This study resulted in the creation of a new media format for urban youth, adopting a living lab-approach, as current studies have shown that this group is currently not reached with the contemporary media offer. Living lab research is a state-of-the art methodology that aims at involving end-users in the innovation process over a longer time span, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques and tools. In a first phase, a panel of urban youngsters was created using an intake survey (N=290). These data were analyzed resulting in three distinct types of urban youngsters. In a second phase, a qualitative research trajectory was organized in order to refine the three profiles and get an insight in their media use, digital skills, media preferences and needs with regards to the current media offer. Research methods during this phase included diary studies, participatory observation during workshops and probe research. In a third phase, co-creation sessions were organized with youngsters from the urban panel in order to get feedback on a concept that was iteratively developed during the first two phases of the project. Results show that mobile devices and social media are important for these urban youngsters and that most of these youngsters have quite some creative skills. Radio seems to be a less popular medium, although they spend a significant amount of time listening to music. Further, results show that these youngsters are in need of a platform which stimulates community building and offers a space to express their creativity. A third requirement for the development of a new media format that would meet the needs of these youngsters is a format that provides space for local elements and niche markets. This all resulted in the launch of Chase, an urban, crowdsourced radio station.

1. Introduction
While society is aging, cities are increasingly attracting a younger generation. This is exemplified by the population of European capitals, consisting of approximately 30% youngsters between 15 and 34 years (Spyns & Vanhee, 2011). These urban areas are characterized by interculturality: a large part of the inhabitants are not originally from the country they currently live in (Thissen, 2004/2005).

Studies on Belgian media consumption showed that the current media offering is not tailored towards migrant inhabitants, and especially not towards its urban youth (Devroe & Driesen, 2005). These migrants often have problems with social integration, encounter language barriers and suffer from poverty which causes school dropout and makes them enter the labor market with limited formal competencies, resulting in a higher degree of social exclusion (Spyns & Vanhee, 2011). However, according to a report on ‘Urban Youth and Europe Day’: ‘Young people from deprived areas are among the most creative in today’s society. That is why the Belgian EU presidency Youth kicked off a long-term commitment to Europe’s Urban Youth to give them the chance to express themselves and show Europe a positive image of urban life.’ (Spyns & Vanhee, 2011, p 6.). Therefore, the Flemish government states these youngsters should be stimulated by means of non-formal learning. In order to let urban youngsters transfer their creativity into labor skills, campaigns need to reach them. Unfortunately, current media are experiencing difficulties in doing so (Devroe & Driesen, 2005). The ‘Future Legends’-project explores new ways of reaching out to this target group by adopting a Living Lab-approach. Living Labs help to
develop and evaluate innovative services that enrich everyday life and can also be used for social innovation (Mulder, 2012).

2. **Living Lab-research**
Living Lab-research is a state-of-the-art methodology aiming at the involvement of end-users in the innovation process. Living Labs are experimental platforms where end-users can be studied in their everyday context (Niitamo et al., 2006). They function as an ecosystem with different stakeholders and where end-users are subjected to a variety of research methods, quantitative as well as qualitative. In this study both techniques will be used to gain deeper insights in the urban youth.

As expectations, desires, needs and experiences are a starting point to develop innovations (Poiesz & Van Raaij, 2002), Living Labs are often used for testing new products and services (Schuurman & De Marez, 2012). Mulder (2012) also proved the usefulness of Living Labs in social innovation-context, which gives Living Labs a much broader potential as facilitators for designing and co-creating tomorrow’s society with end-users. The ‘Future Legends’-project can also be labeled as a Living Lab-approach aiming at social innovation as it was used for assessing the needs of urban youngsters and detecting gaps in the current media offer. This resulted in the identification of opportunities and threats for policy and concrete actions.

3. **Methodology**
The research approach of the ‘Future Legends’-project is outlined in figure 1.

![Figure 1: Research Design](image-url)

The first phase researched the current ‘state-of-the-art’ of urban youth. A first step consisted of interviews with nine ‘urban legends’ - key figures in the urban scene that frequently interact with youngsters - resulting in a demarcation of the ‘urban’-concept. The interviews
resulted in defining urban youth, in the context of urban culture, as youngsters between 16 and 24, living in urbanized areas. In general, these youngsters are primarily male, lower educated, financially less comfortable and mainly – but not exclusively - allochthonous. These insights were quantified by means of a survey amongst the target population aiming at the assessment of media habits, practices and current needs. Specific attention was devoted to media skills and literacy. The survey was spread in Ghent, a Flemish speaking city in Belgium, on several urban settings such as micnights, dance classes, etc. In addition urban organizations such as youth movements and schools served as channels for recruitment of potential participants. Ghent is perceived as a good location for this research because it reflects cultural diversity and focuses on youth in general (http://www.gent.be/gentincijfers/). The survey also enabled to build a potential panel of end-users for the second phase of the study. A kickoff event featuring performances of some ‘urban legends’ was used as a trigger for participation.

The second phase consisted of an ‘intervention’ with the target population. Three different methods were simultaneously applied during the workshops: observation techniques, diary method and probing. As a first intervention, ‘training’ sessions were organized to gain insights in the digital skills of young urbans and how they cope with learning. In addition these sessions should trigger and stimulate their skills. One part of the qualitative research trajectory was participatory observation during the sessions. The participants were not aware of the researcher’s presence. They were filmed and notes were taken. The 23 youngsters participating in these sessions were selected from the panel of the intake-survey and corresponded with the different profiles that were identified. In total, three sessions took place with content matching the interests of the urban youngsters: making a beat with the Logic-software, creating a radio show built around hip-hop legend Method Man and composing a song using the material from the Beatmaking workshop.

Simultaneously, ten urban youngsters from the panel tracked their media usage during a seven days period with a media diary. They wrote down the devices they used (mobile phone, PC, game consoles, tablet, MP3 player, television and radio), the location and the activities they performed.

Seven other youngsters, selected from the ‘urban panel’ worked with design probes (Gaver, 1999). These are design-oriented research methods studying and mapping human needs and activities. Moreover, they offer end users the opportunity to generate ideas for innovation.
The purpose is not to gather complete information about people’s thoughts and lives, but to collect fragmentary pointers. These probes were given to youngsters for a period of seven days. Every day was related to a certain task: gathering information, applying for a job, sharing experiences, buying items, social media use and profiling, information sources and mobile phones. Afterwards a small interview was conducted regarding their media habits. This second phase ended with a closing event where urban youngsters could present some of their works from the workshops live on stage.

The third and final phase of the project consisted of bringing together and analyzing all data to assess the impact of the interventions, to build urban personas and to formulate policy recommendations.

4. Results

4.1. Intake survey
290 respondents completed the survey. 80% of the sample is male, confirming the expert definition of urban youngsters. The respondents’ age ranges between 16 and 24 years with an average of (Mage = 18.65, SD = 2.18).

Segmenting the sample was done using K-means clustering with variables deducted from the Model of Media Attendance (Larose & Eastin, 2004) and Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Both predict media behavior and are therefore appropriate to distinguish profiles. This led to three types of urban youngsters: the Community Urbans (Mage = 18.79, SD = 3.07, 91.8% male, 8.2% female), the Oldschool Urbans (Mage = 18.26, SD = 1.52, 74.4% Male, 25.6% female) and the Niche Urbans (Mage = 18.81, SD = 2.05, 77.2% male, 22.8% female).

The Community Urbans (N=61) have the highest Internet access, spend a vast proportion of their time online and perceive themselves as internet savvy. They use a lot of social media applications, believe in the positive outcomes of their Internet usage and are highly subjected to social influence in their Internet use. They comprise a majority of allochthonous youngsters (68.3%) and use social media in a varied way, spread over several social network sites. They are more ‘present’ on social media compared to the other segments: on average, they post four times a week on social media. In addition, on an average week day, they post seven items. These youngsters engage in ‘active’ activities on social media such as creating a page online (86.9%), creating events (90.2%), posting homemade videos (83.6%) and photos (100%) online.

The Oldschool Urbans (N=84) score the lowest on all items mentioned above. Considering their Internet access is relatively high, they do not use social media regularly. These youngsters have a negative attitude towards the latter and therefore expect little positive outcomes as a result of social media use. 35.9% of the Oldschool Urbans are older than 18. They are the least present on social media and use it less frequently compared to the other segments. They will post something online once a week and on an average weekday, they will post two items. They use the more basic features of social media such as the chat function, posting a reaction on someone’s profile, sending a private message and liking the posts of others. Nevertheless, there is still a fairly high percentage indicating never to chat (20.5%), never to put a reaction on someone else’s profile (29.5%), never to send a private message (29.5%) and never to like posts on other people’s profiles (32.1%).
The **Niche Urbans** (N = 145) show an average score on the aforementioned items and are the oldest (47.6% is older than 18). The Niche Urbans consist of an equal portion allochthonous (49.7%) and autochthonous (50.3%) adolescents. They are active on the more mainstream social media such as Facebook, Youtube and Google+. Three times a week they will post something online and on an average weekday, three items will be posted. The majority of activities they perform on social network sites are passive and communicative in nature, comparable to the Oldschool Urbans. These activities are: posting reactions on other people’s profiles (97.2%), using the chat function (95.9%), sending private messages (95.9%) and liking posts on other people’s profile (95.2%). Their engagement in these activities is somewhat higher than the Oldschool Urbans. Figure 2 provides a more detailed overview. Note that all differences are significant on the 0.000 level. Post-hoc measures show this significance is caused by the high percentages of Oldschool Urbans stating: ‘I am not able to perform this activity’.

![Self-efficacy](image)

**Figure 3: Percentage of urban youngsters not being able to perform activities**

The three profiles do not differ in their ownership of devices, with exception of the tablet (p=.016): more Community Urbans own a tablet (49.2%) compared to the Oldschool (28.2%) and Niche Urbans (30.3%). Activities on these devices vary per group. They behave differently on the mobile phone, especially when listening to the radio (p=.020) and social networking (p=.000). Significant
more Niche Urbans (24.1%) listen to the radio on their mobile compared to the Oldschool Urbans (7.4%). Community Urbans (68.4%) visit more social networksites via their phone compared to the Oldschool (31.5%) and the Niche Urbans (57.4%). The Oldschool Urbans use the desktop significantly less (42.1%) for social networking in comparison to the Community (68.3%) and Niche Urbans (62.5%) (p=.041). For laptop activities differences were found between Oldschool and Niche Urbans for: social networking (p=.012), surfing (p=.026), e-mail (p=.008), listening to the radio (p=.038) and music (p=.034) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Activities performed with laptop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Community urbans</th>
<th>Oldschool urbans</th>
<th>Niche Urbans</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Networking</td>
<td>63,8%</td>
<td>50,9%</td>
<td>73,9%</td>
<td>0,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>68,1%</td>
<td>62,3%</td>
<td>80,7%</td>
<td>0,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>53,2%</td>
<td>39,6%</td>
<td>64,7%</td>
<td>0,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to radio</td>
<td>14,9%</td>
<td>3,8%</td>
<td>18,5%</td>
<td>0,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>63,8%</td>
<td>50,9%</td>
<td>71,4%</td>
<td>0,034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three profiles act differently on their gaming console when surfing (p=.012), listening to the radio (p=.010) and music (p=.001). The Community Urbans surf significantly more on their console than the Oldschool (10.3%) and Niche Urbans (21.3%). The Community Urbans listen significantly less (46.7%) to music on their gaming console compared to the Oldschool (76.9%) and Niche Urbans (82.3%). Furthermore, the Niche Urbans listen significantly more (17.7%) to the radio on their mobile game console in comparison to the Community (6.7%) and Oldschool Urbans (0%).

Table 2: Activities performed with mobile game console.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Community Urbans</th>
<th>Oldschool Urbans</th>
<th>Niche Urbans</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>33,3%</td>
<td>12,5%</td>
<td>16,4%</td>
<td>0,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to the radio</td>
<td>10,0%</td>
<td>0,0%</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
<td>0,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12,50%</td>
<td>26,80%</td>
<td>0,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Community Urbans are the most active media users, the Oldschool Urbans the least. Significant differences are present for surfing on the internet, social networking and listening to music. The post-hoc Scheffe test indicates that the significant differences for listening to music are only applicable between the Commity and Oldschool Urbans.

Table 3: Average time spent on a weekday for following activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Community urbans (SE)</th>
<th>Oldschool urbans (SE)</th>
<th>Niche urbans (SE)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surfing on the internet</td>
<td>5,54 (0,72)</td>
<td>1,95 (0,26)</td>
<td>4,1 (0,31)</td>
<td>0,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>6,62 (0,91)</td>
<td>1,49 (0,32)</td>
<td>3,13 (0,31)</td>
<td>0,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>5,98 (0,81)</td>
<td>3,81 (0,61)</td>
<td>4,35 (0,37)</td>
<td>0,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching video</td>
<td>3,5 (0,54)</td>
<td>2,41 (0,41)</td>
<td>2,6 (0,27)</td>
<td>0,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to radio</td>
<td>1,17 (0,45)</td>
<td>1,06 (0,33)</td>
<td>1,07 (0,18)</td>
<td>0,966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Urbans feel a stronger connection to the city compared to the other profiles. This difference is significant between the Community, the Oldschool and the Niche Urbans (scores respectively 3.31, 2.81 en 3.12).

At the activity level, significant differences are found for going to a concert (indoors), a festival (outdoors), a Cypher (freestyling), the movies, a sports game, a singing or dance battle, a demonstration of street art and game events. Other surveyed activities were: going to the library, an exhibition, the theatre, a stand-up comedian/cabaret and visiting a museum.

Table 4: Activities performed in the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Community urbans</th>
<th>Oldschool urbans</th>
<th>Gaming Urbans</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concert (Indoors)</td>
<td>32,8%</td>
<td>16,7%</td>
<td>32,6%</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival (Outdoors)</td>
<td>45,9%</td>
<td>16,7%</td>
<td>32,6%</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cypher</td>
<td>18,0%</td>
<td>1,3%</td>
<td>13,9%</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the movies</td>
<td>62,3%</td>
<td>46,2%</td>
<td>62,5%</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports game</td>
<td>55,7%</td>
<td>29,5%</td>
<td>30,6%</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle</td>
<td>29,5%</td>
<td>9,0%</td>
<td>18,8%</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetart demonstration</td>
<td>14,8%</td>
<td>2,6%</td>
<td>12,5%</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game events</td>
<td>31,1%</td>
<td>15,4%</td>
<td>16,8%</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Results intervention

4.2.1. Community Urbans
The Diary studies reveal that Community Urbans constantly check their online profile. When not having access to a computer, they transfer this activity to the mobile phone. They share information on social media consciously, for instance they create specific groups not defined by Facebook to share information. The probe results show that these youngsters not only use social media for its social and profiling functions, but also to gather information, for example on upcoming events. These youngsters try to profile themselves by their media ownership: as well as the functionalities, the design will play a role in their choice for a mobile phone. In addition, the diary study exposed that they game out of boredom. Gaming on a mobile device is mostly performed during a ‘lost’ moment such as waiting for the bus.

The Community Urbans alter between listening to their own music and the radio. The latter serves as a ‘background’ and, as such, is passively listened to. Moreover, these youngsters engage in multitasking: different devices are used simultaneously, such as the computer being used while watching TV and texting.

The workshop observation revealed the enthusiasm and studiousness of these youngsters: after the first beatmaking session they downloaded a toolkit and pursued at home. One Community urban even made a new beat between the first and second session, while the other Community Urbans were already ahead of class, by practicing at home what would be addressed in the second part of the session. These youngsters are social in their learning: after the session they shared information on how other software could be used.
4.2.2. Oldschool urbans

Observations exposed how the Oldschool Urbans underrated their skills in the survey. For instance, during the ‘Making Radio’-sessions, they were capable of making an intro which required a certain amount of knowledge and skills. In addition the diary study showed that a girl belonging to this group regularly shops online. Nevertheless the skills addressed in the quantitative study mainly referred to social media skills and the qualitative study indicated that when interest for an activity is high, the Oldschool Urbans would be motivated to learn skills. The observations revealed that there is some uncertainty about their own skills. They learned to work with a flashmic, but before actually using it, they asked to go through the operation again.

They use their mobile for reading e-mails, but rarely consult social media on this device. They prefer to listen to their own music and seldom listen to the radio.

Oldschool Urbans engage in ‘offline social networking’: they go to shows and parties to ‘network’ with others. Two youngsters had a music collective and advertised it by spreading stickers. They prefer ‘oldschool’ techniques. The following quote translated from Dutch demonstrates this.

‘Playing with vinyl is still what the true meaning of being a ‘real’ DJ is. I love to have tangible material that is related to music; I like to own the covers of albums. Playing with CD’s is more profitable; you can download songs for less than 1 euro... but DJ’s that play with the computer are not real DJ’s.’

4.2.3. Niche urbans

In the quantitative results, the Niche Urbans did not show a clear profilation. The qualitative studies however showed that this is a group, with certain creative skills, that would like to receive space to ‘do their own thing’. These youngsters use social media especially for its instrumental and social functionality.

The Niche Urbans have no or only little interest in the current radio and television offer and are more interested in niche markets. Preferences for their own music collection and the freedom of listening to what they want is important to them. They mainly use online platforms, such as Soundcloud, where they can share their created music and listen to music of less mainstream artists. In addition they like to use Youtube for sharing items. Following quote translated from Dutch reflects their attitudes:

‘Everything you hear on the radio is commercial. Everybody knows this kind of music, but when looking at the underground scene you can find things that are 1000 times better and nobody knows or has heard of it, because it’s less commercial or less mainstream. Even though this music has better lyrics, better instrumental characteristics, tighter music, no one will know it when you play it at a party.’

During the workshops some participants clearly stated that there is not enough room or effort in Flanders (Belgium) to offer young talent the opportunity to express themselves. Following quote, translated from Dutch, demonstrates this.

‘We already tried to spread our music through youth organizations and we e-mailed several radio stations, but nobody bothers to respond. The Netherlands offers more opportunities for young groups. They have a lot there: punch-out battles for example or 101 Barz and Zonamo Underground.’
Furthermore, these youngsters game a lot. They own several consoles and play at home, with friends or on the road on a mobile console or phone. Their prefer gaming on a fixed console or the computer. Therefore they can be considered as ‘gamers’.

5. Conclusion
The Living Lab-approach seemed appropriate to uncover the media needs of the Urban Youth. The results were translated into three personas and five specific policy recommendations for the local government of Ghent.

5.1. Personas
The term was introduced by Cooper to describe a new way of creating user profiles. He defines personas as behavioral specifications of archetypical users (Cooper, 1999). Personas contain a story that explains the persons behavior, needs and goals.

---

**Example Persona:**

**Use Context**
- Mobile use of media
- Social use of media (Outdoors, at friends’ houses)

**Online activities**
- Accounts on a variety of social network sites
- Posts items online 4 days a week

**Skills**
- Relatively active in online behavior (uploads home made movies, creates groups/pages, invite friends online for events)
- Profiling and identity construction through social media
- Social media as information source

**City Life**
- Connectedness to the city
- Regularly goes to the movies, sports games, the library, festivals and game events

**Needs**
- On Online Community
- Local initiatives for teaching new skills
- Feedback on creative output
- Larger offer of local elements in current media offer

**Thomas**
Community Urban

**ID:**
- 19 years old
- Primary School Diploma
- On or both parents are not born in Belgium

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*Note: These youngsters can play an important role when launching new initiatives to stimulate the flow of information to the other profiles.*
5.2. Recommendations

Our research showed that urban youth need platforms that stimulate community building and offer room for information about local events and creative output. Developing an online platform has potential since Community and Niche Urbans are present on social media. Ideally this will link to the online profile of social networking sites. This would offer them the opportunity to profile themselves towards other members of the online community, an important factor for the Community Urbans. In addition this link could stimulate word of
mouth in their own social network. As the Oldschool Urbans have a more negative attitude towards social media and spend less time online, it will be important not to limit this to an online platform. It should motivate them to participate in the offline community as well. For example, the kick-off and closing event that were organized in the context of this project turned out to be a success formula, engaging youngsters to participate in this project. As a result a community of 434 people formed itself of which an online extension was created, linking to social media (www.futurelegends.be). When offering something that truly interests these youngsters – in this case music – motivation to participate in new projects or in a community will be higher.

Furthermore they need a platform that offers space to upload their own creations because they have no public outlet to share this yet. In addition feedback on their creations is required in order to further develop their skills. Therefore it is recommended that professionals become part of this community. The organization of workshops related to their interests could help them to develop new skills and can offer opportunities to the professional life by showing how these skills can be transferred to other contexts. Considering they are profoundly connected to the city, this should all happen on a local level.

To further elaborate on these local elements, current media should make more room for local elements (e.g. local brands, events, bands and DJ’s) to create a better identification and sense of community. This goes hand in hand with providing the space for creative output of urban youth.

The ‘Future Legends’-project resulted in a media platform called ‘Chase - Music From Scratch’ (www.chase.be) founded with assistance of local government. This online radio station offers youngsters a platform to express their creativity by participating in the show. Together with professional artists they can compose the playlist and air their own creations. The idea behind this platform is a bottom up approach: a radio station influenced or created by its audience. This is a first indication of the impact of our Living Lab-approach, but further studies and follow-up projects are needed to assess the added-value of this approach.

6. References

Cooper, A. (2004), The inmates are running the asylum: why high tech products drive us crazy and how to restore the sanity, Sams Publishin, San Francisco


