

When I arrived in the village of Ruhira, Uganda in 2009, one of the pivotal people I met was Emmanuel Atuhairwe. “Dr. Emma,” who signs his emails “village doctor,” was one of a handful of doctors making rounds across six clinics, covering a population of more than 100,000. He was part of a concerted international effort in Ruhira to jumpstart economic development.

In 2009 to 2010, I helped the UN Development Program set up data collection for community health workers, verbal autopsies and patient visits at the village. The program employed a team of six data entry clerks, who meticulously typed all the relevant data into a solar-powered electronic medical record system (EMR). The international development researchers used this system to measure success of their interventions, but did not set up clinicians like Dr. Emma to use it.