



The Download November 2021



We would like to start this bulletin by paying tribute to the late **Cécé Nieba**, a dear colleague and one of our Principal Graders from Guinea who sadly

passed away in August this year. Many thanks to Dr André for sharing the following:

Born in N'Zérékoré in south-eastern Guinea, **Cécé Nieba** leaves behind a widow and five children. He started his career in NTDs working for the oncho elimination control programme before working on trachoma and the wider eye care programme in Guinea.

In 2013 he was trained as a trainer for the Global Trachoma Mapping Project (GTMP) and in 2016, with Tropical Data, he became a Principal Trainer, part of an elite pool of international trainers who support surveys in endemic countries.

Cécé will always be remembered as a man with a strong spirit and talent for teamwork, which earned him a good place in any team. He had a great love for work well done, a great ability to work under pressure and was always available and smiling.

In difficult times, Cécé was the man to lighten the situation with his optimism and humorous stories that made you laugh no matter how distressed or sad you were. He never raised his voice in discussions and debates, he instead had the patience to listen to both sides and the art of reconciling the parties.

In a word, he was the epitome of a leader who was pivotal in supporting our teams in the field. May his soul rest in peace.



Other Tropical Data news:

This year, Tropical Data reached a new joint milestone with the GTMP – supporting surveys in our combined **50th country**: Sierra Leone! This represents an incredible amount of work since 2012, with an average of **1 person examined every 26 seconds**. We took the opportunity to celebrate, including [this fantastic video](#) featuring some of our trainers.



Teams visiting a household in Sierra Leone

Take a look at our fantastic video featuring some of our trainers [here!](#)



TO DATE

46
countries supported

2,507
EUs supported

7,896,524
people examined

Supporting new countries

Tropical Data has now supported surveys in 46 countries. Despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year we managed to work with some new countries including Sierra Leone, South Sudan and India. We asked our colleagues in India to share a little about their journey to trachoma elimination and their survey work:

India launched its own National Program for Control of Blindness (NPCB) in 1976, which was actually started as the National Trachoma Control Program in 1963. In recent years (2014-2017), the country conducted both trachoma prevalence and rapid assessment surveys, and in December 2017 declared that it was free of "infective trachoma". Since then, constant surveillance mechanisms have been established to report any new trachoma cases and ensure prompt treatment. Monthly surveillance data on the indicators of trachoma, as per WHO guidelines, are sent to the NPCB for review.



A woman being examined in the field in India.

This year, given the need for TT-only surveys, the team decided to work with Tropical Data to take advantage of the standardised approaches in methodologies, operations, outputs and the focus on data quality, and we have found the experience of working together fruitful so far.

In terms of lessons learnt by the trachoma program, the key has been regular monitoring and surveillance of indicators. Eliminating active trachoma as a public health problem has been made possible due to decades of

inter-sectoral efforts that included provision of antibiotic eye drops, personal hygiene, availability of safe water, improved environmental sanitation, availability of surgical facilities for chronic trachoma, and a general improvement in the socio-economic status in the country.



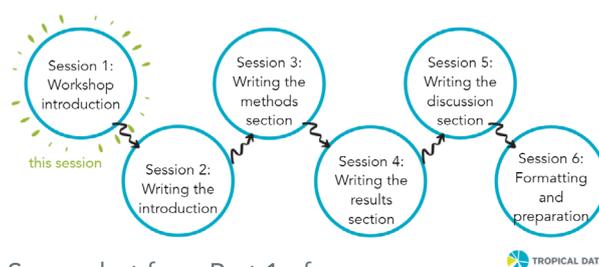
Virtual training being conducted by the Tropical Data trainers

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest challenge in conducting door to door surveys, but taking appropriate precautions and the vaccination drive in India have led to an impactful positive start.

Publications update:

Tropical Data is currently working with over 15 countries to publish data from Tropical Data-supported prevalence surveys. To date, 3 papers (from [Uganda](#), [Sudan](#) and [Brazil](#)) have been published, and 1 more (Kenya) is in press in the journal *Ophthalmic Epidemiology*, with many more close to completion. Publishing the data helps share methods and results, and provides citable support for evidence in elimination dossiers to be submitted to WHO.

We also have a new [online workshop](#) on writing trachoma survey publications, covering everything from how to structure the paper, what to include, and how to present the data. You can find it here: <https://bit.ly/3pMGn1W>



Screenshot from Part 1 of our online publication workshop.