



**COVID-19 Response:
VisionSpring's Programmatic and
Supply Chain Interventions**
Concept Note



Background

Pivoting VisionSpring's Capabilities to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

VisionSpring is the pioneering social enterprise accelerating the uptake of affordable eyeglasses in low income communities. VisionSpring operates at the intersection of community health workers, hospitals, government health ministries, freight and logistics, and the garment/textile manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Last year, we enabled 1.3 million people around the world to see clearly through eyeglasses. In delivering on our eye health and livelihoods mission, we have developed capabilities that we are now using to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rising to the challenge posed by this health crisis, we have pivoted our capabilities to protect health workers and help prevent the spread of the virus.

VisionSpring's Core Capacities to Support COVID-19 Response

A network of 350 health care providers: As a part of our normal operations, VisionSpring provides eyeglasses and training support to government, mission and private hospitals, primary care clinics, vision centers, eye hospitals, and community health workers, many of whom are on the frontline of COVID-19 response in Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia.

Supply chain centers: Our Supply chain centers in Noida and Pune, with procurement, warehousing, pick-pack and dispatch capabilities, source and deliver a wide range of COVID-19 relevant supplies and equipment for frontline health providers.

A 200-person community mobilization team: Trained in community health service delivery, mobilization, education and awareness-raising, our team will conduct COVID-19 education campaigns in communities that we serve through our pre-existing programs including: slum communities, transportations hubs, schools, artisan collectives, agricultural estates, and other high-risk, population-dense areas.

Hotline and data-entry support: VisionSpring has a hotline service for its vision camp customers which we are retooling to also provide COVID-19 information for callers. In addition, 15 data-entry operators are available to support rapid community assessments.

Emergency response experience: Five members of VisionSpring's leadership, including our global CEO and chairman of the India board, have prior experience leading emergency response activities, including for the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Japan's earthquake and tsunami, and the creation of best practices in humanitarian response through SPHERE India.



Background

Rooted in Our Values

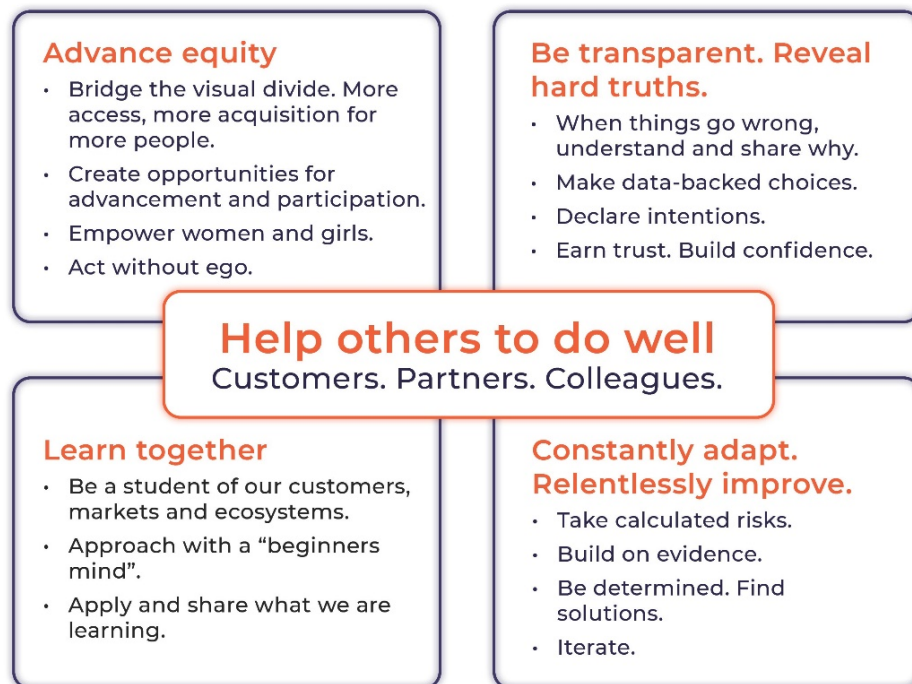
In response to COVID-19, the VisionSpring team is leaning hard into our values, starting with “Help others to do well.” We are a mission-driven organization rooted in the healthcare that operates at the intersection of livelihoods, education and road safety. Our customers live in low-income communities at risk of rapid transmission of the virus, and our healthcare partners are on the frontline of COVID detection and treatment. We see rising to the challenge posed by COVID-19 as our moral imperative.

Putting our “Constantly adapt. Relentlessly improve,” value into practice, we have pivoted our capacities and organized our work into two lines of activity.

Aligned with Constantly Adapt, we are responding to COVID-19, taking calculated risks, being determined and solution-oriented. We are adapting ourselves, and our skills and assets, to the new task of slowing the spread of the virus and ‘flattening the curve’ of the global pandemic.

Aligned with Relentlessly Improve, we are using work-from-home time to strengthen our systems and build our skills. We have formed a “Learn Together” committee that has developed and is delivering 50 training modules, ranging from refreshers on refractive error and effective counseling techniques, to stress management and conflict resolution.

Everything we are doing and learning in this time, will enable us to serve our customers and partners, and keep our team safe in delivering on our mission when the crisis wains.



Interventions in Brief

VisionSpring's COVID-19 Prevention & Response Initiatives

- a) **Protecting health workers: Pooled procurement for VisionSpring's network:** Leveraging VisionSpring's procurement capacity and Noida supply chain, we are sourcing personal protective equipment, hygiene items, COVID-relevant medical commodities and handwashing stations. With financial support, VisionSpring will make items available at-cost or on a subsidized basis to government and mission hospitals, prioritizing those treating suspected and active COVID-19 cases.

- b) **Handwashing and health information stations:**

Following the example of effective infection prevention during outbreaks of cholera and Ebola, we will set up handwashing stations and COVID-19 messaging in high visibility, public areas associated with VisionSpring's core customer groups. These include transportation hubs, weaving/artisan communities, garment factories, agricultural estate areas and schools. The source-water barrels of the handwashing stations carry lightly chlorinated solution, which will be prepared by staff and/or health-trained community members. This chlorination aids in killing the virus during hand washing and in the lower receptacle bucket. Importantly, the spigot flows just like a sink so that both hands can be washed at the same time.



- c) **Masks for All: Cloth mask production and distribution:**

VisionSpring sits at the intersection of the health sector and the garment sector. Through our *Clear Vision Workplace* program, we have relationships with some of the largest manufacturers of garments in India, Bangladesh and Vietnam, as well as established connections with artisan groups and weaving communities. We have provided them with design specifications to produce cloth masks that meet the needs of the general public, as well as designs to manufacture reusable masks for health workers that include a built-in pocket for a replaceable filter. US, Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese health authorities recommend that people wear cloth masks in public to reduce the virus loaded droplets, and to offer some degree of protection.



- d) **Personal Protective Equipment for community health and primary care workers:**

In association with VisionSpring's *Reading Glasses for Improved Livelihoods* program and long-standing support for community health workers, pharmacists and primary care providers, we are distributing supplies to frontline primary care and personnel. Supplies will

keep them safe while coming into close contact with potential COVID-19 positive cases. *Kit contents:* Handwash/soap, gloves, masks, protective goggles, and thermometer (for self-monitoring).

- e) **Community COVID-19 prevention information and communication:** VisionSpring's vision camp teams are being redeployed to provide accurate information about COVID-19 prevention and ways to seek help in the communities we serve. Importantly, the public health information, communicated through posters, leaflets, loud speakers and in person counseling, will also include messaging to counter myths and falsehoods, particularly those that promote social stigma and dangerous behaviors.
- f) **Appreciation and safety stations for drivers and transportation workers:** In association with VisionSpring's *See to be Safe* program, we will be providing drivers, mechanics, allied transport workers and the transport/port authority staff with items that encourage hand hygiene and health monitoring. In addition, they will also receive food items as a gesture of appreciation for their work as COVID-19 responders during the lock-down and beyond. *Kit contents:* mask, handwash/soap, protective eyeglasses, disinfecting spray for surfaces, dried food items.



Intervention supports

- g) **COVID-19 Hotline:** VisionSpring has a hotline service for its vision camps which will be retooled to provide COVID-19 information for callers that is consistent with the World Health Organization guidelines on COVID-19 prevention, hygiene, health-seeking behavior, government self-quarantine instructions, as well as state-wise helpline numbers for testing, and reliable online resources. The phone number will be shared through all activities listed above.
- h) **Mobile vans as a basis for service and health announcements:** VisionSpring vans are equipped with loudspeakers and will be deployed for kit distribution and other community awareness activities,

We stand with you as you look to serve your beneficiaries, patients, and customers in this tumultuous period. For queries, please contact: covid19response@visionspring.org