

## RECKITT LAUNCHES CATALYST IN THE U.S. WITH SERENA WILLIAMS, UNVEILS 23 NEW GLOBAL HEALTH & HYGIENE ENTREPRENEURS

- Reckitt Catalyst aims to deliver health and hygiene solutions to five million people worldwide by 2030
- Serena Williams, Reckitt's first Entrepreneur-in-Residence, will provide mentorship to help founders scale
- Reckitt opens the door for more U.S. founders to apply at [Reckitt.com](https://www.Reckitt.com)

**NEW YORK CITY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2025** – Reckitt, the company behind some of the world's most trusted health and hygiene brands, is bringing its social impact investment programme, Catalyst, to the United States.

The expansion, announced this week in New York, coincides with Catalyst's global selection of 23 new health and hygiene ventures primarily led by women and underrepresented founders. This week, Reckitt and Serena Williams, Catalyst's Entrepreneur-in-Residence, are convening global leaders from finance, health, academia and government to accelerate social entrepreneurship by helping grassroots innovators overcome challenges to access and scale.

Globally one in two people lack access to basic health care and one in four lack access to clean water<sup>1</sup>. In the U.S., nearly 80% of counties are considered 'healthcare deserts', where residents have limited or no access to essential health services such as hospitals, pharmacies, and primary care providers, leaving one in three Americans underserved<sup>2</sup>. Environmental stressors are compounding these health delivery challenges, especially in underserved and rural areas across the country.

"At home in the States, far too many communities are facing barriers to accessing essential healthcare services for their families and loved ones and it's time we took meaningful steps to address them," said Serena Williams. "When we back bold ideas and founders with genuine support – funding, mentorship, and belief – we unlock powerful solutions for the communities that need them most. I'm proud to stand with Reckitt

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization & World Bank. (2023). *Tracking universal health coverage: 2023 global monitoring report*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240080379>

<sup>2</sup> Nguyen, A., & Chase, L. (2023, October 10). *Mapping healthcare deserts: Over 80% of the country still lacks adequate access to healthcare*. GoodRx. <https://www.goodrx.com/healthcare-access/research/updated-healthcare-deserts>



Catalyst to help entrepreneurs scale their businesses and create lasting change in their communities."

Many of the start-ups backed by the Catalyst initiative will be women-led ventures or businesses founded by other underrepresented entrepreneurs. As a successful entrepreneur and impact investor, Serena Williams will play a pivotal role in mentoring and championing the ventures. She is encouraging eligible U.S. businesses to apply for a place in the Reckitt Catalyst program by visiting [Reckitt.com](https://www.Reckitt.com).

Kris Licht, CEO of Reckitt, says: "Through Reckitt Catalyst, we're proud to extend our global commitment and, for the first time, bring our support for social entrepreneurs to the U.S. For nearly 200 years, Reckitt has worked to elevate health and hygiene standards, making a lasting impact in communities worldwide. At Reckitt, care is action. And when we act, we don't just solve problems – we can be a catalyst for positive change that extends far beyond our products."

### **About Reckitt Catalyst**

Reckitt Catalyst is a five-year, up to £10m commitment to provide funding, mentorship and expertise from Reckitt leaders and Serena Williams, to enable innovative businesses to scale rapidly and help solve health and hygiene challenges in communities across the world. In partnership with Yunus Social Innovation, Acumen America, and Health Innovation Exchange (HIEX), Reckitt is scaling its existing commitment to support up to 200 founders over the next five years, across more than 13 countries, including the United States, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Catalyst builds on Reckitt's existing work to further strengthen its social impact projects around the world with flexible funding and expert mentorship. Since 2020, the company has supported more than 60 entrepreneurs across 13 countries, helping unlock access to better health, clean water and sanitation for one million people.

### **The first cohort of Catalyst entrepreneurs in the U.S.**

In partnership with Acumen America, Reckitt Catalyst will support American entrepreneurs, including founders working to improve healthcare access, affordability, and reduce disparities in health outcomes, particularly for underserved populations. The collaboration will provide early-stage companies, and founders often overlooked by traditional investors, with catalytic capital and sector-specific expertise to help their solutions scale quickly. To mark this expansion, an inaugural U.S. cohort will consist of three start-ups, each demonstrating the kind of scalable innovation Catalyst exists to champion.

Acumen America Managing Partner, Catherine Casey Nanda, comments, "We're thrilled to officially kick off our partnership with Reckitt Catalyst and Serena Williams. This shared work will expand our ability to invest in visionary entrepreneurs; provide founders



with mentorship and strategic guidance from Reckitt and Serena's team; and unlock barriers to funding for women and underrepresented founders."

### **Call for Entries**

Reckitt Catalyst is powered by expert partners who bring decades of deep experience in working with founders and scaling breakthrough innovations. With the U.S. programme now live and the first cohort announced, the call for entries is open for additional U.S. entrepreneurs to apply.

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### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**About Reckitt:** Reckitt makes the products people trust to care for the ones they love. We are home to some of the world's best-loved consumer health and hygiene brands, including Dettol, Durex, Finish, Gaviscon, Harpic, Lysol, Mucinex, Nurofen, Strepsils, Vanish and Veet. Consumers are at the heart of everything Reckitt does. By creating innovative, science-backed solutions, Reckitt supports people every day to live healthier lives.

Reckitt exists to protect, heal and nurture in the pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world. This commitment goes beyond the products it makes. Through its actions, Reckitt expands access to healthcare, education and economic opportunities. The company supports the planet by reducing waste, conserving resources and driving sustainable innovation.



Reckitt believes good health starts at home. With every action it takes, Reckitt strives to make consumers' lives easier, cleaner and healthier, to strengthen communities and to create a more sustainable future.

Find out more, or get in touch with us at: [Reckitt.com](https://www.Reckitt.com)

\*Reckitt is the trading name of the Reckitt Benckiser group of companies

Reckitt Catalyst is a partnership between Reckitt, Yunus Social Innovation, Acumen America, and Health Innovation Exchange (HIE) across the United States, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, India and Pakistan.

**About Acumen America:** Acumen America is the leading venture capital firm investing in mission-driven entrepreneurs looking to fix the root causes of America's poverty crisis. The firm believes lasting change requires big, new ideas designed to scale. Acumen America backs founders deeply invested in their communities with the knowledge, context, and trust to improve the lives of people in them. Over the last 10+ years Acumen America has invested \$24 million across 45 companies which have collectively raised an additional \$1 billion in follow-on funding.

**About Serena Williams:** Serena Williams is the most successful female tennis player with 23 Grand Slam titles. She has seamlessly transitioned into entrepreneurship, with the launch of *Serena Ventures*, which she founded in 2017. The venture capital firm focuses on investing in women and founders of colour, supporting startups across various industries. In addition, she launched *WYN Beauty* in partnership with Ulta Beauty in April 2024. Inspired by her own locker room routine, *WYN Beauty* is designed to inspire people to show up for themselves and others. A fashion icon and respected producer, Serena is also the founder of *Nine Two Six Productions*, a multimedia company focused on diverse voices. She is currently working on her upcoming memoir.

**About YSI:** Yunus Social Innovation (YSI) believes that doing good makes business sense. Together with its international team of impact experts and consultants, they redefine the role of business in addressing global societal challenges. Co-founded by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus and inspired by his seven principles of social business, YSI partners with leading corporations to design and implement social innovation strategies and programmes that align business success with positive societal and environmental impact.

**About HIE:** The Health Innovation Exchange (HIE) is a UN-born global platform that accelerates the adoption of innovations to improve health outcomes worldwide. Established with the vision of bridging the gap between innovators, governments, investors, and implementers, HIE enables the scale-up of impactful, sustainable, and context-appropriate solutions in climate and health.