

This document showcase impact stories generated from the **Improving access to WASH services for RMG industry and workers project** implemented by WaterAid with support from Lindex.



# RETHINKING CHANGE IN GARMENT FACTORIES

through inventive application of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions

LINDEX  WaterAid



## WASH in industries can catalyse change

**Improving access to WASH services for RMG industry and workers** is a two-year project implemented by WaterAid and funded by Lindex to improve well-being of the RMG workers in Kaliakair, Gazipur. The project increased access to safe drinking water, built improved sanitation and handwashing facilities, and changed hygiene behavior in factory, school, and worker communities. We have also built a rainwater harvesting plant and mobilised our *Change Agent* model which empowers community members to become hygiene champions and democratise hygiene education.



**Previously, we suffered from unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene practices. We had little knowledge. We were also unmotivated to improve our hygiene measures, which affected our health.**



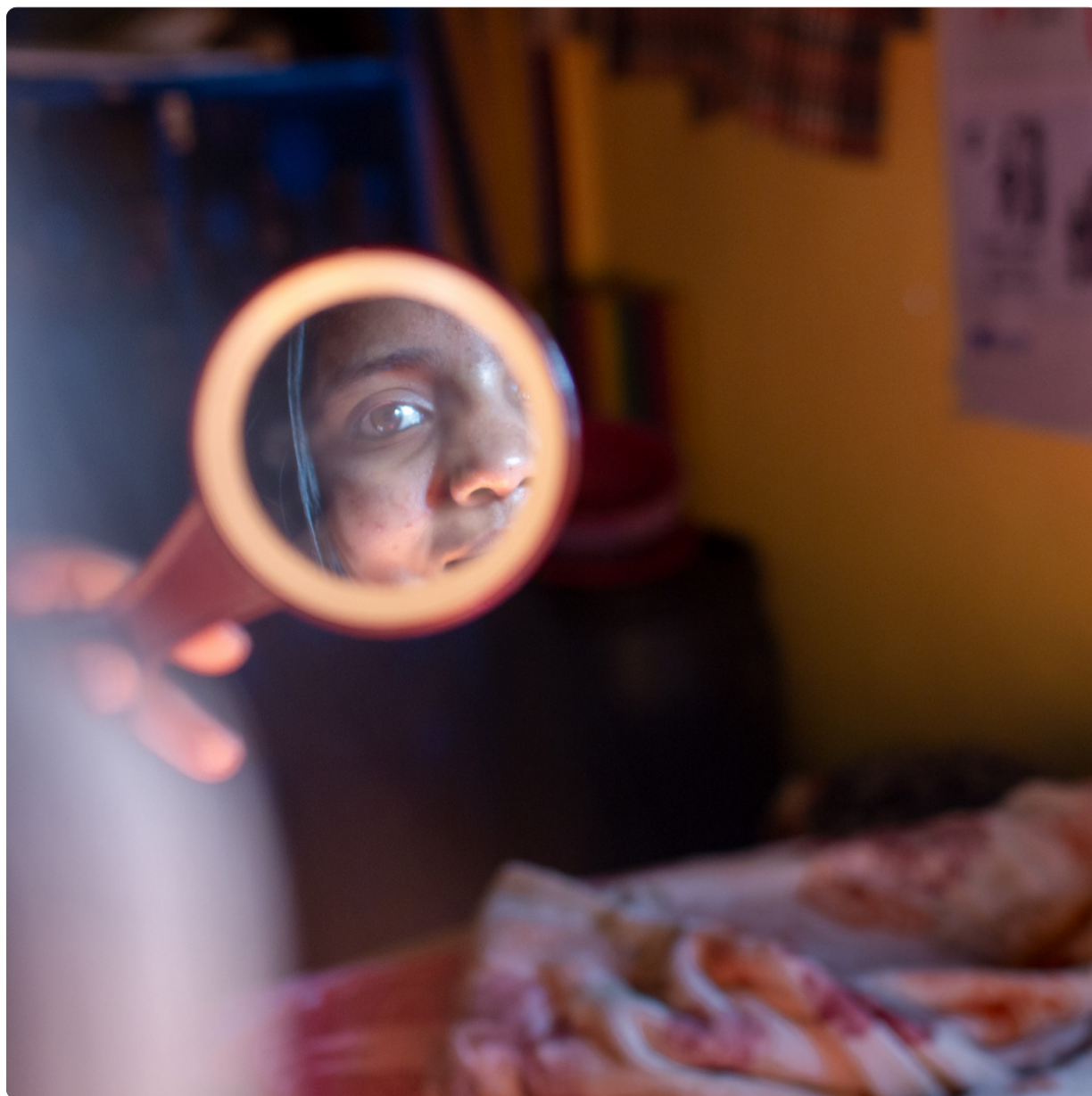
### **Rikta: A change agent at Incredible Fashion Ltd.**

Rikta Akter is 20 years old. She works as a poly-packer at Incredible Fashion, a leading knitted garment manufacturer based in Gazipur, Bangladesh. Rikta belongs to a cohort of 25 Change Agents trained by WaterAid to democratise hygiene education to a peer group of 1,755 readymade garment (RMG) workers.



# Window to Rikta's daily routine

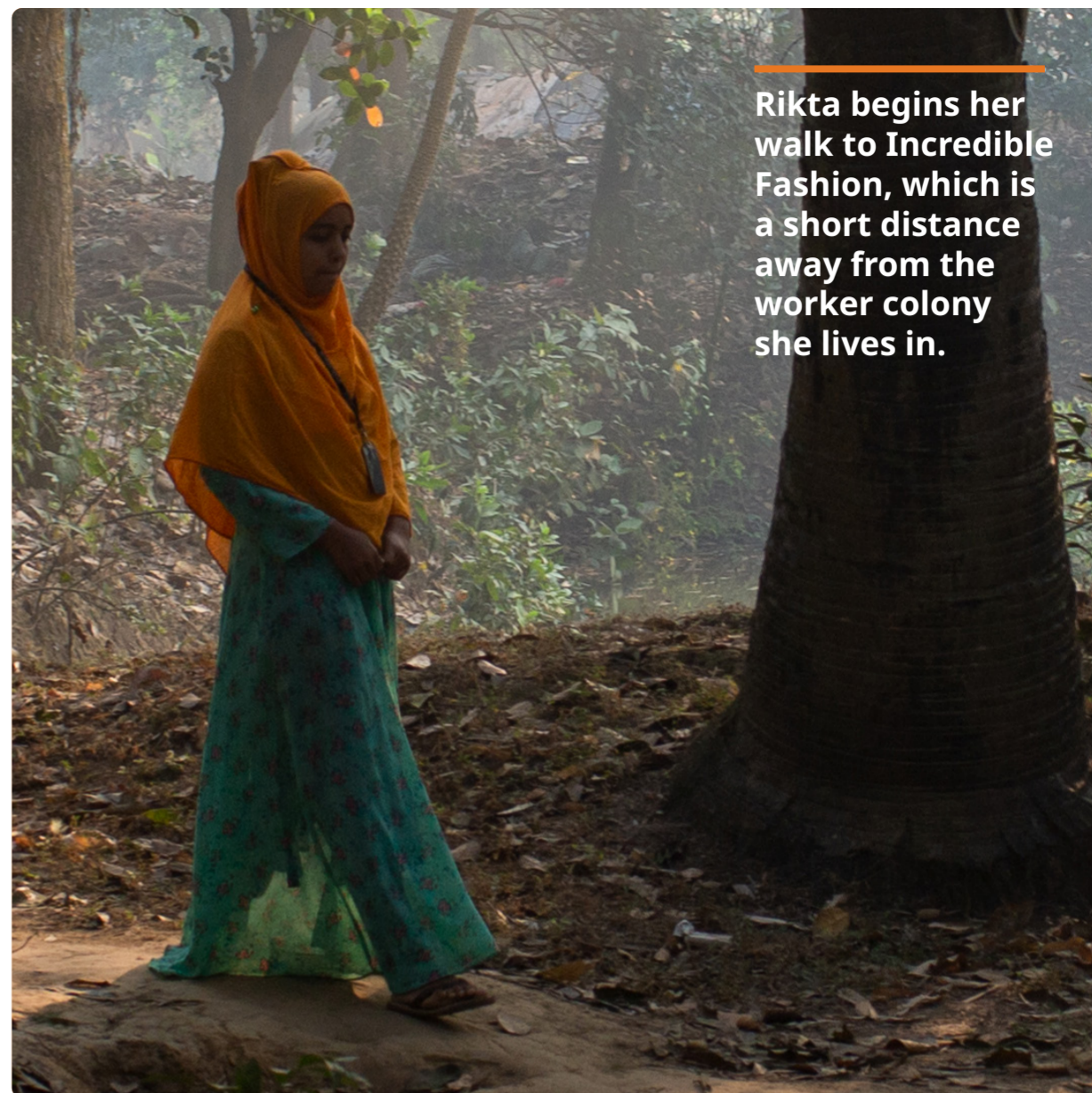
We followed Rikta's daily routine to see how change agents operate in a factory, and how they balance their roles between being a worker and a hygiene champion.



 Dawn + Morning

## Kickstarting the day

Rikta is an early riser - waking up at around 5.40 am in the morning to pray, take a quick shower, and have her breakfast. Her shift at work begins from 8.00 am.



Rikta begins her walk to Incredible Fashion, which is a short distance away from the worker colony she lives in.




## A march of thousands

The new day brings new energy for all, as RMG factories begin their shifts. Thousands of dedicated workers, like Rikta, steps into work. After she checks-in, she gives her fingerprint for attendance and goes to her packing station to begin work.







 Noon

## Complete packaging quota and put-on the blues of 'change'

After completing her daily quota of poly-packing and taking a lunch break, Rikta puts-on her blue vest - a symbol of her being a change agent. She then goes to her peers at different levels to share essential hygiene and health information.



**We need to maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to perform well**



## 'Change' in action

Rikta shares knowledge on different dimensions of hygiene and cleanliness to her peer groups at the factory - inclusive of handwashing with soap, menstrual hygiene management. She also tell stories of how clean water can serve as protection against diseases and be a tool to increase productivity in the workplace to improve income.

Rikta showing how to safely dispose of sanitary napkins to her peers using the newly developed WASH facilities.



At first, I was hesitant since most of the workers are older than me. However, I was received well and felt a sense of confidence. My colleagues listened to me and took an interest to know best practices.



## Coming home, reaching beyond

Rikta completes her shift at 4.00 pm and begins her journey back home. However, her duties as a change agent continues. Hygiene behavior in worker communities is an important aspect of the work of change agents - especially for people not reached in factories such as the elderly and children. Rikta frequently stops at the nearest community WASH facility on her way home where she share hygiene education with community members. In her words, "it is crucial for children to develop good hygiene habits early in life so that they become healthier."



Change agents is a part of our **cohesive WASH approach** in industrial environments. In addition, we have programmed improved WASH in school and implemented industrial rainwater harvesting plant to optimise sustainability.



## Improve education and health outcomes

Gosatra Dr. Jalilur Rahman High School at Kaliakair, Gazipur, house 457 female students. Urinary tract infections and high absenteeism were common here given the school did not have toilets with running water. We developed improved WASH facilities with menstrual hygiene provisions which helped to address these issues and lead to better health and education outcomes.

Students operating a sanitary napkin vending machine we setup at the school's newly built WASH facility.







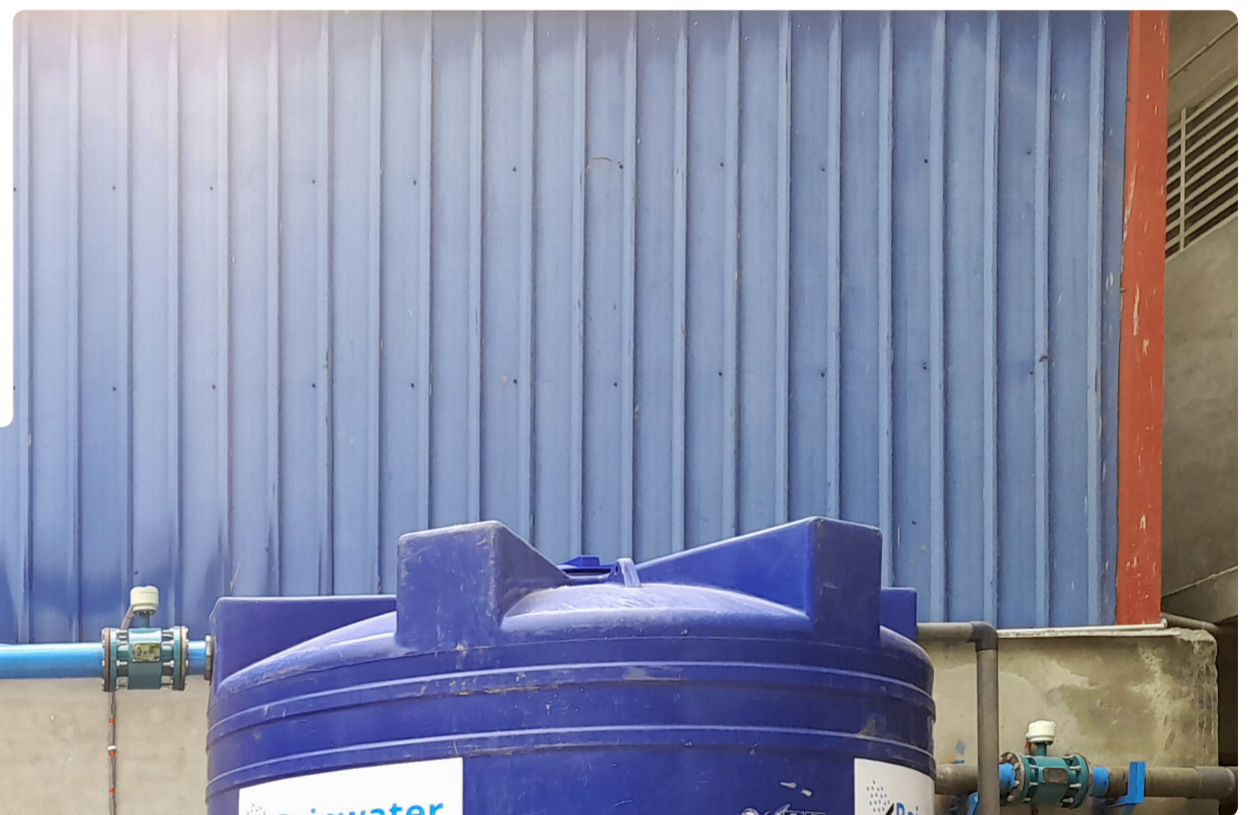
Our goal was to install a rainwater harvesting system on site that will provide us with clean water, solve drainage problems, help us become partially self-sufficient.

*Jahid Hashan*  
Head of Admin, HR, and Compliance at Incredible Fashion Ltd.

# The developed rainwater harvesting system can capture **3,739,482 liters** of water per year



Rainwater is used for flushing, handwashing, mopping, gardening, and car washing. Excess water is used to recharge the underground aquifer.



The rainwater harvesting system at incredible Fashion Ltd. is designed and implemented following the 3R (retain, reuse and recharge) principles.







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