brands, to specific Sustainable Development Goals.

Third, underlying these actions and interventions was a comprehensive theory of change, connecting the activities and inputs to measurable outputs and outcomes that contributed towards the overall goal: Scaling access to health and hygiene for five million people by 2030 by supporting, partnering with and scaling 200 social enterprises.

1.2 Global mission - local deployment

While agenda and goal setting occurred at the global level, local teams were empowered to identify the solutions that worked in their communities.

“We had a mantra within the team,”

YSI co-CEO Sergio López Ramos said.

“Start small, pilot to proof, and slowly expand.”

Targeting markets where there is the potential to link social impact to business growth also motivated buy-in and ownership away from the corporate core, enabling local leaders to shape the program.

1.3 Connect impact mission to business drivers

In addition, where existing programs were delivering success, these were woven into the global program.

This geographic strategy - empowering local teams and expanding on initiatives that were successful - was mirrored as the Catalyst touched other functions within the business, this includes HR, product development and marketing and sales channels.

What has enabled the structure to accommodate this growth has not only been the space for human connections across the organisation, but a clear-eyed focus on the return to the business.

As López Ramos puts it:

“Impact means business.”

The Building Blocks of the Catalyst - Achieving the *multiplier effect*

Chapter Two

In brief - Strategies to create *a home* for social innovation

2.1

Create structures to embed entrepreneurial thinking in the corporate partner and identify opportunities to put this into practice - *The Academy*

2.2

Nurture formats for belonging and exchange that go beyond yearly accelerator cycles - *Community of Practice*

2.3

Link innovation with local context and motivate regulators and government decision makers to become innovation champions - *Strategic Partnerships with government*

The Catalyst achieves its dual role of supporting and enabling entrepreneurs to achieve sustainable, lasting impact, while delivering on business goals, through an innovation hub model. This combines a six month accelerator with an ongoing community of practice and the opportunity for targeted business integration.

These are supported by the Catalyst Academy, Impact Measurement and Management (IMM) and thought leadership and selected investments.

Grounded in real examples of this process in practice, this chapter provides insights from these core pillars.

Before & After

Innovators from the 2025-26 Reckitt Catalyst cohort rate their knowledge on key topics before and after the program.

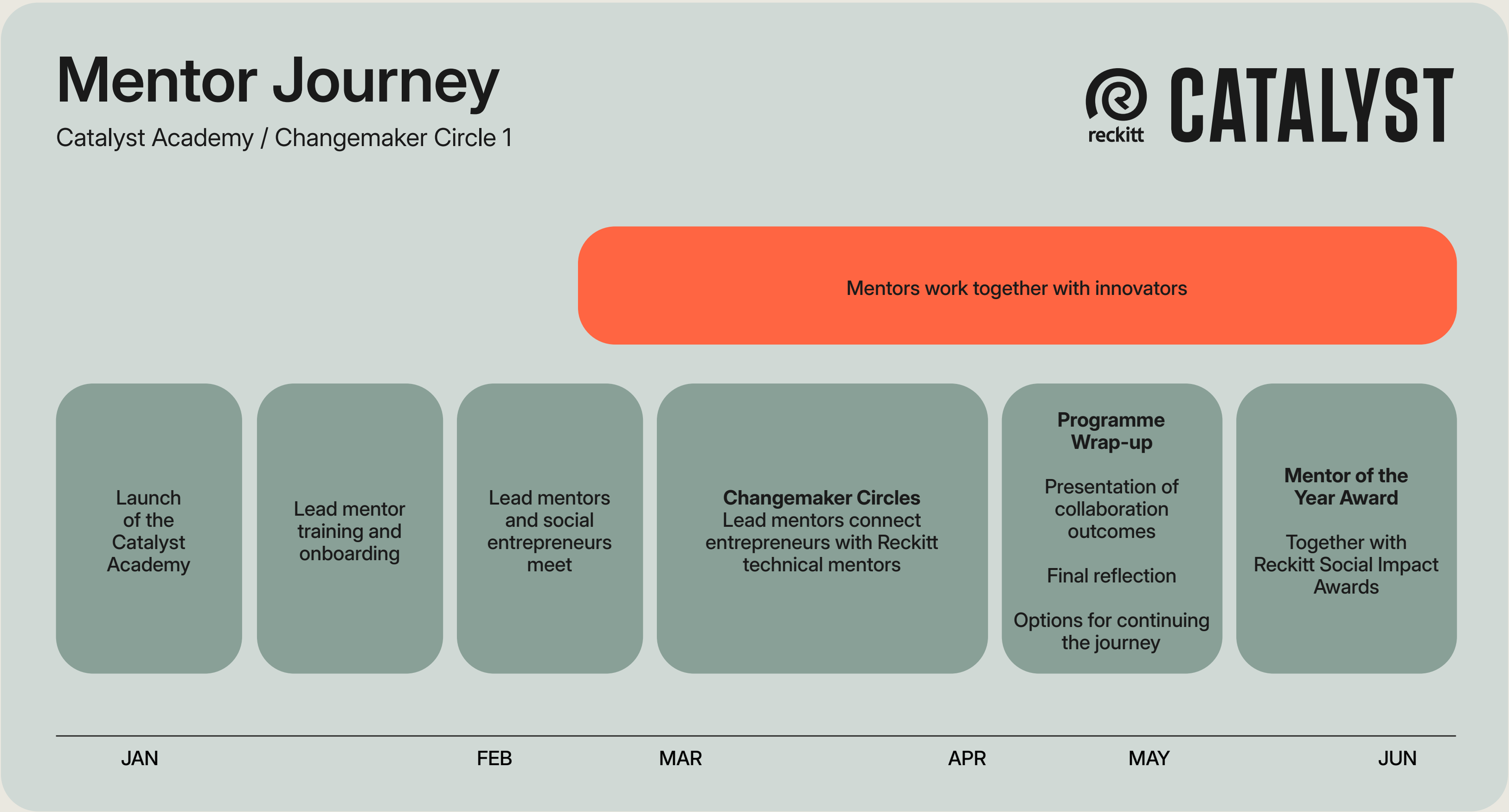


2.1 The Academy

The Catalyst Academy provides a two-way learning exchange between social entrepreneurs and corporate innovators within Reckitt. Not only does the programme provide access to expertise for the social entrepreneurs, but inculcates an entrepreneurial mindset within Reckitt employees, unlocking engagement and innovation within the Reckitt community.

The Academy is structured along three tracks:

- 1. A self-directed online course to ground the mentor's understanding of social entrepreneurship,
- 2. Facilitated online training on the art of mentoring, deepening the existing training, and
- 3. One-to-one mentor and mentee partnerships.



Underlying the program design is the identification of targeted outcomes for the mentors and entrepreneurs to work towards, ensuring the program produces meaningful results.

Here’s how that works in practice:

Dr Chris Varghese, Social Impact & Partnerships Manager, Reckitt India and Dr Navjot Sawhney, Washing Machine Project Founder

The Washing Machine Project exists to reduce the time and burden of hand-washing clothes, a daily burden faced by up to 50 per cent of the global population and a burden that’s disproportionately shouldered by women and girls, many of whom spend up to 20 hours a week hand-washing clothes.

The Divya manual washing machine developed by former aerospace engineer Dr Navjot Sawhney can run without an electricity connection, requires less water than an electric washing machine, and takes less time and physical effort than hand-washing clothes.

Already distributed in humanitarian and crisis contexts, The Washing Machine Project entered the Catalyst with an aim to scale commercial production in India and Kenya.

Partnership in brief

Paired together as part of the 2025-26 Catalyst cohort, the partnership between Dr Chris Varghese and Dr Sawhney demonstrates how the Catalyst Academy has been able to strengthen the capacity of social entrepreneurs through access to technical expertise and networks contained within Reckitt, while also building the personal confidence and capacity of the individuals involved.

The Challenge

The Washing Machine Project initially presented an acceleration plan with a multitude of tasks across various geographies and points in the product cycle. The challenge was to refine these to where the organisation could achieve the most impact in a set timeframe.



Dr Chris Varghese (left) and Dr Najovt Sawhney (right) used the Catalyst Academy to unlock personal and professional growth.

“We’re trying to highlight that there’s this huge problem of hand washing clothes, and there’s an intersection between health and hygiene, and gender inequality, and water, and household labor, and the Catalyst helped us to think more clearly about how that solution reaches more people sustainably.”

Dr Navjot Sawhney, Founder, Washing Machine Project

“Social entrepreneurs are very keen in doing things, but they’re not always very organised. Within a large corporation, everything is very clean cut, so bringing them into that space, telling them we need to do ruthless prioritisation, and reducing that list of 15 actions to three things that we want to do.”

Dr Chris Varghese, Social Impact & Partnerships Manager, Reckitt India

The Catalyst Enabler

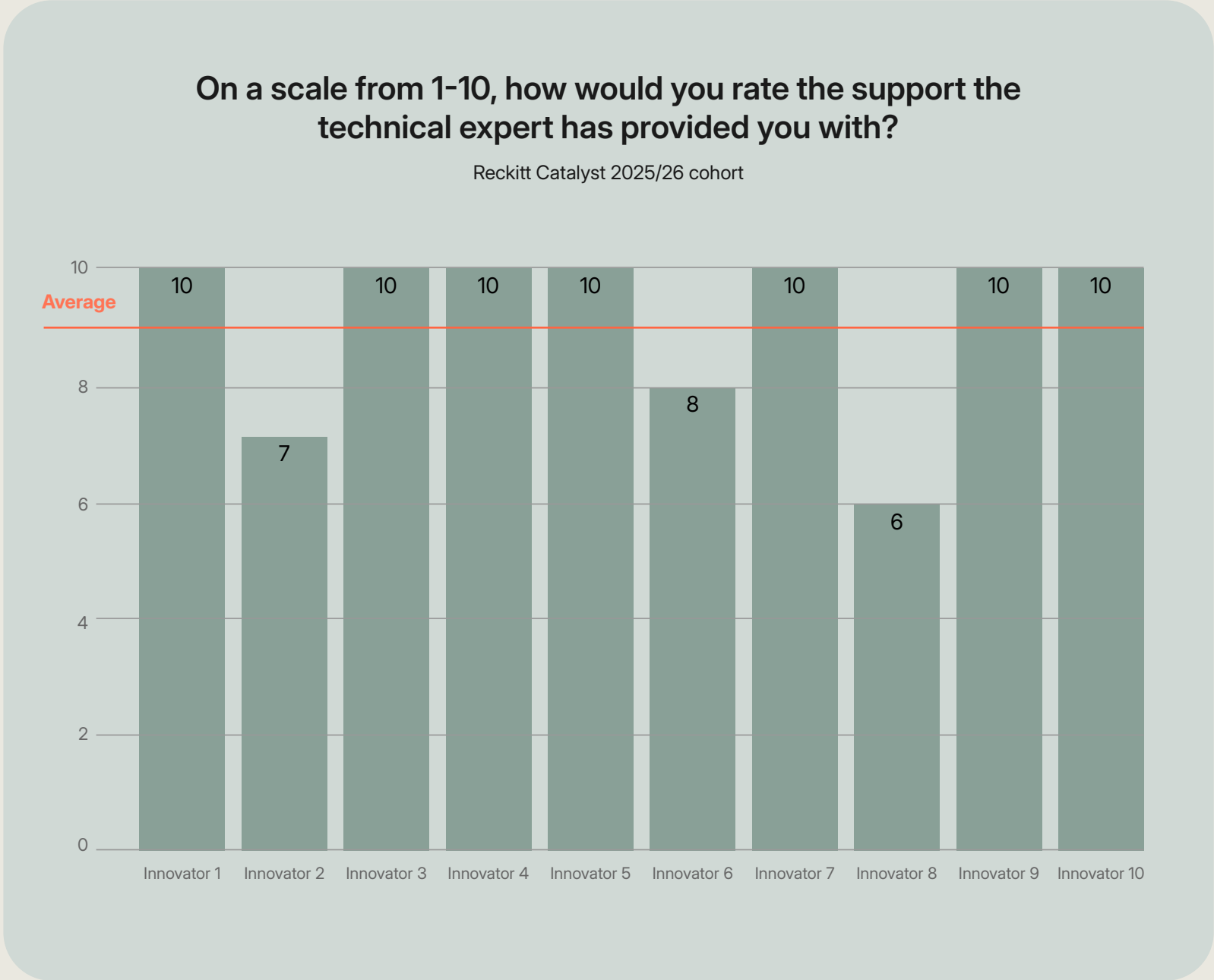
Once the three goals were prioritised, Dr Varghese contributed her skillset to strengthen the start-up’s social impact framework, establish measurable indicators and use the network of Reckitt technical mentors identified through the Catalyst.

Combined, this partnership enabled Dr Varghese and Dr Sawhney to build a feasible use case to suit Indian consumers, refined through multiple rounds of feedback and challenges to the pilot project. The eventual model, the “laundry experience centre”, paired the human-centred product design of the Divya washing machine with innovative financing to create a scalable, financially viable alternative to traditional grant dependency.

In addition, the integration of Reckitt products such as Vanish and Dettol improved hygiene outcomes and reduced time spent on exhausting manual washing, while functioning as a live consumer lab and distribution engine, pairing trial-based habit formation with innovative micro-financing.

Outcome

For The Washing Machine Project, the support of Reckitt technical mentors enabled the social enterprise to pursue local production in India at a lower cost, further supporting the project’s commercialisation pathway.



Insight

While mentor-mentee relationships are built on strong inter-personal bonds, creating an enabling framework around them allows for the relationship to achieve business goals. Within the Catalyst, this operates along three tracks:

- 1. High level support for the mentorship component of the Catalyst at internal staff town-halls.
- 2. The direct nomination of mentors via collaboration with the human resources function further supports the Catalyst as a recognised career opportunity.
- 3. The broad pool of technical mentors connects the impact goals of the Catalyst to business innovation pathways, bridging technical and structural expertise exchanges.

“Social innovation needs more than inspiration. Often social entrepreneurs are the brightest lights in the room, but actually, really bright lights burn out very quickly.

Social entrepreneurs need more than inspiration. They need practical support, like mentorship. They need technical expertise. They need networks. They need partners. They need money, and they need people who are willing to stay close to the detail.

That’s what the Catalyst has been, it’s not just a corporate lip service or encouragement. It’s practical help to help us towards moving into scale.”

Dr Navjot Sawhney, Founder, Washing Machine Project

2.2 Community of Practice

While operating on yearly accelerator and intake cycles, the Catalyst Community of Practice connects entrepreneurs across cycles, leveraging peer networks and solutions to shared challenges, while ensuring ongoing support.

The Community of Practice operates across three pillars:

1. Broad engagements: This creates engagement between community members, awareness of opportunities and access to knowledge.
2. Direct support: Proactive identification of needs and opportunities, facilitated connections within the ecosystem.
3. Community tracking: By capturing stories and measuring progress, innovators are showcased to a wide audience while being given the quantitative and qualitative tools to demonstrate their impact.

What is a *Baraza*?

“Baraza” is a Swahili/Kiswahili word meaning a public platform for sharing knowledge and providing community members with the opportunity to use their collective experiences to solve problems together.

At YSI, we adopt this community-born tradition to create facilitated dialogues on topics of interest between small groups, with a larger audience invited to learn from and contribute to the discussion.

A Baraza combines:

- opportunities to draw knowledge from the community of changemakers from around the world,
- a platform to exchange experiences and resources, and build shared learning,
- a space to connect across different disciplines and geographies, form connections, and scale towards systems change.

What is an *Imbizo*?

“Imbizo” is an (isi-)Zulu word referring to a community meeting for sharing news and important updates.

At YSI, we adopt the idea of Imbizos as a forum for change-makers to update the community on their progress and share ideas or needs. This forum allows for a scaled approach to receiving updates from changemakers and sharing their needs widely in a community, while reducing dependency on a single point of contact.

An Imbizo combines:

- consensus over debate, overcoming Global North systems of meeting that prioritize winning arguments,
- grounding in Ubuntu (“I am because we are”), with radical prioritization of human dignity,
- storytelling and narrative creation as a tool to build common problem understandings and create creative solutions.

Here's how that works in practice:

Namita Banka, founder, BankaBio and Jife Williams, founder, MN Environmental Services

Jife Williams founded MN Environmental Services, which provides public toilet and shower facilities in Lagos State, Nigeria as well as culturally sensitive behaviour change programs, to promote healthy behaviours and improve sanitation and hygiene in Africa's largest and fastest growing city.

Namita Banka, founder of Banka Bio, delivers sustainable solutions for the water, sanitation and health industries in India, including a bio-digester system that reduces waste.



The opening of the toilet facility not only provides a service to the community but encourages a process of behavioural change.

Partnership in brief

Spread across separate Catalyst cohorts, Banka and Williams were able to leverage the Catalyst community of practice to deepen an existing relationship. The two-way exchange of information not only enabled a project conducted by MN Environmental Services to succeed, but has provided access to new business models and revenue pathways.

Banka joined the Catalyst in 2025, but had previously met Williams through a separate programme, The Cartier Women's Initiative. Williams remained engaged with the Catalyst as part of the Community of Practice.

Having previously explored how technology developed by Banka could assist with the reduction of waste in Williams' operations, the two reconnected following their participation in the Catalyst.

The Catalyst Enabler

While the technology partnership was a natural fit, the community of practice structure established by The Catalyst supported the essential human-to-human connection. The shared experience strengthened trust, while technical guidance and mentorship was able to translate the two differing business contexts.

Outcome

Not only is the Banka Bio technology present in the public toilets being rolled out across Lagos state in Nigeria, but it has enabled Banka Bio to expand into a new market via a trusted business partner. For MN Environmental Services, Banka Bio's technology solved a key challenge facing the business - how to dispose of the waste produced

by the facilities. In the first three months after opening in April, the facility reached 2157 people. In addition, the partnership also shared best practice in terms of securing revenue streams, including digital payment collection.

Insight

While traditional accelerator programme logic combines expertise and funding in a uni-directional relationship, enabling an ongoing partnership model can contribute to solving pressing challenges.

“It boils down to the Catalyst providing a platform where entrepreneurs can come together from time to time. The entrepreneurs were able to ask, acknowledge that we had a problem and we didn't have the answer. When we asked, Namita was willing to help.”

Jife Williams, Founder, MN Environmental Services

2.3 Strategic Partnerships - Linking government and businesses to scale

Led by programme partner HIEEx, the Catalyst provides targeted support for entrepreneurs that would benefit from government engagement, as a critical pathway to scaling impact.

This support can not only be an essential pathway for the social entrepreneur to grow, but provide credibility and experience in government engagement, opening future opportunities for collaboration.

These partnerships operate on three principles:

1. Identify sandboxes, or bounded areas for experimentation to test the solution in a real-life scenario.
2. Be ready to adapt the innovation based on the findings.
3. Build a culture and mindset within organisations to support and nurture innovation and change.

Here’s how that works in practice:

LifeBank

Founded by Temie Giwa-Tubosun, LifeBank was founded to address the leading cause of maternal mortality in Nigeria, postpartum hemorrhage, and now delivers critical medical supplies including blood, oxygen and medical consumables in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya via an online platform.

Partnership in Brief

Having established a presence in Nairobi, Kenya, a change in government policy and reorganisation of the public service cut off LifeBank’s access to critical government contracts. With a new administration in place, the public sector contacts which LifeBank had previously relied upon were no longer in place.

The Catalyst Enabler

With the support of HIEEx, LifeBank was able to directly connect with decision-makers in the county council. The government sandboxes approach that HIEEx has developed enabled a low-risk way of enabling entrepreneurs to trial solutions in public settings and to scale once suitability has been demonstrated.

These formal structures are supported by expert

guidance and mentoring, to enable social entrepreneurs to overcome the bias towards incumbency within government procurement contexts.

Outcome

Not only has LifeBank now been able to return to its partnership with the government to provide products and services in Nairobi, the deeper connection and trust developed has enabled the enterprise to engage with other jurisdictions, creating a long-term pipeline of growth for the enterprise.

Insight

Allowing for flexibility and change within structured government and business partnerships can enable innovative solutions to find their place within a bureaucratic setting. However, this needs to be supported by a structured framework to enable the social enterprise to succeed and weather the potential for significant disruption based on policy and political changes.



LifeBank founder Temi Giwa-Tubosun with a medical products delivery rider.

“Acceleration support is not just about putting them through structured classes and teaching entrepreneurs about systems and marketing. As an entrepreneur, what you need is *hands-on, real-time problem solving.*”

Pradeep Kakkattil, CEO, HIEEx

“We had this incredible opportunity to *connect as a human being to human being*, and could not have happened without that institutional guidance.”

Temie Giwa-Tubosun, Founder, LifeBank

Business *Integration*

Chapter Three

In brief - Strategies to connect *business and impact*

3.1

Focus on the needs of the consumer of tomorrow, not the buyer of today. Identify the social innovators working on the ground to address the structural barriers communities face - *Brand partnerships*

3.2

Addressing new markets requires tackling barriers to access. Uplifting those connecting to communities provides an opportunity to address those who would otherwise be left out - *Access point innovation*

3.3

Build resilience from day one by working with communities - *Value chain integration*

Today, emerging markets represent a major source of global growth. From 37 per cent of GDP in 2005, emerging markets are forecast to account for 50 per cent of global GDP by the 2030s.

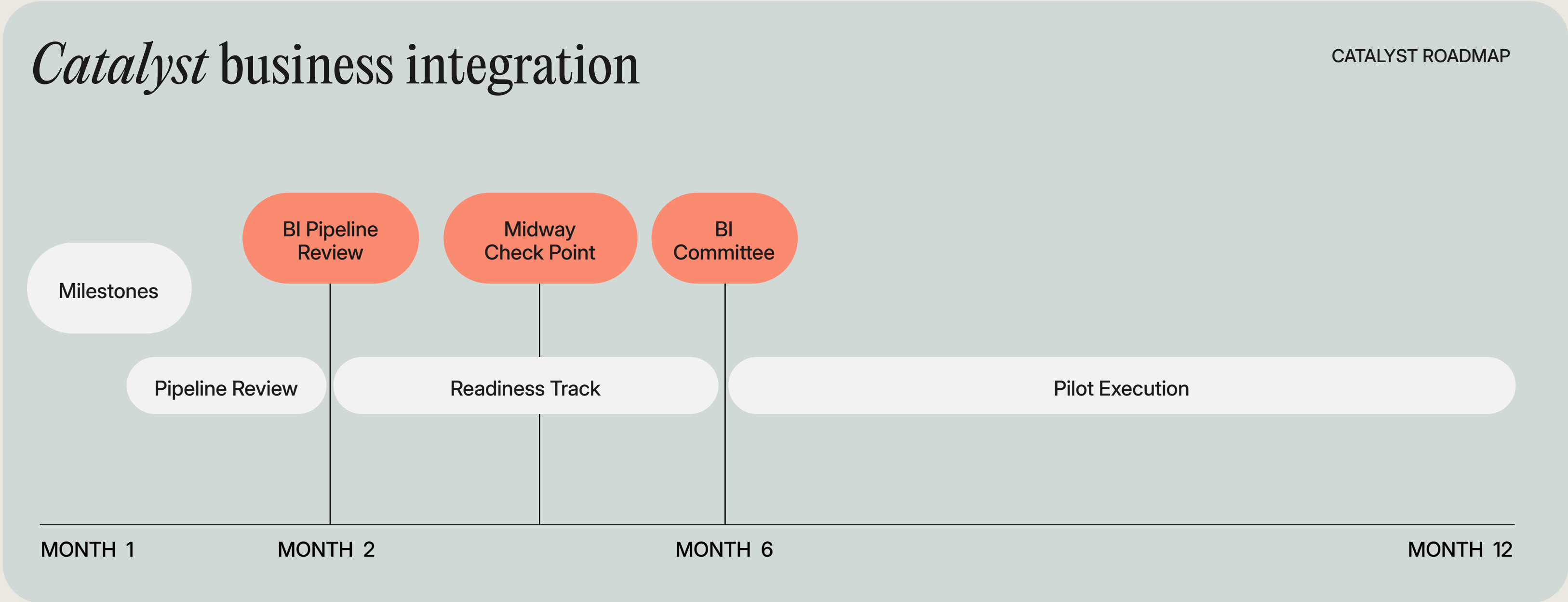
The growth in major markets including China, India, Brazil, Mexico and Indonesia is also expected to be more than double the G7 between 2025 and 2030².

This is expected to continue to expand a global middle class with the purchasing

power to select a wider array of household goods. The Catalyst supports the social entrepreneurs already working in these communities, accelerating solutions to overcome barriers, whether they be infrastructure, economic or social.

Drawing on insights from the field, this chapter presents three innovative partnerships that, combined, provide a model for integrating business and impact in new and emerging markets.

² Reckitt, "Focus on Emerging Markets", 2026



3.1 Brand Partnerships

Social enterprises provide a unique channel to engage with the consumers of tomorrow by building brand equity with consumers while supporting initiatives that address the structural barriers they face to accessing markets.

Here’s how that works in practice:



Komodo Water, founded by Shana Fatina (right), provides clean, drinkable water to some of the most remote communities in Indonesia.

Komodo Water

Social enterprise Komodo Water provides clean water to some of Indonesia’s most remote communities. Powered by renewable energy, the water filtration system not only delivers one of life’s essentials, but reduces the burden on the communities to access potable water, improving health outcomes and creating economic opportunities.

Partnership in brief

Through the Catalyst, Komodo Water founder Shana Fatina was matched with Reckitt mentor Roman Bazhibin, Sales Director Malaysia & ASEAN Sales Transformation. At first, the two appeared to come from different worlds. On the one hand, Fatina and Komodo Water were speaking in the language of impact, communities served, lives changed and access gaps closed, while Bazhibin was focused on commercial outcomes, unit economics, revenue models and scalability.

While it took some time for their two perspectives to click, the transformation occurred when the support from Reckitt, in this case via the brand of Dettol, shifted from being a donation to a partnership.

The Catalyst Enabler

This mindset shift from donation to partnership unlocked rapid support from across the Reckitt network, including local brand managers and global sustainability teams, supported by a Catalyst business grant, accelerating the partnership’s first contract to business integration proposal within three months.

The US\$30,000 grant will enable the deployment of Komodo Water’s treatment system at five sites across East Nusa Tenggara province, reaching up to 1500 people in one of Indonesia’s most remote provinces. These water stations will be combined with Dettol handwashing stations as well as behaviour change programs to combine water access with safe hygiene practices.

Komodo Water will provide the distribution network and delivery mechanism for Reckitt products to communities where the multinational would otherwise not have a presence, while the funding and brand partnership from Reckitt supports the commercial viability of the model to create a sustainable and impactful partnership.

Opportunity

For Komodo Water, the exposure to Reckitt through the Catalyst has strengthened the organisation’s business model by gaining access to new knowledge, business development strategies and feasible technologies.

For Bazhibin and Reckitt, the partnership has created a new perspective on reaching remote markets.

“Shana showed me that there are entire markets that don’t exist yet, and that impact is how you build them. That’s not a feel-good lesson, that’s a business lesson. And it’s already changing how I look at markets.”

Roman Bazhibin, Sales Director Malaysia & ASEAN Sales Transformation, Reckitt

Challenge

Making the case for the partnership required the integration of legible and understandable metrics from both sides. From Komodo Water, this required rethinking the metrics they were tracking to align with Reckitt’s business goals, while for Bazhibin and Reckitt, factoring in impact as a prerequisite for market growth was the enabler that unlocked further integration.

As the partnership matures, aligning measurement and reporting will be essential for its effectiveness and durability, a not insignificant task, particularly for social enterprises which must report on different lines to attract and retain donors and investors. The convergence and blending of these two distinct approaches to thinking and action enrich the development of new, realistic and practical methods for purpose-driven business development.

3.2 Access point innovation

In emerging and developing markets, access to life-changing health and hygiene products is a significant challenge. Low income communities are often not able to physically access the stores where these products are sold, facing intractably long distances and price points that put these products out of reach.

Innovating in finding new access points can contribute to improved health outcomes in these communities. Collaborating with the local entrepreneurs providing a primary point of care and working within established retail networks can raise health outcomes and support economic opportunity.

Here’s how that works in practice:

Rhiza Mpathy

Rhiza Mpathy, part of the Rhiza Holdings Group, has established nurse-led and mobile health clinics that operate in some of South Africa’s most impoverished neighbourhoods. Unable to access private healthcare due to cost and with long delays for public services, the low-cost model enables access to primary health care in areas where this otherwise would not exist while providing local employment.

Partnership in Brief

Through the Catalyst, Reckitt and Rhiza Mpathy are exploring how the communities in which Rhiza Mpathy clinics operate can benefit from Reckitt products.



The Rhiza Mpathy clinics provide a nurse-led model of care for under-served communities in South Africa.

Catalyst enabler

Facilitated by YSI, close collaboration between the Rhiza team and a local Reckitt mentor, senior logistics specialist Dash Pillay, leveraged Pillay’s supply chain expertise combined with the Rhiza team’s on-the-ground knowledge to develop a distribution model that works for all parties and the patients.

Within the partnership, close attention was paid to aligning the various perspectives and needs involved. In addition, the buy-in of the Reckitt mentor opened doors to expertise and knowledge held elsewhere in the organisation, when required.

“The Catalyst walks the journey with you. It’s not a short term model. It’s a model of testing, pivoting based on feedback and partnership.”

Alef Meulenberg, Founder, Rhiza Holdings Group

Opportunity

A successful partnership in the model of Rhiza Mpathy could improve health outcomes by extending nurse-led care and equip the mobile clinics with a wider range of options to treat their patients. This has the potential to include improved health indicators and quality of care.

The pilot is in the final stages of preparation, with plans to be implemented across four clinics by the end of 2026, with the goal to scale to 10 in phase two.

By providing more treatment options, the clinics would be able to improve the health of their communities, as well as scaling the clinic model to additional neighbourhoods and communities where feasible.

Further expansion to Rhiza’s network of over 30 clinics, which served over 520,000 patients in 2025, will be based on the feasibility of the model once it is implemented.

Challenge

Opening a new distribution channel presents significant regulatory and financial hurdles.

In addition, the low-cost model offered by Rhiza required close collaboration, refinement and good-will on both sides.

3.3 Value chain integration

Establishing brand partnerships and creating new distribution chains is one step towards supporting and enabling new markets, but in an environment of heightened risk and a greater focus on resilience, efforts to bridge the gap between established and emerging markets need to be backed by a commitment to social cohesion and equality in the daily work of business enterprises.

With production facilities located in emerging markets, addressing waste and creating circular economies is one area in which the Catalyst has innovated with social enterprises and partnered with communities.

Here’s how that works in practice:

Eco-Soap Bank

Launched in 2015, Eco-Soap Bank employs women in Africa and Asia to recycle soap waste into soap bars that are distributed to people without access to sanitation and hygiene.

Partnership in brief

One of the early recipients of the Lead 2030 prize, a predecessor to the Catalyst, Eco-Soap Bank has been working with Reckitt and the Catalyst team to identify ways to divert soap waste from landfill, and has already seen significant impact, with over 200 tonnes of soap waste redirected and 200,000 beneficiaries since the inception of the partnership.

Opportunity

While Eco-Soap Bank has an established relationship with Reckitt’s production facilities in South Africa, there is the potential to grow this to other Reckitt sites around the globe. This would not only reduce Reckitt’s environmental impact but create the opportunity to improve health and sanitation outcomes in the communities where it operates.

Catalyst Enabler

The Catalyst has enabled Eco-Soap Bank to access expertise and networks within Reckitt to assist in achieving closer integration.

For founder Samir Lakhani, the funding support was critical, but it was the access to the wider network throughout Reckitt was a game-changer.

“The best thing that mentors can do, and it is very valuable, is put you in touch with the right people, and more importantly, chase after them when they don’t respond. That’s true championing.”

Samir Lakhani, Founder, Eco-Soap Bank

Challenge

Scaling the partnership beyond the initial production facility has required aligning disparate timelines and rethinking the central business proposition for both parties.

While social enterprises are chasing quick growth as cash-strapped organisations, corporations are often looking for long-term, stable growth. This can lead to partnership misalignment, requiring intermediaries to manage the demands of both parties and settle on a common solution.

In addition, returning to the core business value proposition requires a ruthless focus on financial

outcome, even if a social impact goal can also be reached. Combined with staff turnover and different ways of working at various sites, this can present a challenging barrier for scaling even proven corporate-social entrepreneurship partnerships.

Social enterprises, while providing significant social value, have to be able to clearly enunciate their contribution to the business, either through cost savings or increased revenue. Where that does not occur, partnerships can stall.



Children using Eco-Soap Bank’s soap bars, made from waste from commercial soap production.

Conclusion and *outlook*



As organisations around the globe look to technological solutions to unlock stagnant productivity and continue to face a crisis of human attrition, the experience from the Catalyst so far reveal not only how partnerships can be built that integrate business and impact, but that to do so requires recognising local actors as agents of change able to shape their own destiny.

Marking the closure of the 25/26 cohort, with 643,000 customers serviced by 19 social enterprises, achieving average monthly revenue of US\$2.23m, the individual case studies and pathways to impact surfaced by the Field Guide stand as examples of the potential and challenges of achieving greater and longer-lasting impact.

And as sustainability and impact activities shift from communication and branding exercises to being recognised as

core strategic business drivers and responses to risk and resilience challenges, the Catalyst provides a potential pathway for integrating these endeavours within business drivers.

Looking ahead, as the Catalyst continues its trajectory towards impacting 5M people with better access to health and hygiene by supporting 200 social innovators by 2030, the techniques and strategies presented in this Field Guide will continue to be refined to support individual innovators and Reckitt to integrate impact and business goals.

About Reckitt Catalyst

Reckitt Catalyst is a global social innovation hub supporting entrepreneurs who are expanding access to health and hygiene. From creating new products and services, to strengthening supply chains, these innovators are helping build more resilient systems and unlocking new markets for the future.

Delivered in partnership with Yunus Social Innovation (YSI), Health Innovation Exchange (HIEx) and Acumen America, the programme provides funding, mentorship and expertise to help impact-focused ventures grow and scale solutions to essential health and hygiene challenges.

To date, Reckitt Catalyst has supported more than 80 social innovators across 15 countries, reaching two million people with life-saving health and hygiene solutions. Alongside this, the programme has also transformed how Reckitt does business, solving business challenges by reaching communities in new ways, while engaging and inspiring Reckitt employees.

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About YSI

We are YSI, a Europe-based social innovation consultancy. We believe that doing good makes business sense. We partner with corporations, philanthropic entities and social enterprises to make social innovation a key driver of business success. We design and implement strategies that align business success with positive societal and environmental impact. We work with a team of dedicated consultants and change makers, all aligned on making our time on this planet count. We are proud to be embedded in a global ecosystem of inspiring organisations and individuals. First founded in 2012, we remain committed to exploring new ways of collaborating and expanding the boundaries of business.

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