

## Report Outline

# Environmental Awareness Through Youth Storytelling: Urban Green Spaces in Madrid

This report analyzes the findings of high school students in Madrid who documented the challenges and benefits of urban green spaces through the Student SIDINL Newsletters initiative. The report presents specific cases of neglected parks and disparities in access to green areas, along with recommendations generated from the students' work, supported by mentorship from SIDINL curators and educators. The report underscores the critical role of youth-led storytelling in driving awareness and fostering dialogue around urban environmental issues, with tangible outcomes in community engagement and local policy responsiveness.

Madrid's urban development has led to a significant reduction in accessible green spaces, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. Rapid population growth and infrastructural expansion have exacerbated the problem, impacting air quality, urban biodiversity, and public well-being. The students, guided by the Student SIDINL Newsletter curators, explored the condition of public parks, tree-lined streets, and community gardens. They uncovered evidence of uneven distribution and maintenance, demonstrating how these inequities disproportionately affect marginalized communities. This report argues that youth-led storytelling offers a valuable lens to highlight these disparities, mobilize communities, and engage policymakers in finding solutions.

The research was centered on three specific neighborhoods in Madrid: Chamberí, Carabanchel, and Vallecas. The students mapped and photographed deteriorating public parks, conducted surveys with over 300 residents about park usage and satisfaction, and interviewed officials from the Madrid City Council's Department of Urban Planning. The students' work included multimedia content creation, such as infographics on tree cover loss, short videos featuring testimonials from residents, and an interactive digital map pinpointing neglected areas. Data were collected over a three-month period with training and guidance provided by SIDINL curators and the "Physiognomy at School" initiative.

The students' research identified a clear disparity in the distribution and condition of green spaces. Chamberí, a higher-income district, had well-maintained parks with ample recreational facilities, tree-lined streets, and accessible walking paths. By contrast, Carabanchel and Vallecas, lower-income neighborhoods, suffered from underfunded and neglected parks, with issues such as broken playground equipment, inadequate lighting, and reduced tree cover. Survey data revealed that 75% of Carabanchel residents felt their local parks were insufficiently maintained, compared to only 20% in Chamberí. Interviews with city officials acknowledged these disparities but cited budget constraints and competing priorities as key challenges. Additionally, the report noted that Vallecas had the highest percentage of residents (over 40%) without access to any green spaces within a 15-minute walking radius, underscoring a stark inequity in resource distribution.

The students' newsletter had a tangible impact on local awareness. Their work was shared at a community event in Vallecas, where residents, activists, and local environmental groups convened to discuss actionable steps to improve green spaces. One direct result was the formation of a community group in Carabanchel to advocate for increased funding for park maintenance, which held its first meeting just weeks after the event. Additionally, their social media campaign reached over 5,000 viewers, generating online discussions about green space access and prompting a response from Madrid's Urban Planning Department. In a formal statement, the department committed to conducting a review of resource allocation for green spaces and announced plans to prioritize underrepresented neighborhoods in future urban development strategies.

This report concludes that the Student SIDINL Newsletter program provides an effective platform for youth to contribute to urban environmental discourse. By combining storytelling, data collection, and community engagement, the students were able to highlight systemic disparities and inspire grassroots action. The program's integration of multimedia tools and participatory research methods equipped students with critical skills in advocacy and civic engagement. The initiative should be expanded to other schools in Madrid and integrated into regional environmental education initiatives. Further recommendations include increasing local government accountability by involving students in public consultations on urban planning and green space management. Long-term strategies should also focus on building stronger collaborations between schools, local authorities, and environmental NGOs to create a sustained impact.