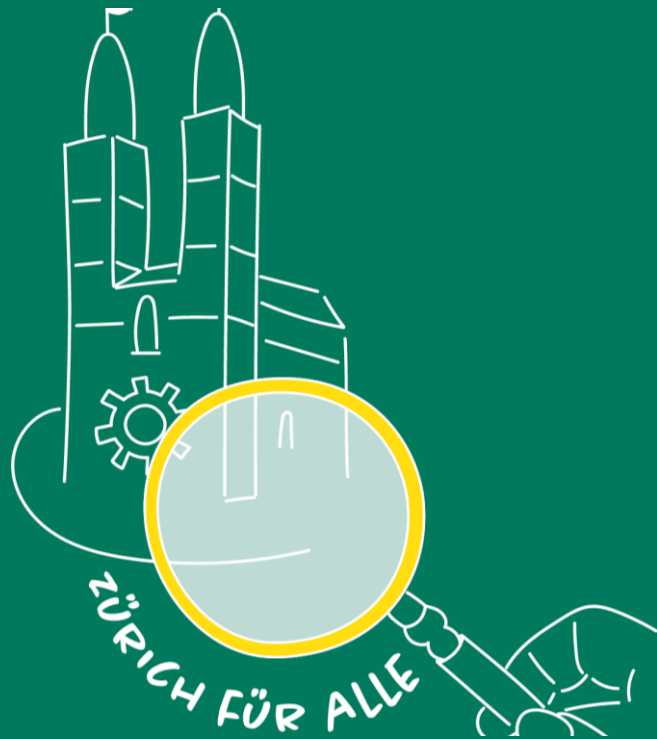




Zurich for everyone:

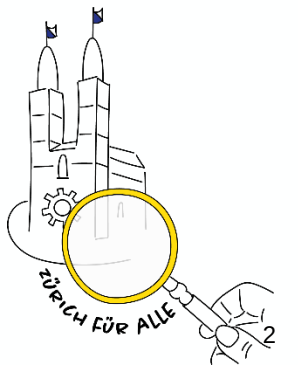
When «vulnerable»
people test public
services

Seminar SIG SUI
15th October 2025

Gisela Meier, Zurich University of Applied Science

Agenda

- Project overview
- Establishment of a «pool» with test people
- Previous experiences, challenges and best practises
- Questions and discussion



Project overview



Project team



Prof. Dr. Monika Götzö



Prof. Dr. Peter Streckeisen



Gisela Meier



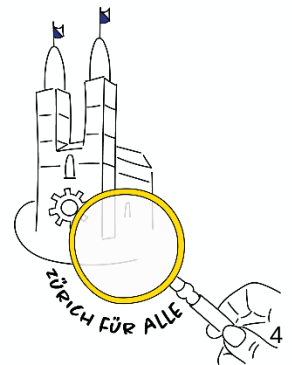
Elias Brandenburg



Dr. Barbara Baumeister



Dr. Rahel Strohmeier



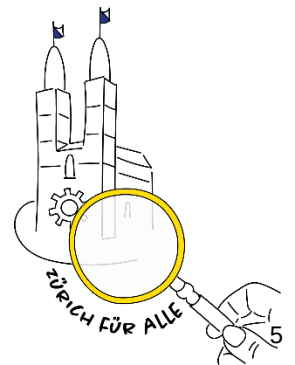
Introduction

Context

- 3-year pilot project commissioned by the City of Zurich (2025-2028)
- Focus: User-centered development and evaluation/testing of public services.
- Open to all public services from all departments (finance, safety and security, health and environment, civil engineering, building, social affairs, school and education, ...)

Objective

- Making public services more inclusive.
- Focus: Integrating the (potential) service user perspective of vulnerable populations.



Test types and methods

Test type	Methods
Concept or service development	Co-Design Workshop, User advisory panel
Testing of a prototype	User acceptance test, Group discussion,
Testing of an existing service	User Journey, Knowledge Lab
Testing of information material	Feedback Workshop, Interviews

Test examples

Digital application for financial benefits

Testing of prototype, feedback workshop with 9 participants

Profile of test participants: affected by poverty; recipients of social welfare or health benefits

Statistical survey

User Journey with 11 participants (2 groups)

Profile of test participants: low education/low-skilled (group 1), non-native speakers (group 2)

Social prescribing in health sector

Feedback workshop with 7 participants

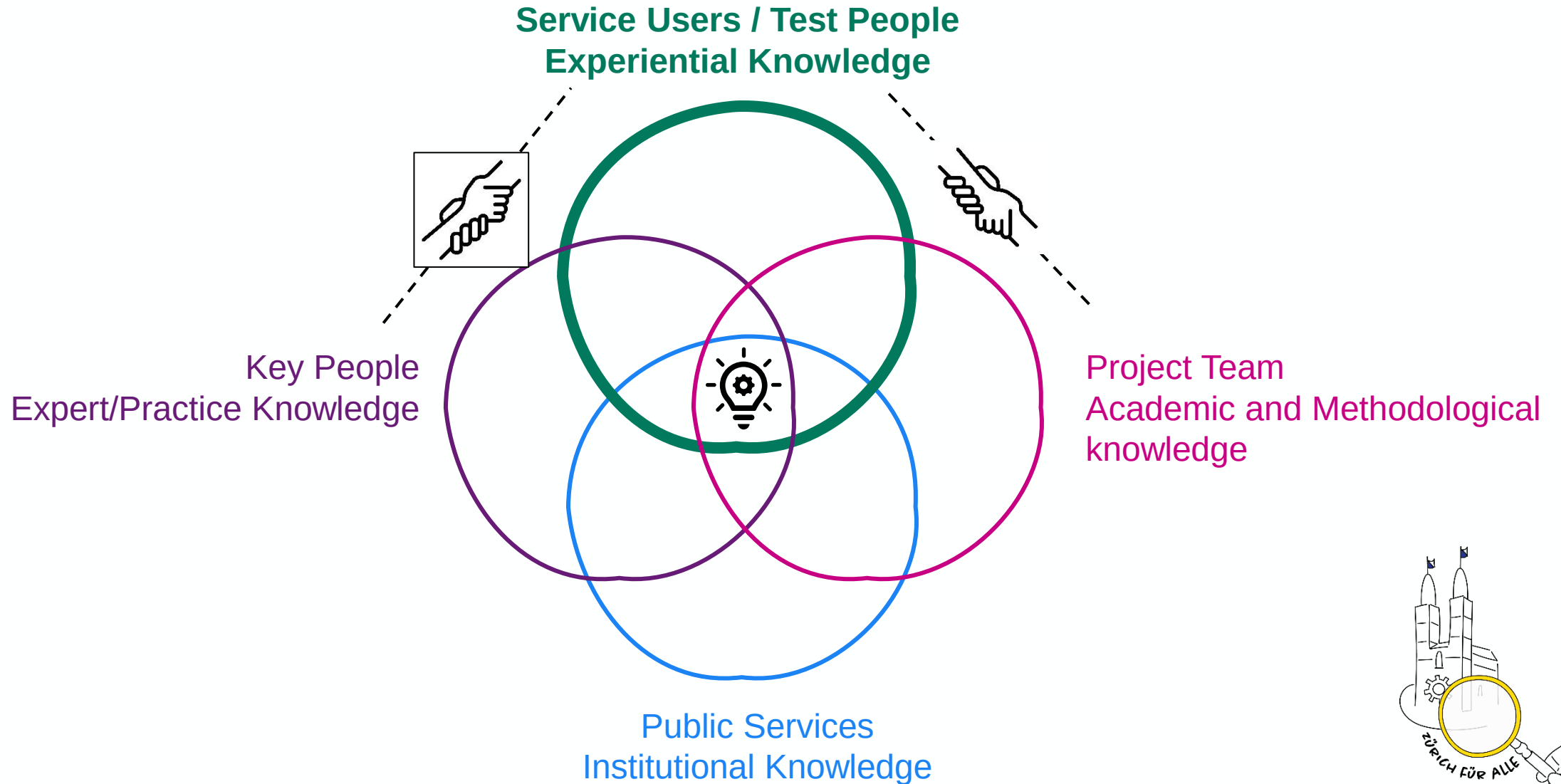
Profile of participants: various social barriers

Funeral Service Office

User Journey with 7 participants, knowledge lab

Profile of test participants: non-native speakers, old age, refugees, low education/low-skilled, neurodiversity

Who is involved and how?



Establishment of a «pool» of test people

1) Workshop

Workshop with experts by experience to identify mandatory criteria for test people *facing special barriers*:

Results:

- No current severe psychological crisis
- Postal address OR phone number OR email
- Open for different ways of life, open minded, respectful
- Willing to work

Not a criteria:

- Permanent home
- Kids and/or pets
- German language skills



2) Kick-Off

- Public event for and with potential test people
- Project information
- Group discussions
- Trust building

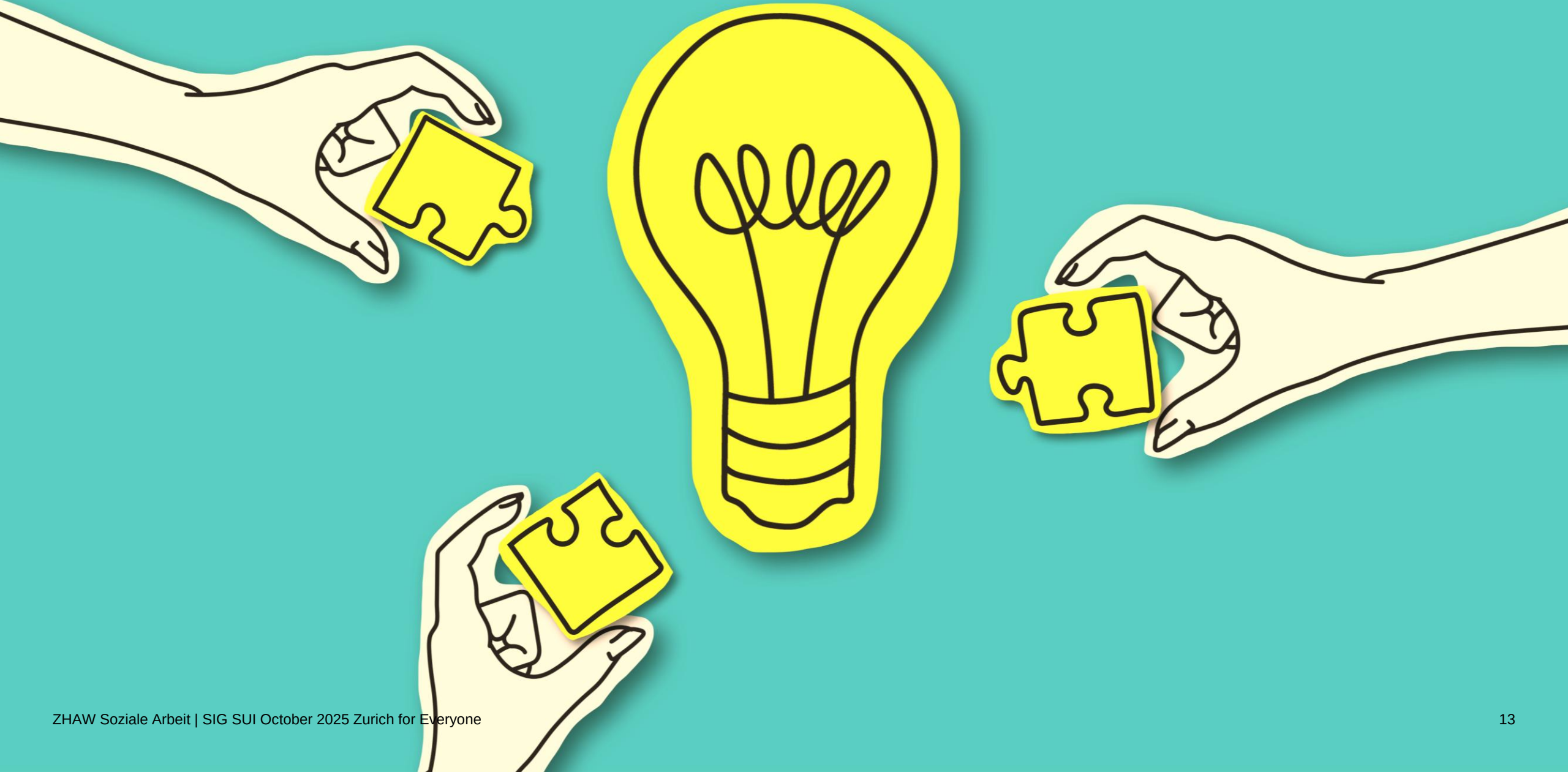
Result:

~ 30 future test persons

Current test pool

- Approximately 50 (potential) participants
- Repeated assignments
- Refugee / migration background, often combined with experiences of discrimination

Experiences, challenges, best practices



User Journeys

- The most popular test type and...
- ... the most complex as well
- Introduction is a challenge
- Documentation is time consuming
- Less ist more!

Collaboration with test people

- High appreciation
- High motivation
- Well-being has priority
- Address concerns

Main (subjective) insights (1)

“A further point of reflection, which I did not mention in the last part of the discussion, is the following: I spent a lot of time explaining to Yohannes what a 'survey' was, I don't think such questionnaires are provided in the country of origin. It was difficult for Yohannes to understand/conceive the quality of life questions and the purpose of the questionnaire.

It should be taken into account that many of them come from developing countries. Obviously, we are considering people who struggle to have access to basic services (e.g. housing, medical care etc.) and the questions concern services that go beyond primary needs.

Above all, it was difficult to make the candidate understand the tasks of the Municipality of Zurich, therefore what the Municipality of Zurich does and what function it has.

The questionnaire, indirectly/unintentionally, selects some types of candidates and excludes others. For example, only people who actually use the services on a regular basis may answer the questionnaire.”

Main (subjective) insights (2)

LESS IS MORE

WHAT

NEXT?

Next steps

- 7 tests in preparation
- Annual social event in November 2025
- External evaluation until the end of 2026
- Decision on permanent integration in City of Zurich

Questions and discussion



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