



MONASH
University

FREE
TO BE

MADRID

CONTENTS

_Toc525549267Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Introducing Free to Be	3
1.2 Madrid city context	3
2. Methodology	6
2.1 Design	6
2.2 Sample	6
2.3 Recruitment of research participants	7
2.4 Analysis	7
2.5 Limitations	8
3. Findings	9
3.1 Characteristics of the pins	9
3.1.1 Pin location	9
3.2 Good Locations	10
3.3 Bad Locations	10
3.3.1 What makes a place bad?	10
3.3.2 Who are the main perpetrators?	13
3.3.3 How do girls and young women respond?	14
3.3.4 Where are the most prominent bad locations?	15
4. Conclusions	17
4.1 Recommendations	17
Acknowledgement	19
About Monash University XYX Lab	19
About Plan International	19
About Plan International Spain	19
About the Safer Cities Programme	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on Plan International's extensive experience of working with girls and young women in cities, including through our Safer Cities programme, this research sought to understand more about the experiences of girls and young women. *Free to Be* is a crowd-mapping website, implemented in Madrid in April-May 2018, that enables young women to identify and share the location of public spaces that make them feel uneasy and scared or happy and safe. It was designed in collaboration with Crowdsport, Monash University XYX Lab and young women within the city. As well as Madrid, *Free to Be* has been implemented in Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Melbourne and Sydney.

The *Free to Be* tool comprised an interactive map of the city and a survey which allowed girls and young women to drop 'pins' on the map – good or bad - and answer questions about their experiences there, as well as leave comments. A group of young women in Madrid input into the design and promotion of the tool, as well as having an opportunity to reflect on the findings to support analysis.

In total, 951 valid pins were dropped on spots of the Madrid map, of which 16% denoted good experiences and 84% bad. *On the street* was identified as the most common place for both the bad pins and the good ones (67% and 52% respectively). *Public transport* and *parks* were the next most common sites for pins, and they were mostly for bad incidents. *At the shops* and *public events* were more likely to garner positive pins.

The research found that the threat of sexual harassment with and without physical contact was the main issue for the participants of *Free to Be* Madrid. Overall, more than four out of five of the young women and girls who participated in Madrid experienced many forms of sexual harassment, but particularly verbal harassment. This was spread across the city, concentrated in public transport hubs, and consequently affected the freedom of girls and young women to move around the city and take part in activities. There was also a strong theme of public masturbation, with 11% of all bad comments noting this. In 78% of all bad pins, participants identified gender discrimination as a factor.

Nearly half of all the participants were resigned to the fact that such incidents are so frequent that they were used to it. Girls and young women reported avoiding certain parts of the city when alone if they had had a bad experience there, or simply never going back to a location. There was an extremely limited rate of reporting to officials, and very little action by authorities when incidents were reported. This highlights the wariness young women and girls have towards reporting incidents which, while serious enough to radically change their behaviour, are frequently not taken seriously by those who have the power to prevent reoccurrence or reassure safety concerns.

There is a level of normalisation of harassment of girls and young women by society. However, the responses by young women and girls indicate a high level of awareness of everyday harassment and an aptitude to engage and give voice to their lives and experiences. In Madrid, as in general in all the cities of the world, harassment on the city streets is not penalised, but rather is widely conducted and includes comments which are apparently intended as 'compliments'. The high levels of verbal harassment create environments of fear and intimidation, and are also a way to devalue women and girls. For Madrid to be accessible to all who live there, this needs to be addressed.

Based on these findings, young women in Madrid recommend:

1. **Education on equality and sexuality:** to highlight the value of women and girls and highlight the unacceptability of harassment and gender based violence. This must be implemented consistently throughout society, including in institutions, the family environment and in schools. Comprehensive sexuality education should also be rolled out to increase understanding of respectful and equal relationships.
2. **Reconsider the role of the media and change the narrative on street harassment:** campaigns, messaging and media around harassment needs to focus on the harasser and not the victim. Society must condemn all kinds of harassment and abuse and men and boys must be held to account for their actions.
3. **Men and boys need to change their behaviour:** listening to and empathising with the experiences of women and girls in Madrid, questioning and challenging discrimination and harassment wherever they see it, championing and advocating for equality and the rights of women and girls.

4. **Revision of the penal code:** legislation around violence needs to recognise all forms of violence as a crime, including non-physical violence, allowing the police and security forces to have power to act upon it.
5. **Better equip police, security personnel and other authorities (including judges) to respond to harassment:** through addressing discrimination and bias in the system, educating individuals, and hiring more women.
6. **Greater presence of women in decision-making bodies:** to allow the issues of girls and young women to be better represented and better responded to.
7. **Obtain more data on street harassment:** It is essential to have current statistics on street harassment to know the global dimension of the problem.
8. **Galvanising political will:** Public and political institutions must support and advocate for social change. Political support must translate into programmes, public policies, and human and economic resources.
9. **Using gendered approaches to city design:** gender applied to urbanism and urban planning must be seen as a social issue. Precisely because there is still a lack of awareness and training on gender issues, and specifically in urban issues, gender is still not really present in the construction of cities. It is necessary to take into account the gender perspective (that is, the specific circumstances and needs of women and young women) in the design of urban environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing Free to Be

Plan International has extensive experience of working with girls and young women in cities, including through our Safer Cities programme.¹

Prior research has shown that cities around the world are unfit for girls: cities tend to be designed by older people, often men, who do not understand, take interest in or experience the realities of girls moving around cities.² Physical environments contribute to how safe or unsafe girls and young women feel, and fear and experience of harassment or other negative experience can contribute to girls' confidence, ability to carry out daily activities, and freedom to participate. Plan International puts the voices of young women and girls at the centre of its strategy, and through this research sought to better understand their experiences and enable them to participate in decision-making and policy development processes.

Therefore, the aim of this research was to collect comparable data to tell a story about how young women and girls are experiencing their cities, and their feelings of safety or risk in relation to their physical environment, examining how harassment and violence against girls can act as both a product and a cause of unhealthy gender norms, creating and maintaining acceptability and normalisation of violence and harassment in public spaces. The intention was to develop data which listened directly to the experiences of girls and young women in a number of cities where Plan International works, to inform discussions with key decision makers, such as city councils and transport providers, so that the city can be made safer for girls and young women.

Free to Be is a crowd-mapping website that enables young women to identify and share the location of public spaces that make them feel uneasy and scared or happy and safe. It was designed in collaboration with Crowdsport, Monash University XYX Lab and young women within the city. In addition to Madrid, *Free to Be* has implemented in the following cities: Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Melbourne and Sydney.³

Anonymity is the great advantage of crowd-mapping for the target participants. *Free to Be* allows those young women and girls who have experienced or fear harassment to disclose the location and context of their experience "in their own words, without the restrictions on a narrative form associated with the traditional justice system."⁴ As the #metoo movement has highlighted, women may be reluctant to detail harassment because not only are their concerns frequently dismissed but also there are too often negative consequences for them. The anonymity of *Free to Be* means this reluctance can be overcome and multiple stories that indicate the type and prevalence of harassment can be collected and studied. It allows girls and young women to make their views and stories public if they wish to do so.

The research was a collaboration between Plan International Headquarters, Plan International Australia and Plan International Spain, Monash University XYX Lab, and Crowdsport digital consultancy. Further details about each can be found on page 19. This report provides an analysis of the data generated in Madrid.

1.2 Madrid city context

Madrid is the capital city of Spain, as well as the principal city in Madrid community and Province. Situated in the centre of the country, it is the third largest city in Europe (after London and Berlin). The city

¹ For more information about our Safer Cities programme, visit <https://plan-international.org/ending-violence/safer-cities-girls>

² Beebejaun, Y (2016) Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07352166.2016.1255526>

³ Reports for other cities are available here: <https://plan-international.org/publications/free-to-be>. A cross-city summary of findings is including in <https://plan-international.org/unsafeinthecity>. Note that the Melbourne pilot project was completed in 2017 and was not part of the latest data collection and analysis process.

⁴ Bianca Fileborn, "Special report," *Griffith Report Law and Violence* 2, no. 1 (2014): 45.

is estimated to have 3.2 million people,⁵ with an estimated density of 4,700 per square kilometre.⁶ Madrid is a city that offers many and varied alternatives of leisure and culture, has a lot of street life, both day and night. Its varied nightlife is world famous.⁷

According to official data, most of the complaints in Spain correspond to robberies, strong robberies in homes and other establishments, and robberies with violence and intimidation.⁸ Gender violence has been prevalent in the media after more than 28,000 women required some form of official protection measure in 2016.⁹ There were 3,025 reports of crimes against sexual freedom (including rape and other forms of sexual violence) over the period, a 13.8% rise from the same period in 2017. In the whole of 2017 there was a 7.8% rise in reports of sexual crimes compared with 2016.¹⁰

There has been considerably progress made by Spanish legislation on gender equality and against gender based violence in recent years, notably:

- Organic Law 1/2004 on Integral Protection Measures against Gender Violence¹¹
- Organic law 3/2007 for effective equality between women and men¹²
- State agreement against gender violence 2017¹³

In addition, state and municipal campaigns were carried out by civil society organizations in order to raise awareness in society about gender violence, and that these legal and political measures have the greatest possible support.

This sustained commitment means that women in Madrid and Spain are particularly aware of multiple forms of gender-based violence and their capacity to detect such violence may be higher than in some of the other cities where the study was carried out. This is one of the reasons why the women's rights movement in Spain has been particularly successful, from #MeToo to #Cuéntalo, #NoEsNo or #8M.

⁵ Data at 2017. Instituto Nacional de Estadística <http://www.ine.es/en/welcome.shtml>, last accessed 08 August 2018.

⁶ Demographia, "Demographia World Urban Areas," Built Up Urban Areas or World Agglomerations, 14, April 2018: 23; "Madrid Population 2018," *World Population Review*, Accessed June 6 2018, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/madrid-population/>

⁷ Demographia, "Demographia World Urban Areas," Built Up Urban Areas or World Agglomerations, 14, April 2018: 23; "Madrid Population 2018," *World Population Review*, Accessed June 6 2018, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/madrid-population/>

⁸ Statistical portal of criminality. Ministry of the Interior, Spain. First quarter of 2018.

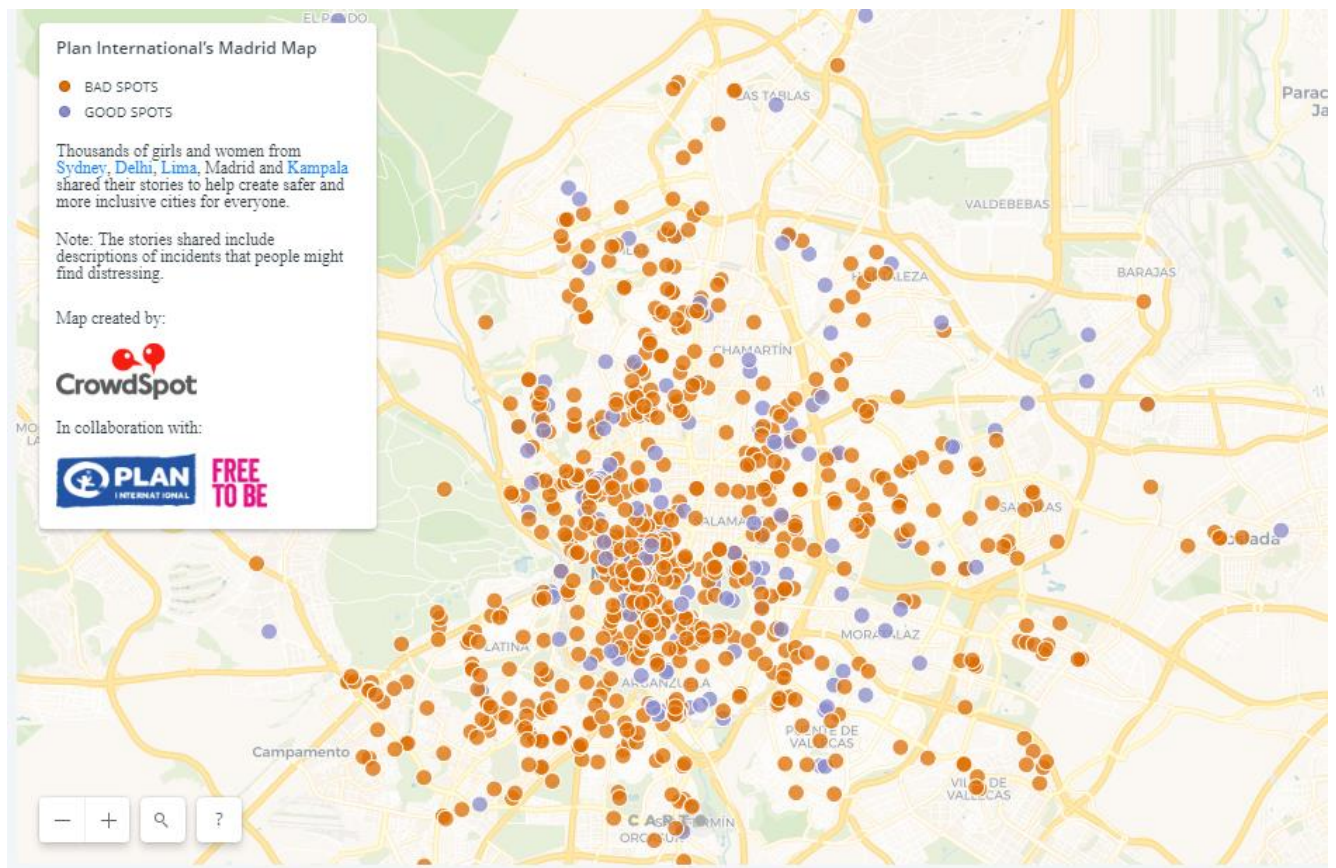
⁹ "Gender violence rate rises in Spain for second consecutive year," Alba Moraleda, El País, 1 June 2017, https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/05/31/inenglish/1496243416_419062.html.

¹⁰ "Rape reports in Spain up 28.4% in the first three months of 2018," English version by Susana Urrac, El País, Published 11 Mar 2018, https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/05/10/inenglish/1525967029_649591.html.

¹¹ Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence Spain. <http://justiciadegenero.com/en/organic-law-12004-of-28-december-on-integrated-protection-measures-against-gender-violence-spain/>

¹² <https://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/20451>

¹³ El País (2017) Political parties reach landmark deal to combat gender violence. https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/07/25/inenglish/1500974144_022899.html



2. METHODOLOGY

The Free to Be project was conceptualised and piloted in Melbourne, Australia, in 2016, developed by Plan International in collaboration with Crowdsplot and Monash University's XYX Lab. The pilot was highly successful, with more than ten thousand people visiting the website and over a thousand dropping a pin. The data was used to discuss and advocate with key decision-makers at the city level. The Free to Be online map-based social survey tool was further developed before being rolled out in five other global cities in 2018.

2.1 Design

The Free to Be comprised an online interactive map of the city and a survey which allowed girls and women to drop 'pins' on the map – good or bad – on places they love, avoid, feel safe in and think can be improved, and answer a small number of questions about their experiences there, as well as leave comments.

In March 2018, discussions were held with young women from Plan International's programmes in the five participating cities to allow for input into the tool and interface. Consultation included adaptations for appropriate language and options for the Madrid context. The map, survey tool and text on the website were translated in Spanish prior to start of data collection.

2.2 Sample

Sampling estimates were made for each city based on the population size and levels of mobile phone usage. In Madrid, the target was set at 1,200. Crowdmapping is a means for gathering impressions and stories from a wide range of people, but is not a probability sample. This means that percentages included in this report are indicative, not representative. However, when many stories are gathered common themes can be discerned, and this report considers those themes. In addition, the early analysis identified trends in the data and further data did not change those trends. For example, the timing of incidents, 'anytime' was the most common response for good pins by a significant margin. This suggests that more data would not significantly shift the overall patterns. Therefore, though the target was not reached, the gathered stories still portray a clear picture of the Madrid experienced by young women and girls.

Free to Be Madrid recorded over 3,000 pins, of which 951 were deemed as valid and included in the analysis. The final sample for analysis only included women and girls and those who identified as trans, non-binary and other gender participants, up to the age of 30. The following were therefore excluded from the analysis:

- Men (29 pins)
- Women 31 years or older (192 pins)
- Posts which were identified as offence or false¹⁴ (1,287 pins)

The number of pins does not correspond to the number of people who engaged with Free to Be as participants were able to place as many pins as they chose.

Some of pins simply denote good or bad locations without any additional information, but 70% also included comments detailing the reason for their good or bad pin, indicating that the young women and girls participating readily took up the option of sharing their stories offered by Free to Be. There was a higher rate of comments for the bad pins, 74%, than for good pins, 51%. Participants were also able to 'support' an existing pin: over 620 posts supported existing pins.

¹⁴ Pins identified as 'false' or troll pins, including those that were nonsensical, homophobic, racist, or where there were sexist remarks (typically negative and from males)

2.3 Recruitment of research participants

The Free to Be online map-based social survey tool was open from 17 April 2018 and closed 31 May 2018. Recruitment was ongoing throughout this time.

Plan International Spain used online social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), communications media and offline campaigns to recruit participants. On Instagram, influencers that are well-known among the young people of Madrid promoted Free to Be through their channels. The dates of recruitment over the six-week period coincided with some very important local festivals in Madrid with activities in public spaces, and the campaign was especially adapted for those days to promote greater participation. The launch of the tool also coincided with the court ruling in "La Manada" case, a sexual abuse case against an 18-year-old woman at a local party, which raised public discussion on these issues.¹⁵

Also, within the campaign on networks and media, emails were sent to social organisations that work with young people and with women, such as schools. Free to Be was featured in major national newspapers and television programmes, including statements by Plan International spokespersons during primetime hours, and interviews in various local and national radio programmes.

To access a range of participants and experiences in Madrid, Plan International Spain launched the campaign throughout the city. They also targeted strategic points where a range of young people gather, such as universities, with street recruiting.

Figure 1: Images used to promote the map



Street recruitment was by young women and men. Recruiters began with the question “have you ever felt street harassment?” to instantly engage young women, and showed them the Free to Be tool. Participants wanting to engage were given the opportunity to enter their responses directly through a handheld device (tablet or mobile phone).

2.4 Analysis

Following data collection, analysis was conducted on the location of pins, the responses to survey questions and the free text comments. Analysis of the data by Monash University XYX Lab considered:

- the stated demographic information of those who placed pins
- the presence of hotspots (good and bad)
- a detailed breakdown of the kind of incidents and conditions that made for a good or bad location as provided by the comments

Comments were translated from Spanish to English and then coded by the research team, to allow emerging trends and patterns to be assessed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Some coding categories were common from city to city (such as sexual harassment), other categories arose from the data for the specific city. For example, the frequency of comments around public masturbation in Madrid led to that becoming a coding category. Some comments were labelled with more than one code. For example, a comment might include notes about the physical conditions of the place as well as details about a particular incident that occurred. Some pins recorded historic events or incidents, and some

¹⁵ BBC News (2017) 'Spain 'wolf pack' case: Thousands protest over rape ruling.' 26 April 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43915551>.

described the ongoing ‘feel’ of a place. Comments included in the report identify (as far as possible) the age of the participant, the location of the pin, and the time of day referred to in their response (morning, afternoon, evening, late night, anytime).

To enhance analysis and action planning, a reflection workshop was held with young women (aged 18-24) in Madrid to discuss the emerging results. Reflections from these young women have been included in this report where relevant, but clearly labelled as distinct from the research findings.

2.5 Limitations

The anonymity of Free to Be means that there is no way to tell that the participant is who they say they are, and troll activity is possible. Madrid was particularly targeted by trolls, but this was managed during the data collection through greater controls and faster response. Where posts were identified as offensive or false, they were made invisible on the site and removed from the dataset prior to analysis.

3. FINDINGS

This section contains details of the findings from the Madrid map. It outlines key characteristics of the pins, before going into details of good and bad places in the city and what makes them good or bad.

3.1 Characteristics of the pins

In total, 951 valid pins were dropped on spots of the Madrid map, of which 153 (16%) denoted good experiences and 798 (84%) bad, showing the greater motivation of girls to register points on the map after having suffered an unpleasant experience. Key characteristics include:

- **Time of day:** Participants were asked to record the time of day that they felt the spot was good or bad. Good spots in Madrid were generally good no matter what time of day. The bad spots were spread more evenly with a spike in the evening. See Figure 2.
- **Age range of participants:** The majority (60%) of the participants included in the analysis were in their twenties. The average age of responses was 22. See Table 1.
- **Occupation of participants:** Participants were asked about their occupation situation. Overall, more than half were students (59%), and another 36% were in work. Note, some participants ticked a number of boxes (such as student and in work). See Figure 3.

Figure 2: Time of day of good and bad pins
Expressed as percentage of total good pins or bad pins

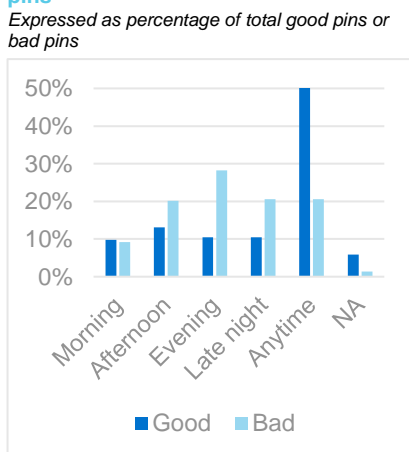
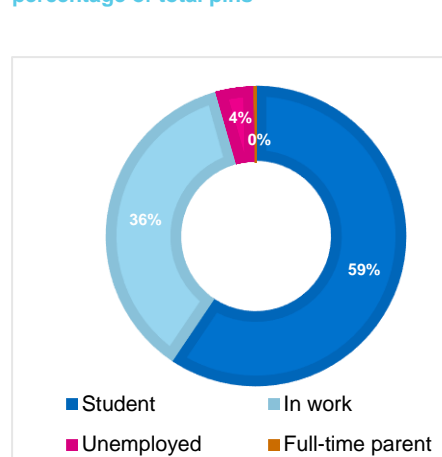


Table 1: Pins by age of participants, number and percentage

	No.	%
<16	28	3%
16 to 20	350	37%
21 to 25	385	40%
26 to 30	188	20%

Figure 3: Occupation of participants, as percentage of total pins



3.1.1 Pin location

Free to Be asked participants to identify the location type of incidents or experiences from a predefined list. Some participants selected more than one location type (for example, walking to and from a public transport hub a participant might select both *on the street* and *public transport*). See Table 2 for a list of these location types.

On the street was identified as the most common place for both the bad pins and the good ones (67% and 52% respectively). Of all the pins coded *on the street*, most of the respondents (87%) shared a bad experience.¹⁶ *Public transport* and *parks* were the next most common sites for pins, and again they were mostly for bad incidents. *At the shops* and *public events* were more likely to garner positive pins.

Over one-third (39%) of *public transport* pins were placed in conjunction with *on the street* pins demonstrating that moving around the city with comfort and safety was an issue for the young women

¹⁶ 534 bad pins out of a total of 614 coded 'on the street'.

and girls of Madrid. This affected the ways they normally access education and work, with 65% of pins coded *going to and from work or school* also tagged *on the street*.

Table 2: Location of pins, as percentage of total good pins, total bad pins, and total pins.

Note in some cases more than one location was selected.

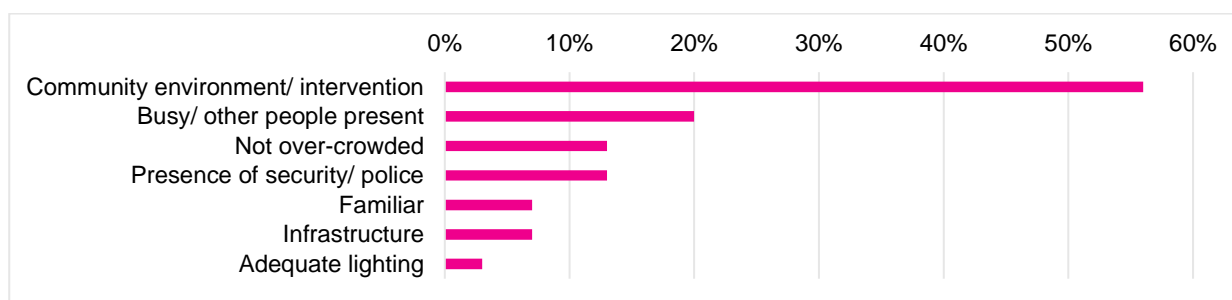
Location of incidents	Good pins (153)		Bad pins (798)	
	Number	% all good pins	Number	% all bad pins
On the street	80	52%	534	67%
In a park	36	24%	141	18%
Public transport	32	21%	140	18%
Going to or from work	23	15%	109	14%
Going to or from school	24	16%	62	8%
Out socially	30	20%	45	6%
At the shops	22	14%	25	3%
At a public event	18	12%	29	4%

3.2 Good Locations

This section includes an analysis of the good pins, 16% of the total pins on the Madrid map, or 153. Not all good pins had comments added to them. Where a pin had comments, there were not always explicit about what made the place feel safe or why it felt good. In total 61 comments were clear enough for analysis and are discussed in this section.

The Free to Be Madrid map revealed no place in the city where the good pins outnumbered the bad. This was unusual in the five cities and is a reflection of the low number of good pins across the city, or the lack of motivation of the girls to register the points in the absence of problems.

Figure 4: What makes a place good, as % of coded comments



The most common description for feeling safe was the presence of a community environment. For many of the girls and young women who responded, their local neighbourhood was well known - where they were known and where they trusted other people would look out for them intervening if necessary to help them. They described the people around them as being familiar, and/or family orientated. From the 61 filtered positive comments, 6 entries mention the word 'family', 15 entries use 'quiet' and just under 50% of the girls and young women who responded used the word 'safe' to describe their pin.

"It's a family area, where there are always people and I feel safe no matter what I wear." (Age 28, anytime)

"It's an area with a lot of small bars where they always treat you well and you can feel comfortable whatever you're wearing or whatever you are doing." (Age 23, anytime)

3.3 Bad Locations

3.3.1 What makes a place bad?

More than 590 comments were attached to the pins for bad places/incidents, some were not explicit about what made the place feel unsafe or bad. In total 560 comments were clear enough for analysis and are discussed in this section. Note one comment could have multiple codes.

Table 3: Bad pins by incident type, as coded from comments

Note some comments contained more than one incident.

Incident type or description	Number noted	% of comments
All sexual harassment cases	476	85%
Sexual harassment - no physical contact only	402	72%
Sexual harassment - physical contact only	62	11%
Sexual harassment – both	12	2%
Group of offenders/ attackers	96	17%
Drug and alcohol affected	81	14%
Public masturbation	59	11%
Unpredictable people/ loitering	44	8%
Dark/ lack of lighting	36	6%
Physical and verbal assault (non-sexual)	32	6%
Theft/ robbery	22	4%
Infrastructure	20	4%
Lack of security/ police	14	3%
Murder/ death	1	0.2%

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment dominated the comments (85%) and gender-based discrimination (78%) was identified as the most common form of discrimination affecting the incidents. Madrid had the lowest gap between these two measures indicating a general understanding in the country that sexual harassment is gender-based discrimination.

For the purposes of this analysis, sexual harassment was coded to identify whether it involved physical contact or not (see Box 1). Where the type of harassment was unclear, the comment was coded with both categories.

Box 1: Coding for sexual harassment

Sexual harassment not involving physical contact ranges from unwanted so-called ‘compliments’, catcalling, intense staring/leering, inappropriate photography, flashing and propositioning to being verbally threatened with rape, stalked, chased and blocked.

Sexual harassment involving physical contact ranges from a ‘pat on the bottom’ through to groping. Incidents of rape were not commonly reported by the participants, and so these have been included under sexual harassment with physical contact. Any incident involving physical contact is technically sexual assault, but many women are inured to some forms of physical sexual contact and would not categorise them as assault (for instance, a pat on the bottom).

This division between touch and no touch is to some extent arbitrary and not necessarily indicative of the level of fear it might induce: being chased is more disturbing than a pat on the rear.

Altogether a high 85% of the 560 filtered comments for bad pins noted sexual harassment of some kind. 2% of all the comments indicated both physical contact and non-physical contact sexual harassment; 72% were for non-physical only and 11% for physical only.

Overwhelmingly, *non-physical sexual harassment* was the main cause for unease for young women and girls as they moved around Madrid (72%). While no physical contact may seem less invasive than harassment involving contact, this form of harassment contributes in a major way to perceptions of safety because even the slightest forms carry the potential for escalation.

“Several times I have been followed to my front door. Luckily, the doorman is always close and knows those who don’t live there.”
(Age 25, Anytime)

“An older man, or young man, could not be clearly differentiated, told me that I was so pretty that he would fall dead after making love to me. He followed me a few meters and he kept looking at me like an object of desire, I was very afraid.”
(Age 20, Afternoon)

“A guy followed a few friends and I through the park and the street outside one day. A couple of weeks later the same thing happened with a group of guys.”
(Age 17, Evening)

“A disgusting man shouted dirty things at me, followed me to the door of the college, the worst part is that after several hours, I went out into the street and he was still waiting for me on a bench. It has given me very bad vibes and right now I am really afraid.”
(Age 19, Afternoon)

“It was a night that I was with my friends in the pub. When we left, a man that we did not know took the opportunity to take a picture of my friends. Then when we were leaving, he tried to follow us, until two of our friends confronted him and told him to leave us alone. We were very afraid.”
(Age 17, Late night)

“When leaving work a man (50 years old or so) approached me and started talking to me, inviting me for coffee and giving me compliments, I ignored him. The next day in the same place, the same man began to follow me and when he reached a pedestrian crossing he stopped next to me and started saying things and tried to give me a lollipop. I was very scared.”
(Age 22, Afternoon)

“Being a woman and sitting alone quietly to read or rest is impossible, after 10 minutes you will be approached by different types of slimeballs to annoy you, some even try to touch you. My last experience was a beggar who is always in that area who literally told me to jerk him off. It’s disgusting.” (Age 26, Anytime)

A high incidence of public masturbation (11%) was recorded on the Madrid map, occurring mainly in parks. This was much higher than other cities in the project.

“I was with some friends and among the trees appeared a man jerking off walking towards us.”
(Age 24, Afternoon)

“In broad daylight, I was coming back from the dentist. I felt that someone looking at me, it was a man masturbating on the street.”
(Age 21, Morning)

“I returned home at 3 in the morning and was followed by a man masturbating in a white van all the way to my house. One of several scares when returning home in that area.”
(Age 26, Late night)

“En route to university every day, even when returning at night after the afternoon/evening classes. On numerous occasions I have run into a man masturbating and showing his genitals, even in broad daylight.”
(Age 22, Anytime)

“It was a few years ago, was younger and was on the subway with some friends. To begin with, a guy came over who was very drunk, and began to rub his private parts against my friend and me. That day the carriage was really busy and another man who was sitting began to masturbate covering himself with a bag. It’s just disgusting.”
(Age 19, Afternoon)

Sexual harassment involving physical contact was less common, but more likely to be considered contributing to a place being considered unsafe (rather than uncomfortable, which was the main effect of no physical contact sexual harassment).

"I was partying with a friend, we passed by a man, he touched my ass and he called me a bitch, we were afraid and we did not say anything to him."
(Age 25, Late night)

"Coming home at night, two men grabbed me and cornered me against a wall and started to touch me. I managed to get away from them and run."
(Age 23, Late night)

"One day after shopping I returned home, at 2 pm, and a guy grabbed the back of my neck, lifted up my skirt. I shook him off quickly and when I turned round he had his member in his hand. I shouted at him (no one came to help me) until I pulled out the phone saying I was going to send a picture to the police, he did not leave me."
(Age 29, Afternoon)

Other factors contributing to bad locations

Sexual harassment is not the only factor reported by the participants as contributing to the incidents and perceptions of unsafe locations. 6% of comments on bad pins described *non-sexual verbal and physical harassment* and 4% noted *theft or risk of theft*.

The physical state of a location had an effect on the perceptions of safety and designations of locations as 'bad'. 4% of comments on bad pins noted poor infrastructure, including public transport sites, associated with negative experiences. 6% of comments on bad pins identified a lack of lighting as problem.

Discrimination

There was a specific question in the survey tool which allowed participants to identify if discrimination was a factor in allocating a bad pin. The survey enabled participants to select one or multiple types of discrimination which they perceived as being a factor. Gender-based discrimination (78%) was identified as the most common form of discrimination affecting the incidents. 11% of respondents did not identify any form of discrimination, and other types were minimal: ethnicity 4%, LGBTIQ+ 4%, religion 1%, disability 0% other 6%. In reflection workshops young women felt that the levels of racial bias were likely to have been under reported.

3.3.2 Who are the main perpetrators?

Offenders in general across all cities were predominantly reported to be male, with a small number of female offenders.

16% of comments on bad pins noted the presence of gangs or groups of men contributing to feeling unsafe. Groups of men or youths are particularly intimidating for young women who are on their own or are outnumbered.

"I was having a picnic with my girlfriend when at some point we realized that there was a group of men watching us. As we felt uncomfortable, we moved and the men started to follow us. In the end we had to run, terrified, out of the park."
(Age 18, Afternoon)

"Walking back to the station after a night out with my bestie (female) and a group of men walking behind us started talking about 'gangbanging'." (Age 19, Late night)

Men under the influence of drugs or alcohol whose behaviour was often threatening was mentioned in 14% of the 560 freetext comments on bad pins (Table 3). A separate question in the survey allowed participants to select if someone was 'under the influence' and if this contributed to the incident: 22% of responses to this question on all 590 bad pins indicated the presence of alcohol or drugs as affecting the incident.

“At the exit of the station in the night you often see groups of drunk people who can insult you with dirty words if you are a woman and sometimes even start to follow you.”
(Age 25, Evening)

“We joined the work colleagues for a drink, and having refused several groups of guys who were constantly bothering us throughout the night, it ended up with one of them throwing a drink in one of our faces, and later them spitting on our backs when we were leaving.”
(Age 23, Evening)

“A few days ago I was annoyed by several guys, they are usually in that area, they said all sorts of things to me and I was very scared, in that area they sell drugs to people from elsewhere, I do not go through that area anymore.” (Age 25)

“Usually there are homeless guys drinking and they start calling you names: slut, thief and even worse names.”
(Age 21, Morning)

“There are always junkies in the train station and they do not care who is in front of them and they start to get high anywhere. This leads to many arguments.”
(Age 25, Anytime)

“I was going home alone at dawn, I came across a group of drunken guys who started to follow me and shout things like ‘I’m going to pound your ass’ ‘come here I want to make you a Marta del Castillo’¹⁷ (real). They were so drunk that in the end they were lying on a bench, but I was very afraid.” (Age 19, Evening)

In some comments, the indifference of bystanders to an incident was noted. In the good spots, participants trusted that locals would come to their aid; in bad spots, those nearby brushed off the incident and failed to offer assistance.

“I left the nightclub with friends when 2 guys between 35-45 years old, Spanish and French, approached me. I spoke to them in French, the French guy takes out a 50 Euro note. I said EXCUSE ME?, the Spaniard laughed, he says it’s a magic trick. They said something about my teeth, I got angry and my friends defended me. The doorman kicked us out and hugged the French guy.”
(Age 22, Late night)

“A man touched me from behind. Touching all my intimate parts. I shouted but nobody did anything. He left laughing.”
(Age 28, Morning)

“It was inside the subway of Plaza Castilla, six guys followed me throughout the subway harassing me and nobody did anything and there was no security. There should be more police inside the subway.”
(Age 17, Afternoon)

3.3.3 How do girls and young women respond?

Participants dropping a bad pin were asked to respond to the question ‘What happened next?’ by selecting all relevant options listed. This included actions about the place (whether they came back there) as well as whether and who they spoke to about it.

Table 4: Selected responses to what young women do in response to bad incidents, as percentage of total bad pins (798)

A large proportion of participants reported that they avoid the area if they are on their own (39%), but a significant percentage never went back to the location (10%). Importantly, while not statistically significant, seven participants actually stopped studying or working because of the seriousness of their experience. This is indicative of the severe impact of harassment on young women and girls and their ability to freely access their city.

Response	No.	% of bad pins
Avoid coming here alone	309	39%
Never went back there	82	10%
Stopped going to school, university or work	7	1%
Happens so often that I’m just used to it	393	49%

¹⁷ The Marta del Castillo case is an event that has had a great impact on Spanish society. In 2009, a 17-year-old girl disappeared and was murdered. The alleged perpetrators changed their version several times and the location of the body is still unknown.

Participants were also invited to add comments for this question, which provide detail on such behaviour change and coping strategies.

“I used to use this area as a meeting point with my friends when we met up but now I avoid it because whenever I waited for them alone someone would come to try to chat me up etc. At night the situation gets worse.”

(Age 23, Anytime)

Many girls and young women expressed resignation to these incidents being a frequent part of their life: nearly half of the young women and girls reported that it ‘happens so often I’m just used to it’.

The survey also asked participants to detail whether and who they had told of the incident and, if officially reported, whether this resulted in any action.

Table 5: Selected responses to what young women do in response to bad incidents, as percentage of total bad pins (798)

Response (798 pins)	No.	% of bad pins
Told my friend or my family	316	40%
Reported it but authorities did nothing	45	6%
Reported it and authorities did something	17	2%

A high proportion of participants dropping bad pins told a friend or someone in their family about their experience (40%). Only 8% of participants said they reported an incident officially, and in nearly three-quarters (73%) of these cases, the authorities apparently did nothing. Participants may have been referring to a formal complaint, or telling the incident to someone in the security forces. Such outcomes highlight the wariness young women and girls might have towards reporting incidents which, while serious enough to radically change their behaviour, are not taken seriously by those who have the power to prevent reoccurrence or provide protection. Many participants talked about how incidents were trivialised by those they told, resulting in young women and girls being hesitant to report such incidents.

“A couple of weeks ago, we went into a disco in the lower part of Argüelles-Moncloa and in the bathroom a boy pushed me, threw me on the floor and split my tongue. People helped me up and the doormen came to kick me out of the premises. I called the police and they took a long time to arrive, when I explained what happened they played the incident down and let the boy go.”

(Age 24, Evening)

“I get home from work around 11pm and this is my bus stop. When leaving 3 guys surrounded me and followed me home. I’m sure that if I hadn’t taken out my phone and pretended to arrange to meet them at a terrace, they would DEFINITELY have done something. I did not tell the police because I’m sure they’re not going to do anything.”

(Age 21, Evening)

“One night I was waiting for a friend to come, a man who was constantly prowling around suddenly stood between two cars looking at me and started to masturbate, I started shouting at him that I was going to call the police and he left running. 5 minutes later I passed a police car stop them and I told what had happened to me and the policeman started to flirt with me.”

(Age 25, Evening)

3.3.4 Where are the most prominent bad locations?

Few places had only good or only bad pins. In general, places were a mixture of positive and negative. Participants could also view previous pins and ‘support’ or agree to a spot being bad (there were over 650 of these across Madrid). See below areas with high concentrations of bad pins. These tended to be areas of movement or areas of leisure. In the reflection workshop, young women were surprised there weren’t more bad pins in parks, but they thought that might be because girls just don’t go to parks after dark, when it

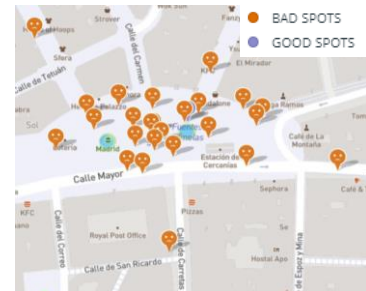
“But it’s also that we have the “machismometer” ingrained in us, that the immigrant from the Middle East will be much more sexist than I don’t know who and, if he comes from Norway, well, [...] he’s lovely.”

(Reflection workshop)

becomes dangerous. This highlights that levels of perceived threats may be under-reported, if girls and young women are already avoiding certain areas (and therefore not recording them on Free to Be). Young women in the workshop also suggested that those participating in the research may have come to the maps with their own biases, resulting in them identifying areas which have a previous particular reputation, or are highly populated or frequented by certain groups.

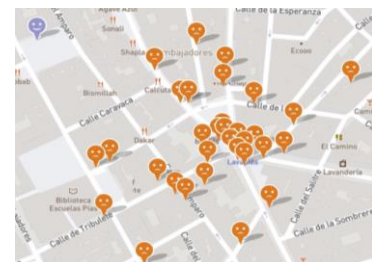
Plaza Puerta del Sol

- Comments note high incidence of sexual harassment that include propositioning for sex, touching, obscene gestures, following, unsolicited conversation or 'compliments'.
- Only one positive pin dropped in this area.
- Calle Mayor is the most important streets in Madrid and Plaza Puerta del Sol is the centre of the city. One of the busiest places in the city.
- Includes a metro station and a local train station



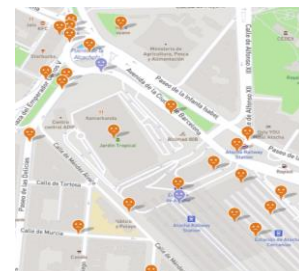
Junction of Calle de Argumosa, Calle del Ave Marla &, Calle de Tribulete (Lavapiés)

- Comments note high incidence of sexual harassment that include: groups of men, drinking and drugs, staring, whistling, touching, following, 'compliments', verbal harassment.
- Only one positive pin dropped in this area.
- Centre of city
- Area with high levels of diversity, young people and population mix
- Area of old buildings
- Leisure area (coffee shops, cocktail bars, restaurants)



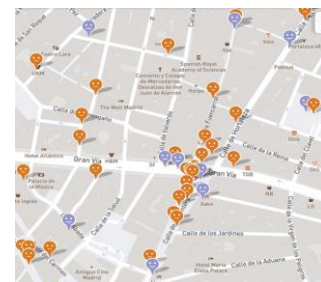
Atocha Railway Station

- Comments note high incidence of sexual harassment that include: groups of men, staring, 'compliments', verbal harassment, and touching.
- Main railway station in Madrid with long, medium and long distance trains. Also at the top, on the street, there is a bus interchange.
- Very busy, and includes a commercial area within the station.



Calle Gran Via and Calle de Hortaleza

- Comments note high incidence of sexual harassment that include: physical assault, verbal harassment, following, whistling, staring.
- Many bars and shops, including establishments intended for the LGBTIQ+ community (bars, shops)
- Of the good pins dropped, comments include: police and security cameras, positively report on the diversity of people residing or traveling through the area.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The critical message derived from Free to Be in Madrid is that more than four out of five of the young women and girls who participated experienced sexual harassment, with highest rates of non-physical sexual harassment. This was spread across the city, concentrated in places with high numbers of people such as public transport hubs, and consequently affected the ability of girls and young women to move freely around the city and access education and employment. Free to Be allowed girls and young women to directly share their experiences, revealing the reality of discomfort and insecurity in the public space felt by girls and young women, represented in multiple forms of discrimination, sometimes more subtle and others more evident. Young women and girls changed their behaviours to avoid such situations and to stay safe, often avoiding certain parts of the city if they are on their own, or simply never go back to a location. Half of the young women and girls noted that they were used to harassment because it happens so frequently.

In the reflection workshop, young women confirmed the high levels of harassment and abuse found through Free to Be were not surprising to them; rather, they were pleased that they had evidence to demonstrate to others what girls and young women experience constantly. Many spoke of a desire to be able to enjoy their city, alone if they chose to, without the constant threats of harassment or abuse.

“We felt total identification. We think that it is something that happens to us routinely, well, one day, then another day. Sometimes more, sometimes less, but it's happened to all of us and we completely feel as though we'd written it ourselves. And resigned too, in this respect.”

(Reflection workshop)

“For us, there isn't anything new, simply at the most, the most important finding for us isn't for us but for the world that you can see how insecure we feel, they harass us, they touch us, they do everything to us. So that there is finally somewhere where it is written down.”

(Reflection workshop)

Young women in the workshop identified the normalisation of harassment of girls and young women by society as a root cause, as well as the acceptance and acceptability of it by authorities and law enforcers. They talked about how girls and young women were made to feel responsible for harassment by, for instance, the way they dressed, rather than perpetrators being held to account. Harmful values which undermine the value of women and girls are learnt from an early age, through education, family and the media. These factors allow harassment to continue unchecked, and cause girls and young women to resign themselves to it and change their behaviour to cope with it.

The study confirms that in Madrid, physical violence is less of an issue than ongoing cases of verbal harassment. Ongoing changes in legislation, campaigns and awareness raising in Spain (outlined in 1.2) may have supported girls and young women to identify verbal abuse and unwanted 'compliments' as harassment. Free to Be provided the opportunity for girls and young women to share experiences of their city, and they were able to identify these forms of violence and reject them: this could be taken as a positive step forward for Spanish society. However, the study also confirms that girls and young women feel harassed and are not free to move about as they please without having to endure intimidating comments, threats and attitudes from men and boys. The implications of this are that harassment is endemic in the populace and too often embedded in the very fabric of the city, something which was found in Madrid as well as the other cities in the study. For cities to be accessible to all who live there, this needs to be addressed.

4.1 Recommendations

The findings of Free to Be highlight how young women and girls of Madrid are fully aware of the risks and threats to their person as they move around the city. Questions about how to improve the city weren't specifically asked on Free to Be, but some participants talked about simple solutions such as improved lighting and the presence of visible security and police enforcement. Based on the findings, young women recommend:

1. **Education on equality and sexuality:** to highlight the value of women and girls and highlight the unacceptability of harassment and gender based violence. This must be implemented consistently throughout society, including in institutions, the family environment and in schools. Comprehensive sexuality education should also be rolled out to increase understanding of respectful and equal relationships.
2. **Reconsider the role of the media and change the narrative on street harassment:** campaigns, messaging and media around harassment needs to focus on the harasser and not the victim. Society must condemn all kinds of harassment and abuse and men and boys must be held to account for their actions.
3. **Men and boys need to change their behaviour:** listening to and empathising with the experiences of women and girls in Madrid, questioning and challenging discrimination and harassment wherever they see it, championing and advocating for equality and the rights of women and girls.
4. **Revision of the penal code:** legislation around violence needs to recognise all forms of violence as a crime, including non-physical violence, allowing the police and security forces to have power to act upon it.
5. **Better equip police, security personnel and other authorities (including judges) to respond to harassment:** through addressing discrimination and bias in the system, educating individuals, and hiring more women.
6. **Greater presence of women in decision-making bodies:** to allow the issues of girls and young women to be better represented and better responded to.
7. **Obtain more data on street harassment:** It is essential to have current statistics on street harassment to know the global dimension of the problem.
8. **Galvanising political will:** Public and political institutions must support and advocate for social change. Political support must translate into programmes, public policies, and human and economic resources.
9. **Using gendered approaches to city design:** gender applied to urbanism and urban planning must be seen as a social issue. Precisely because there is still a lack of awareness and training on gender issues, and specifically in urban issues, gender is still not really present in the construction of cities. It is necessary to take into account the gender perspective (that is, the specific circumstances and needs of women and young women) in the design of urban environments.

“But I've been thinking that I don't want a perfect city either; the only thing that I want is that guys stop taking the liberty of commenting on me and saying things to me. I don't want much either. I don't want birds or the smell of bread in the streets. All I want is for them to treat you normally, like a human being, and that's all.”

(Reflection workshop)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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We are very grateful to the young women who participated in the design, implementation and reflection of the research. And we are of course grateful to all the girls and young women who courageously shared their stories on the Madrid map.

About Monash University XYX Lab

XYX Gender and Place research lab is a team of experienced design researchers led by Dr Nicole Kalms exploring gender-sensitive design practices and theory. The work operates at the intersection of gender, identity, urban space and advocacy. Through the research, they bring together planners, policy makers, local government and stakeholders to make tangible the experiences of underrepresented communities in urban space and planning. The XYX Lab analysed the data from the first iteration of Free to Be and this experience laid the groundwork for this current project.

About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

About Plan International Spain

Plan International has been operating in Spain for 17 years. Plan International Spain seeks to contribute in a sustainable manner to development and humanitarian aid cooperation programmes in the countries where we work. Plan International has more than 68,864 regular donors in Spain who support our work. The support of multi-lateral donors and the strategic alliances that we have developed have allowed us to expand our work in the areas of humanitarian aid, climate change and clean energies, empowerment and sustainable solutions for young people. We work with governments, parliaments and institutions to place the rights of children, especially girls, on their political agendas.

About the Safer Cities Programme

Girls are increasingly moving to cities for work, education and opportunities. It is estimated that by 2030, approximately 700 million girls will live in urban areas. This shift can increase their chances of marrying later and having fewer and healthier children but it also presents risks and challenges. Cities can be some of the most dangerous places for girls to live. Plan International works in cities around the globe to make cities safer for everyone, particularly young women and girls. Delhi in India, Lima in Peru and Uganda's capital Kampala are all part of Plan International's Safer Cities program which works with communities to transform neighbourhoods into safe places where girls are respected and can go to school or work without fear of violence.

About Crowdsport

Crowdsport is an award-winning, Melbourne-based digital consultancy specialising in map-based community engagement and data collection. Their mission is to help create quality spaces in a social, inclusive and engaging process. They do this by connecting decision makers with targeted community groups through the use of online map-based social survey tool.



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