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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **VisionSpring Named by the International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) as a Vanguard Member of the Million Lives Club**

***The Global Non-Profit is Being Recognized for its Contribution of More than \$1.2B in Economic Impact for People Living on Less than \$5 per Day***

**(New York, NY) October 22, 2019**— [VisionSpring](#) announced today that they have been selected as a Vanguard member of the [Million Lives Club](#), an initiative that celebrates innovators and social entrepreneurs who are scaling impact in improving the lives of those living on less than \$5 a day.

[Awarded by the International Development Innovation Alliance \(IDIA\)](#), the Million Lives Club was established to collectively highlight social innovators who have reached transformative numbers of clients and will act as a powerful platform to encourage the uptake and scaling of innovations; illustrate the importance of innovation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals; and increase the use of social entrepreneurs and innovators as key delivery partners for development agencies.

The Million Lives Club (MLC) is comprised of three cohorts of innovators and social entrepreneurs who are improving the lives of people living on less than \$5 a day:

- MLC Vanguard: Celebrates those who have directly impacted 1,000,000+ clients with their innovations
- MLC Voyager: Recognizes innovations expected to impact 1,000,000+ clients within 18 months
- MLC Pioneer Highlights innovations that have scaled to meet the needs of 40%+ of their target populations.

“We are honored to be named a Vanguard member of the Million Lives Club,” said Ella Gudwin, VisionSpring’s CEO. “It took us ten years to reach our millionth customer. Now, with our partners, we are correcting the vision of over 1.2 million people annually, and we are on track to reach our 10 millionth customer by 2021. Working with members of IDIA and other MLC innovators to collaborate, learn together and put customers first will enhance our collective outcomes and ability to scale,” Gudwin added. VisionSpring’s goal to reach 10 million customers will create \$2.1B in economic impact for low-income households.

VisionSpring’s customers live on less than \$5/day. For them, a simple pair of eyeglasses means continuing to earn a living, seeing the blackboard at school, driving safely on the roads and enjoying all of life’s beautiful details. Uncorrected poor vision remains the world’s number one unaddressed disability, affecting 2.5 billion people globally. Studies show that glasses help students succeed in school and increase productivity among adults. A 2018 study (PROSPER) published in the *Lancet Global Health* revealed that wearing reading glasses increased worker productivity on average by 22%. This is the largest recorded productivity increase in a trial resulting from a health intervention.

Eyeglasses are a simple and powerful tool for boosting economic development and helping to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Eyeglasses underpin achievement of SDGs 1 – no poverty, 3 – Good Health and Well-Being, 4 – Quality Education and 8 – Decent Work.

### **About Million Lives Club and IDIA**

The Million Lives Club seeks to nurture innovation ecosystems by recognizing innovators and social entrepreneurs whose innovations have scaled to serve 1 million customers, or are rapidly approaching this milestone. The Million Lives Club is an initiative inspired by members of the International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) and supported by a growing [partnership](#) of leading development organizations. For more information, visit [millionlivesclub.org](http://millionlivesclub.org).

The International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) – a collaborative platform with the shared goal of “*actively promoting and advancing innovation as a means to help achieve sustainable development*”, including through the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

At the heart of this Alliance is a commitment to exchange innovation-related knowledge and learning across organizational, sectoral and geographic boundaries. This

shared learning is critical not only to collaboratively enhance the development of new products, services and ways of working, but to also ensure that the lessons arising from both success *and* failure can be disseminated to inform the more efficient adaptation and scaling of innovations within different countries, populations and contexts.

By leveraging the extensive knowledge and experience of its members, IDIA therefore seeks to stimulate the co-production of public goods that support innovation and, at the country level, hasten the creation of strong ‘innovation ecosystems’, in which favorable policy and regulatory frameworks, open data systems and domestic resourcing come together for innovation to thrive.

### **About VisionSpring**

VisionSpring is the pioneering, international social enterprise accelerating the uptake of affordable eyewear among people who earn less than \$4 per day in emerging and frontier markets. Founded in 2001, VisionSpring uncovers latent demand for vision correction; conducts community, workplace and school vision screenings; trains others to do the same; and supplies radically affordable, durable eyeglasses. VisionSpring has delivered more than 5.5 million pairs of eyeglasses, providing vision correction in 43 countries with over 385 NGO, corporate, government and health partners. VisionSpring has been recognized for its innovative work, receiving multiple awards including the Skoll Award; social entrepreneur fellowships from Draper Richards Kaplan, the Aspen Institute, and the Schwab Foundation; and honors from World Bank, Duke University, [Fast Company](http://www.fastcompany.com), and Tribeca Film Festival, among others. [www.visionspring.org](http://www.visionspring.org)

