



Duke unicef 

INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

2023 Annual Report

# Scaling Social Impact



As 2024 began, the Duke-UNICEF Innovation Accelerator (DUIA) took the difficult step of sunsetting all operations. Post-COVID and in the midst of increasing world crises, DUIA found itself at a crossroads in its quest to support promising social entrepreneurs innovating in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. While achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 remains a paramount issue for our partners, global priorities shifted, and, with it, the resources to continue DUIA's scale journey.

The partnership between Duke University, UNICEF, and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF was a special and unique collaboration, one that came to fruition after years of thoughtful planning and conversations. In 2019, the Duke-UNICEF Innovation Accelerator was formed to accelerate solutions to the biggest challenges facing children around the world. Utilizing Duke's track record of success in entrepreneurial education and UNICEF's 70-year history of innovating for children, the Accelerator supported social enterprises tackling the most pressing challenges facing children and youth around the world, focusing specifically on SDG 6.

Our goals were ambitious - we set out to find the most innovative social entrepreneurs working on menstrual health issues and in water, sanitation, and hygiene to provide the most promising with wrap-around support to help them scale. And we did just that. Across three cohorts, comprising 19 social enterprises, we supported social innovators from across Africa to East Asia to the Pacific Islands, improving and deepening their ability to sustainably provide affordable, essential products, services, and programs to millions.

Each enterprise received between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in unrestricted grants, bespoke mentorship from talented field and subject matter experts in our combined networks, tailored coaching from Duke and UNICEF staff, and intensive guidance through our proven capacity building curricula. Through immersive, interactive webinars, workshops, and coaching, the Accelerator helped each innovator team develop concrete, measurable, and ambitious plans to scale and reach sustainability.

By refining enterprises theories of change, testing new business models, and developing robust impact measurement strategies, Duke-UNICEF Innovators built the foundation necessary to revolutionize their organizations to create lasting impact in communities around the world. To date, they have collectively reached over **17 million** people with their innovative products and services, worldwide.

The third, and final cohort, consisted of six early-stage social enterprises innovating in WASH across East Asia and the Pacific. From organic, environmentally sustainable menstrual products in Thailand to water filtration devices in Timor-Leste to WASH education in schools in the Philippines, these young changemakers are providing safe and affordable products and services deep in their communities. Graduated at the end of the year, Cohort 3 left the Accelerator with concrete, actionable plans to scale, having spent much of their time with Duke-UNICEF improving their business models, operations, and strategies.

## 2023 Accelerator by the Numbers

**6** social enterprises selected, and graduated, for 3rd cohort

**18** skill-building webinars and workshops

**100+** mentors in our network

**250+** support touchpoints with innovators

**\$175k** capacity building scale grants awarded

**219k+** people reached by Cohort 3 across East Asia & the Pacific Islands



## Cohort 3 Spotlight: Graduated to Impact

**Abundant Water** is working to expand their market across Timor-Leste, providing low-cost ceramic water filters to communities through locally trained sales agents.

**Ira Concept** continues to steadily grow sales of organic, sustainable menstrual products, doubling them in Thailand, and they've increased their education and donation programs in schools.

**Learn to Serve** launched their savings and loan program for water and sanitation infrastructure projects with 40 households participating in the initial pilot phase.

**Myanmar Kitchen** launched a premium water brand and product to cross subsidize their low-cost water kiosks, expanding their sales base and reaching a record number of people in Yangon with safe water.

**Masy Consultants** launched WASHed in schools and are currently developing their online curriculum to impact even more children.

**Te Meu Projects** faced delays in shipments and expects the prototype of their efficient Island Compact Toilet to be ready to sell in early in 2024.



# Overall Accelerator Impact

**17m**

CHILDREN, WOMEN, & PEOPLE impacted globally across 3 Cohorts

**\$5.4m**

RAISED in follow on funding

**\$650k**

In SCALING GRANTS awarded to test, iterate, and ultimately scale

**100%**

Of INNOVATORS scaled their impact, deeping their reach in new communities and markets

**18+**

COUNTRIES served with improved WASH products and services

**19**

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES accelerated across Africa, East Asia, and the Pacific



## Thank You to All Our Supporters



To our generous donors, partners, mentors, and supporters, we thank you for walking alongside us as we worked to uplift and accelerate game-changing solutions to truly critical challenges facing the world's children. Together, we improved the lives of millions and significantly impacted the lives and trajectories of a group of incredibly talented, ambitious, and dedicated social entrepreneurs.

While the Duke-UNICEF Innovation Accelerator is closing its doors, our proven entrepreneurial skill-building curricula will live on as we work to digitize it, making it openly available via Duke University's Coursera to any social entrepreneur working anywhere. Stay tuned as that develops in 2024 and continue to follow the incredible progress of the Duke-UNICEF Innovation Accelerator innovators!

