

# history, actuality and future of Safe injection facilities Switzerland

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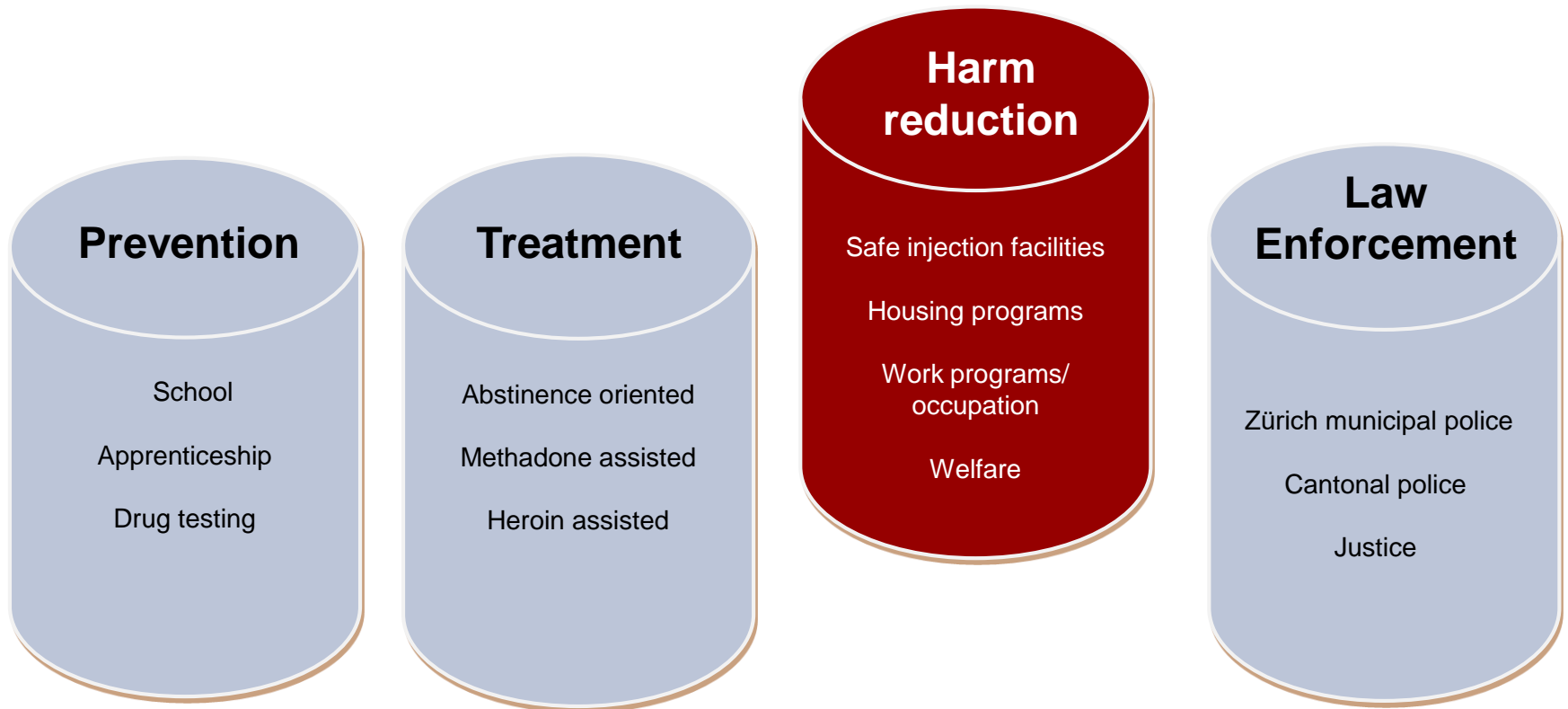
**Stadt Zürich**

Soziale Einrichtungen und Betriebe

# Zurich: The Needle Trauma (1986 – 1995)

- 1986-1992: Platzspitz (the so called «Needle Park»)
- 1992-1995: Bahnhof Letten (the site of a former train station)
- Lawless areas, violence, gun fights, excessive deal
- Approximately 600 drug users per year infected with HIV
- 400 to 500 hepatitis B viral infections per year
- Approximately 600 hepatitis C viral infections per year
- Between 5 to 10 artificial respirations per day
- Approximately 80 drug-related deaths in the City of Zürich per year
- Distribution of roughly 6'000 syringe and needlesets per day

# Switzerland: Four-pillar policy



# City of Zurich: principles of drug policy

- Main objective: compliance with urban environment, not abstinence
- Maintenance of public order
- Integration of drug users
- The Swiss Four Pillars Policy: prevention, law enforcement, treatment and harm reduction
- Cooperation and coordination between social work, police services and medical assistance services

# Safe injection facilities

- Drug consumption rooms set up for a supervised and hygienic use of pre-obtained drugs (injecting, smoking/inhalation or sniffing of drugs)
- Meeting place and safe haven, recreational activities
- Medical counseling and health promotion, first aid and doctor's consultation on-site
- Exchange/supply with syringes and needles
- Information and counseling, personal single case work, triage
- Laundry, showers, clothes exchange
- Work opportunities (e.g. lunch counter, cooking)

# Locations in the city of Zurich

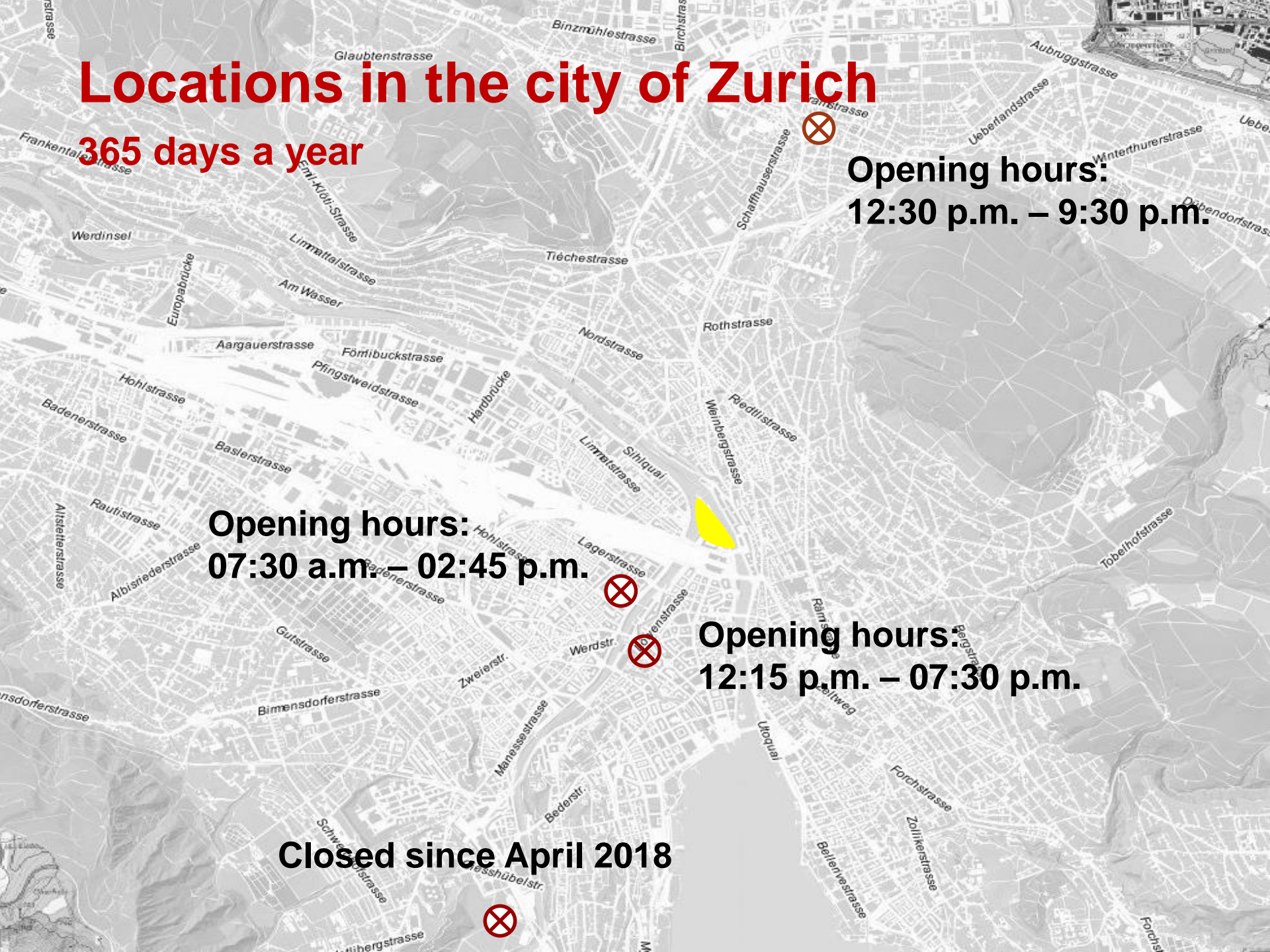
365 days a year

Opening hours:  
12:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

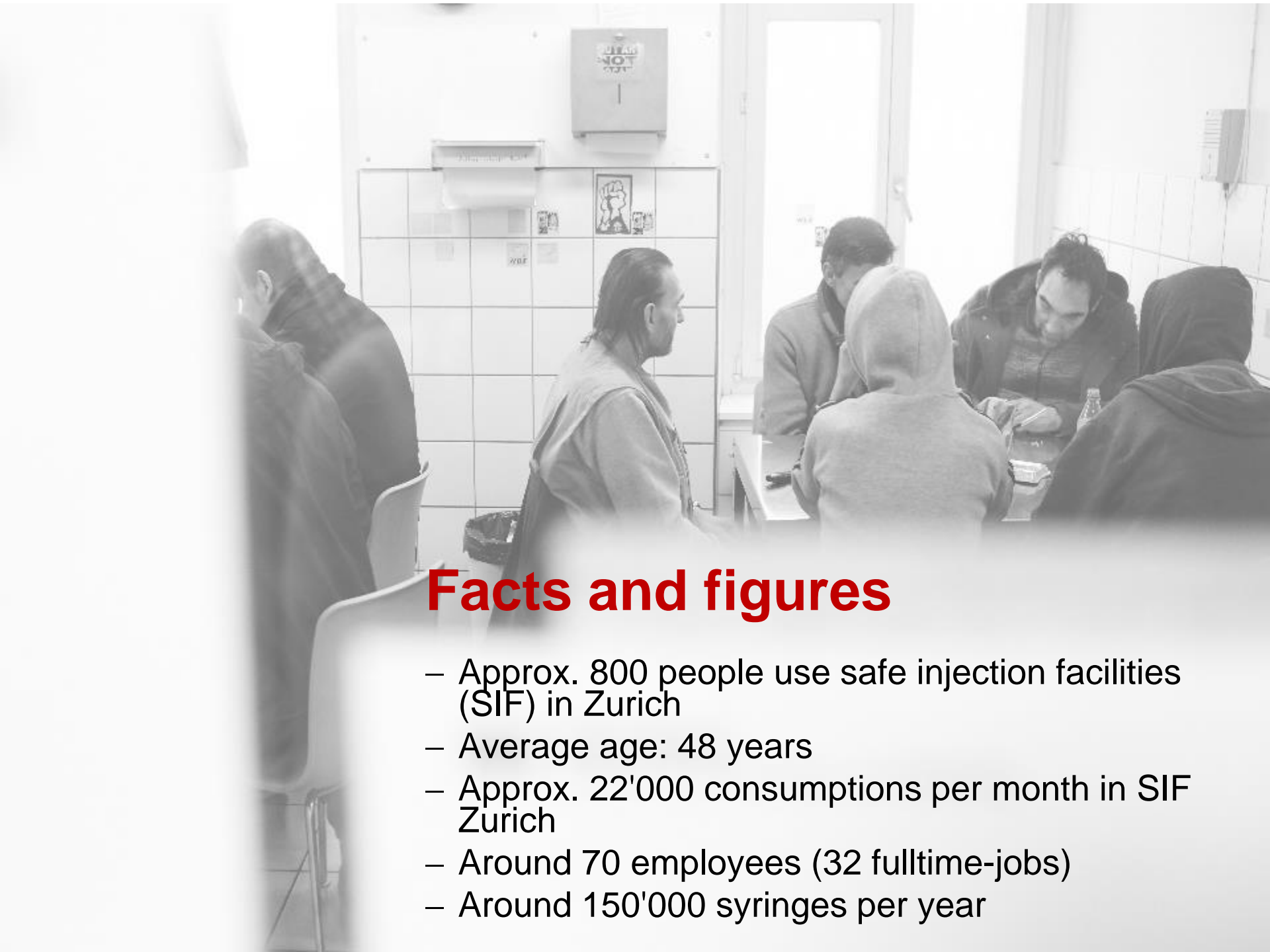
Opening hours:  
07:30 a.m. – 02:45 p.m.

Opening hours:  
12:15 p.m. – 07:30 p.m.

Closed since April 2018







## Facts and figures

- Approx. 800 people use safe injection facilities (SIF) in Zurich
- Average age: 48 years
- Approx. 22'000 consumptions per month in SIF Zurich
- Around 70 employees (32 fulltime-jobs)
- Around 150'000 syringes per year

# Collaboration between Harm Reduction and Law Enforcement

## **Strategic objectives of Drug Investigation Police:**

- managing drug markets, not eliminating
- drug dealers and not consumers as primary targets
- focusing on high-level dealers & organized crime, not low level dealers
- reducing drug-related crimes
- public safety & order, safe & clean neighbourhoods
- no public dealing & drug use, no open/visible drug scenes/markets

## **How we work together:**

- Employees of the Safe injection facilities absolve internship at the Police Department
- An internship in a Safe injection facility is obligatory part of the Police School
- Employees of the Safe injection facilities are teaching at the School of Police (mandatory part in each class)



# Neighbourhood and local community

The neighbourhood and local community are very sensitive to contact centres and their clientele. The division «Safety and prevention» pays attention to the needs of the neighbourhood and maintains an intensive dialogue with neighbours and the community.

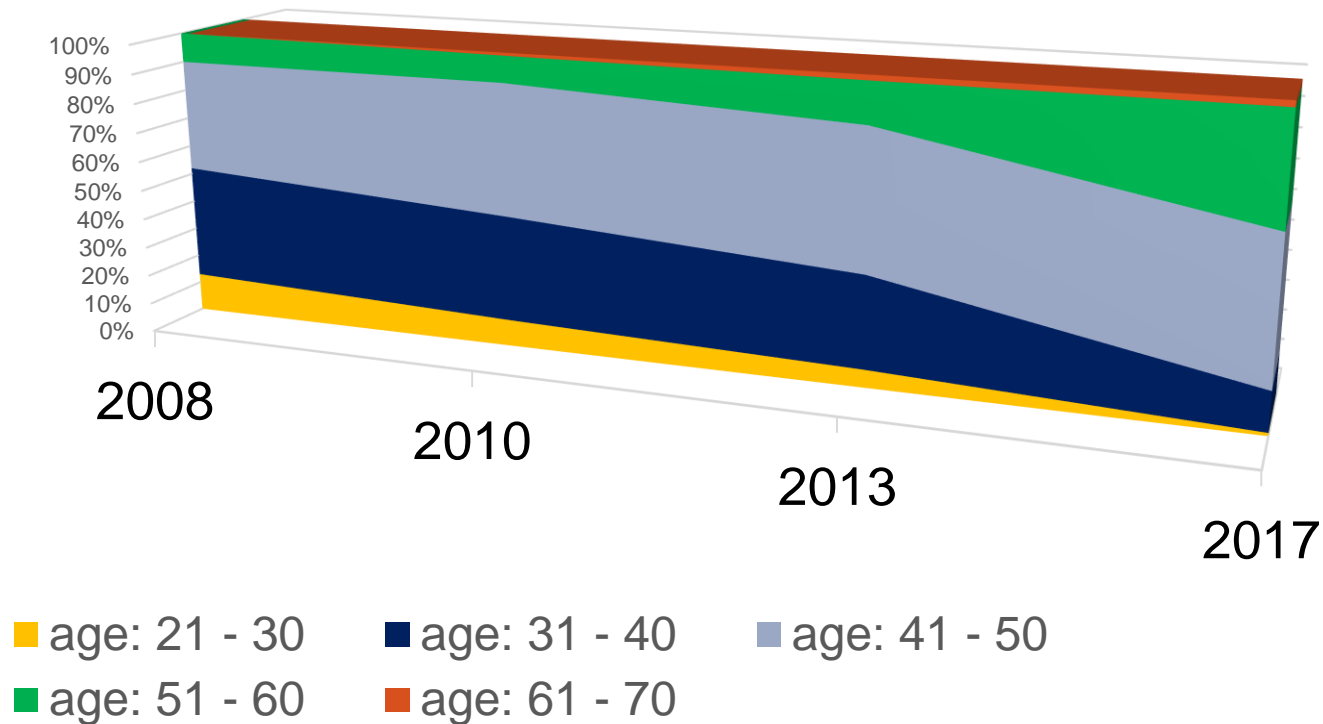
Therefore:

- The locations of the centres are very carefully chosen
- We aim for communication/information (meetings on a regular basis)
- The surroundings of contact centres are kept clean

# Other challenges

- clients with dual diagnosis (with violent behaviour)
- clients in need of care
- young clients
- pregnant clients

demographic trend



# Proof of effectiveness

## **The Cumulative Impact of Harm Reduction on the Swiss HIV Epidemic:**

Cohort Study, Mathematical Model, and Phylogenetic Analysis  
(University Hospital Zurich, University of Zurich, 2018)

Link: <https://academic.oup.com/ofid/article/5/5/ofy078/5001718>

### **Harm Reduction prevented:**

- 15'903 HIV infections among Drug Users until the end of 2015
- 5'446 acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) deaths
- Savings of 340 Million Swiss Francs per year

→ introduction of a harm reduction two years prior to 1988, could have halved the epidemic and preventing 3'161 HIV infections and 1'468 AIDS deaths