

Software Maps Rwandan Health

A system of electronic mapping is being used to improve healthcare across Rwanda. The digital maps are designed to compile information from numerous databases and use it to both track and predict outbreaks of disease. This can then be used to help developing countries best utilise their limited resources.

By putting this information together on a map, correlations can be found between things that might not be obvious from looking at graphs or tables. Information collected in Rwanda for example shows not only the locations of health services, but water and electricity supplies as well. It also records how many cases of illnesses such as malaria have occurred in different parts of the country. The interactive layers on a map can then be used to plan where specific health services and supplies are most needed for example.

The system has allowed health workers in Rwanda track the number of malaria cases at each health facility. A dot on the map centred at each clinic appears larger or smaller depending on the number of cases.

The biggest challenge is to collect enough information to make the databases reliable.

But the results could have far-reaching effects for government policy and making the best use of time and money.