



Pilot Testing the RHD Action Needs Assessment Tool in a Live Environment

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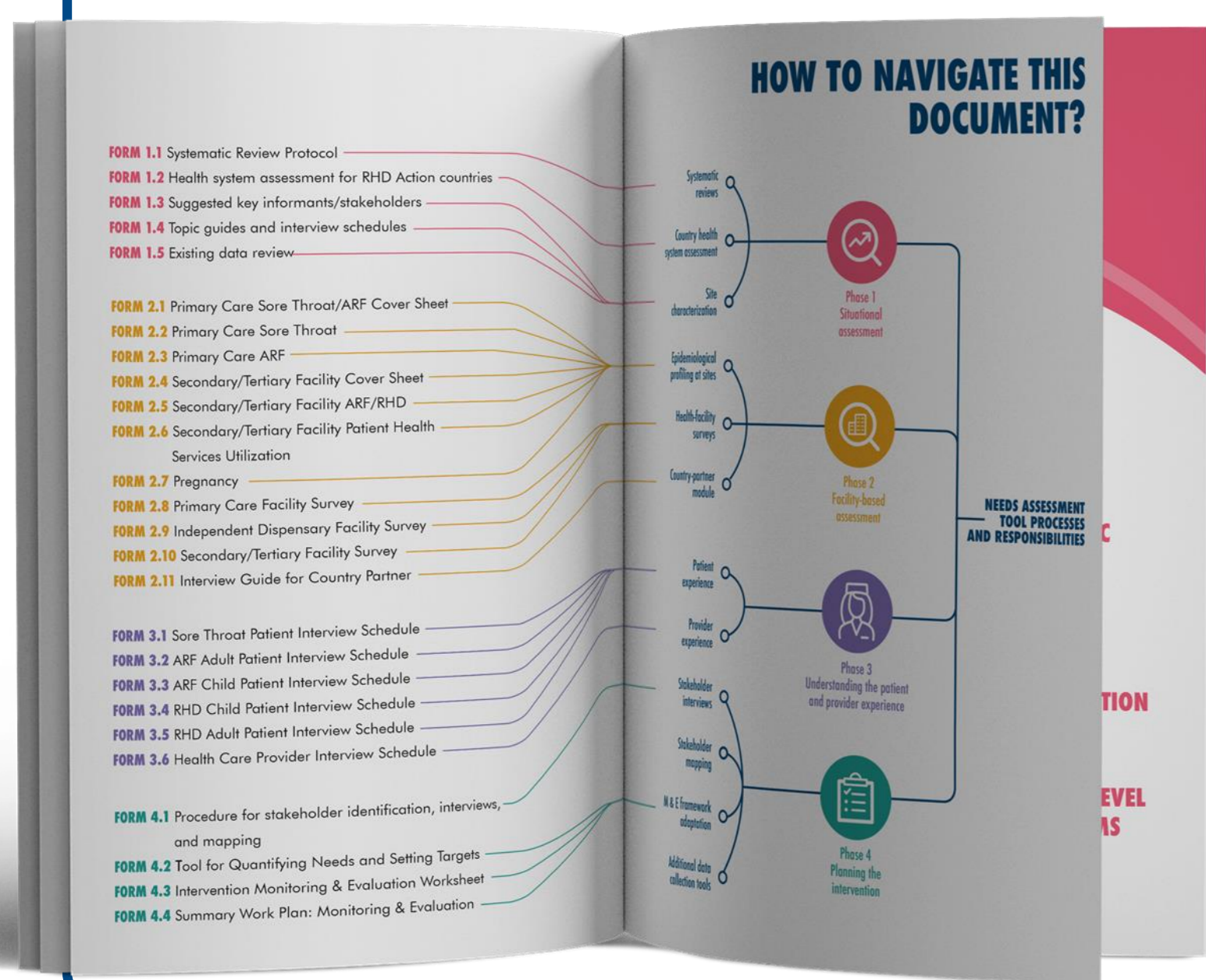
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BACKGROUND

In 2016 RhEACH, with support from RHD Action, developed a Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) to target interventions to prevent and control Acute Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease in resource-limited settings. The tools were developed by public health practitioners and health care professionals with clinical and field experience, but had not been tested in a real-time, live environment. Our objective was to test the NAT tools in a live, resource-limited environment.



METHODS



A protocol was developed by a multi-university team incorporating selected qualitative and quantitative tools, and conducted at two peri-urban clinical sites Uganda in May 2017. RhEACH conducted a site visit to observe and assist with the application of the tools at one site. Information regarding the other site experience was obtained via skype interview. The pilot framework was based on assessing Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the application of NAT tools and User Guide.

RESULTS

Initial observations and feedback from the sites suggest that:

- Pre-implementation site strategy meetings are critical to discuss interviewing techniques, logistics, and adaption of questions and topics to the local context.
- Questions and prompts in the Interview Guides should be reviewed for formatting, flow and redundancy.
- A cover sheet to record demographic and employment information on each respondent should be developed.
- Incorporating user guide materials into individual tools, using You Tube links or similar media, should be considered to make them more accessible.
- The role of technical support in pilot projects should be formalized so that expectations are clear.



CONCLUSION

Pilot testing data collection tools and methods in a live environment is a critical component of the needs assessment process. Lessons learned provide the basis for improving and refining tools to be relevant, effective and efficient for end-users.



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