

# **Scarcity of Cultural Spaces and Sustainable Awareness in**

## **Villa El Salvador**

Stefany Horna Ramon

University of Arizona

College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture

Course: SBE 498 Senior Capstone

Instructors: Sandra Bernal

December 2024

**"The experience of Villa el Salvador  
opens a new path to project  
sustainable cities"**

- *Architect Javier Velarde Aspillaga*

## **Scarcity of Cultural Spaces and Sustainable Awareness in Villa El Salvador**

### **1. Abstract**

The creation of cultural spaces where creative development, discussion of topics on well-being, sustainability, and culture are prioritized is essential, to allow the awakening of the interest of young people and increase their active participation in the community, promoting identity and social cohesion (Spinozzi, 2018). This research examines successful sustainability, cultural, and community wellness strategies in spaces in Tucson, Arizona, and their potential adaptation to the context of Villa El Salvador, Lima, Peru. The community development legacy of Villa El Salvador offers another valuable chance to adapt these strategies to help alleviate the district's gap concerning the cultural spaces and active community participation. Qualitative methods, such as observations and case study analysis, are employed to identify practices that were evaluated to determine their potential use in Villa El Salvador. The use of grey water for irrigation, the organization of cultural and artistic workshops and the use of native plants in green spaces. The results reveal that these practices effectively transform neglected spaces into community spaces.

Overall, this research contributes to the urban planning literature by demonstrating how Tucson's strategies can be adapted to Villa El Salvador and similar communities. These findings contribute to the broader body of literature on sustainable and inclusive urban spaces, emphasizing the importance of cultural and environmental initiatives.

**Keywords:**

**Cultural Development, Villa El Salvador, Tucson, Community Participation, Urban Sustainability, Cultural Spaces, Environmental Awareness**

**2. Introduction**

Villa El Salvador emerged in 1971 from the invasion of hundreds of residents on the borders of San Juan de Miraflores, as they were motivated to organize themselves in search of a decent place to live, and fight for a promising future where they would not lack basic services or have their rights denigrated (Miguel Azcueta Gorostiza, 1983). Over time, the community developed based on self-management, creating in 1973 the Self-Managed Urban Community of Villa El Salvador (CUAVES) and receiving the “Prince of Asturias” award from Spain, the highest award for communal solidarity development of an organized population, since they carry out a pioneering model that allowed residents to design their own development plan, for this reason Villa El Salvador has proven to be an example of community participation and resilience in Lima, focusing on urban, productive and social progress (Fundación Princesa de Asturias, 2024). In 1983, Villa El Salvador was officially recognized as a district, and a second development plan was also promoted focused on improving infrastructure, productive opportunities and social life, always highlighting the strong citizen participation of the community (INEI, 2005). The district of Villa El Salvador is the youngest district and is considered one of the largest and most populated among the forty-three districts that make up the province of Lima, but its lack of adequate urban planning, caused by rapid population growth, has led to serious problems with infrastructure and basic services today. (Abbot, 2018). Its architecture has been mostly self-

built, with residents themselves playing a key role in the construction of their homes and services, therefore, this approach has caused many areas to lack recreational, cultural or community gathering spaces. (Castells,1983)

Cultural, sustainable, and well-being spaces are fundamental for the educational, social, and environmental development of communities since these spaces are determined as meeting points, which can lead to the growth and strengthening of communities. (Al-Shami et al., 2023) Challenges include the absence of adequate infrastructure, the scarcity of cultural and educational programs on sustainability, and the absence of these spaces for artistic expression and social and cultural exchange (Manthey, 2024)

Therefore, according to Brewster (2014) in her thesis "Ciudad Disidente: Addressing Social and Infrastructural Deficiencies in Villa El Salvador" points out that this district has experienced rapid urban growth, which has accentuated the lack of adequate infrastructure. This affects the participation of residents, weakening the identity and social cohesion of the community, since the lack of sustainable and cultural practices contributes to environmental degradation and negatively affects residents' quality of life, compromising their prospects. Young people today are looking for ways to occupy their free time so that this decision can affect or benefit their integrity, thus reflecting the need to create these public spaces where they can satisfy their needs for recreation and social connections (Carmona, 2015). The creation and design of these cultural spaces where creative development, discussion, and debate of topics on well-being, sustainability, and culture are prioritized is essential, to allow the awakening of the interest of young people and increase

their active participation in the community, promoting identity and social cohesion (Spinozzi, 2018). In this way, the use of space will contribute to the prevention and overcoming of problems that youth face today, and in turn, develop a more open mindset to debates and greater awareness of contemporary concerns (Barlow, 2024). The link between young people, through talks and conversations that they carry out in these spaces, are assertive aspects of creating these spaces. This will foster a sense of inclusion and social cohesion among young people, helping them to participate more actively in these conversations and initiatives that promote cultural themes of well-being, culture, and sustainability, both within and outside the community (Eden et al., 2024) Multicultural communities require active participation to ensure the effectiveness of living together with our differences, therefore in these spaces an empathetic, supportive and ideal environment for the exchange of ideas is developed. In the Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, it is stated that the participation of all citizens is essential for social cohesion, the development of civil society and the community, and the commitment to "leave no one behind" is recalled, as described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2021).

The historical context of rapid urbanization and lack of adequate infrastructure in the Villa El Salvador district of Lima, Peru, of high importance of creating cultural spaces and promoting environmental awareness in this district. Studies are needed to contribute to community well-being by creating spaces that promote active social participation, the development of an identity with the place, and the strengthening of the sense of belonging. By integrating sustainable practices, reductions of the negative effects of uncontrolled

urbanization, environmental problems, and the lack of identity within the district, and contribute to urban regeneration and community strengthening is possible.



Figure 1 and 2: Villa El Salvador in 1983  
Resource; amigosdevilla.it



Figure 3 and 4: Villa El Salvador in 2022

<https://larepublica.pe/datos-lr/respuestas/2022/10/22/villa-el-salvador-que-significa-por-que-se-llama-asi-y-cual-es-la-historia-de-este-distrito-de-lima-evat>





Figure 4: Lack of adequate infrastructure in Villa El Salvador  
<https://intrepidtimes.com/2022/12/a-world-apart-in-villa-salvador/>



Figure 5: Rapid urbanization in Villa El Salvador  
<https://intrepidtimes.com/2022/12/a-world-apart-in-villa-salvador/>

### 3. Methodology

This research project is based on quality research methods including observation, perception analysis, case studies comparative analysis to answer the research question:

**3.1 Research Question:** What sustainable, cultural and well-being strategies applied in successful spaces in Tucson Arizona can foster greater engagement in spaces in Villa El Salvador?

#### Study Site

The study is carried out in one of the districts of Lima, belonging to Lima Sur, Villa El Salvador. The district of Villa El Salvador has a total population of 414,000 inhabitants and has a projection for the period 2025-230 in which, in the year 2030, the district will have approximately a total of 460,512 inhabitants (INEI, 2017). Regarding the need for green areas, it is noted that the district has 1.47 m<sup>2</sup> of green areas per inhabitant (m<sup>2</sup>/hab), demonstrating a high deficit of green areas (SINIA, 2018), thus recalling that at least one tree is necessary for every three inhabitants for better air quality and a minimum of between 10 and 15 square meters of green area per inhabitant (World Bank and Schaeffer, 2016).

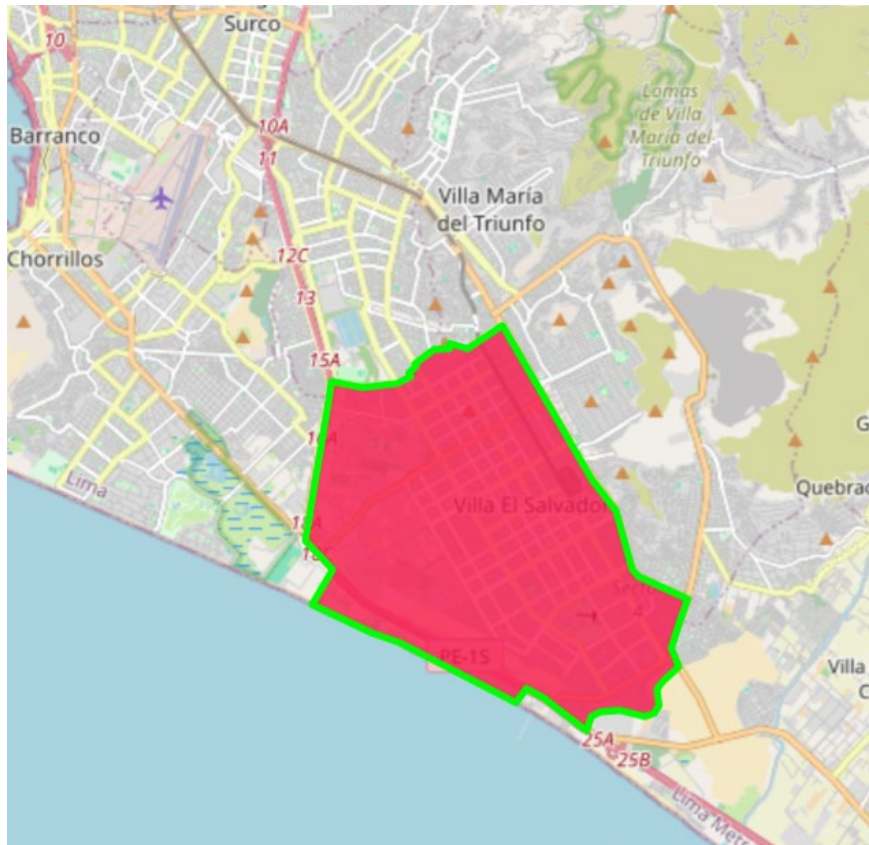


Figure 6: The study site.

[https://www.citypopulation.de/en/peru/limametro/150142\\_villa\\_el\\_salvador/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/peru/limametro/150142_villa_el_salvador/)

## Data collection and analysis

- **Observations**

The observations are made in a specific place in the Villa El Salvador district: Óvalo Las Palomas. This place was chosen due to its proximity to the Huáscar Zonal Park and the “Arena Y Esteras” Cultural Association (Figure 7) and therefore helps us to analyze the cultural and recreational dynamics and sustainable practices of the large district.

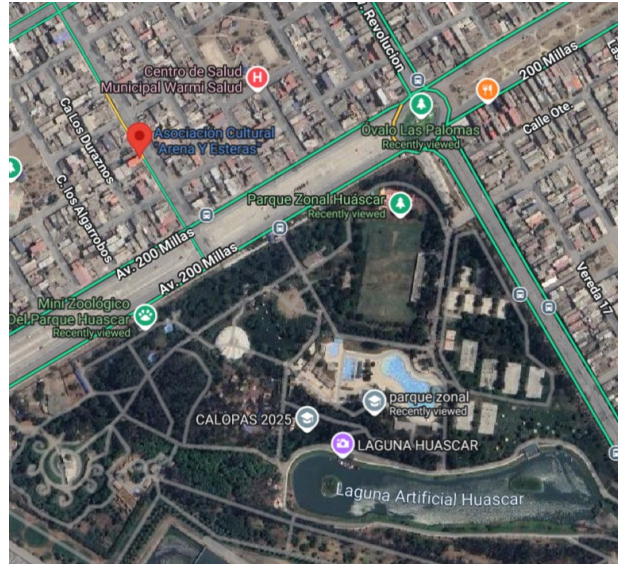


Figure 6: Óvalo Las Palomas

The days analyzed are Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons (5:00-8:00 pm), with Fridays at that time being chosen to assess usage patterns during the week, when children are out of school and may have more free time for recreational activities. Saturdays and Sundays are selected to assess the availability of children and parents to participate in various activities as a family or separately, whether for recreational or educational purposes.

During these observation sessions, the focus is on assessing residents' needs for cultural spaces, identifying how these spaces facilitate and promote community participation and unity, and fostering awareness about sustainability. In addition, observations aim to determine the types of activities that generate the most interest among children and parents, as well as their curiosity regarding sustainable activities and to raise awareness about sustainable practices for everyday community development. A survey is also conducted to explore the population's curiosity and interest in these spaces, their preferences for cultural activities, and their commitment to sustainable practices.

Observational data are analyzed qualitatively, focusing on residents' interactions, perceptions, and attitudes toward cultural spaces and sustainability issues, and help provide a better understanding of how these spaces impact and unite the community through the development of activities that take place in them.

- **Perception analysis**

To collect perceptions in this research, various people of different ages and occupations who reside or not in Villa El Salvador were included. This group was selected with the purpose of obtaining a diverse representation of the community, to have a variety of opinions and perspectives regarding the community's understanding of cultural spaces and the understanding of sustainability.

### **Surveys**

Data is collected from surveys conducted with 50 people, whether or not they are residents of Villa El Salvador, who were identified through personal connections. These surveys are conducted on the Qualtrics Survey Software platform to collect their perspectives regarding their perceptions and interests as residents and part of the Villa El Salvador community regarding cultural spaces and sustainability. In their district, through the questions, we seek to understand how residents perceive cultural spaces and if they find any relationship with their well-being, the cultural activities that attract their attention and would like to see in their community, how they perceive the concept of “sustainability” and how they can relate it to their daily lives, and their motivation to participate in events that promote the importance of environmental awareness among the community.

**Survey Questions:**

**Question 1. Age:**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

**Question 2. Do you currently reside in Villa El Salvador, Lima?**

- Yes
- No

**Question 3. In your opinion, how important are cultural spaces (e.g., art galleries, libraries, theaters) to the well-being of Villa El Salvador?**

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

**Question 4.** Which of the following cultural activities would you be most interested in participating in, if available?

- Art workshops (painting, music, dance)
- Movie screenings and discussions
- Traditional music and dance performances
- Literary events (poetry readings, book clubs)
- Community theater productions
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 5.** How often do you currently visit cultural spaces in Villa El Salvador or nearby areas?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Often

*Sustainability refers to the ability to satisfy present needs without compromising those of future generations, promoting a balance between economic growth, environmental protection and social well-being. This involves adopting responsibilities, practices such as*

*waste reduction, recycling, energy and water conservation, promoting sustainable transportation and supporting local businesses. By understanding and putting sustainability into practice, residents can help build a more prosperous, healthy and equitable community, preserving natural resources and improving the quality of life for present and future generations.*

**Question 6.** What does "sustainability" mean to you in the context of Villa El Salvador?

**Question 7.** Which of the following sustainable practices would you be most likely to adopt in your daily life, with more support or resources?

- Waste reduction and recycling
- Energy conservation (e.g., using less electricity)
- Water conservation (e.g., fixing leaks, using less water)
- Sustainable transportation (e.g., walking, cycling)
- Supporting local businesses

**Question 8.** How important do you consider incorporating sustainable practices in your daily life?

- Not important at all
- Somewhat important
- Important



- Very important

**Question 9.** Would you be interested in attending events at cultural spaces that focus on environmental awareness or sustainability themes?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Depends on the event

**Question 10.** Do you think that participation in cultural activities can contribute to the sense of belonging and social cohesion in Villa El Salvador?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

### **Case Study Comparative Analysis**

The comparative analysis is based on three case studies chosen in Tucson, Arizona, selected for their focus on sustainable strategies, their artistic expression, their cultural impact and the notable community participation that takes place in these spaces. These places were identified through personal connections, so the approach was made through email exchanges to carry out visits to the place, interviews with representatives of each

organization and observations of the activities and dynamics carried out with the community. Through these observations and interviews, we seek to understand how these sustainable and cultural strategies contribute to the well-being of the community, and how these strategies can be adapted to promote cultural spaces and sustainable awareness in Villa El Salvador.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Observation Results**

Along the Óvalo Las Palomas, in nearby spaces such as the Huáscar Zonal Park and the “Arena y Esteras” Cultural Association, observations are made to analyze the infrastructure, social interactions, and urban environment, concerning the cultural activities and sustainable practices of the area. A vacant lot is identified near the Óvalo Las Palomas, used by children to play after school hours, but it lacks adequate infrastructure, such as sports fields or green areas, and it does not have security elements or recreational furniture (Figure 7). Despite its frequent use, the place is not a flat terrain, since it is an abandoned dirt lot, so added to the lack of adult supervision during that time, it leaves children exposed to the risk of accidents, in addition there are no green areas that promote connection with nature and interest in sustainability (Figure 8). The presence of local businesses and many families with children on weekends is observed. However, the infrastructure does not facilitate the permanence of residents in these spaces due to the absence of benches, without sufficient space for recreational activities (Figure 9).



Figure 7: Children go out to play after school



Figure 8: Lack of good infrastructure for the care and recreation of children



Figure 9: Absence of benches and recreational infrastructure

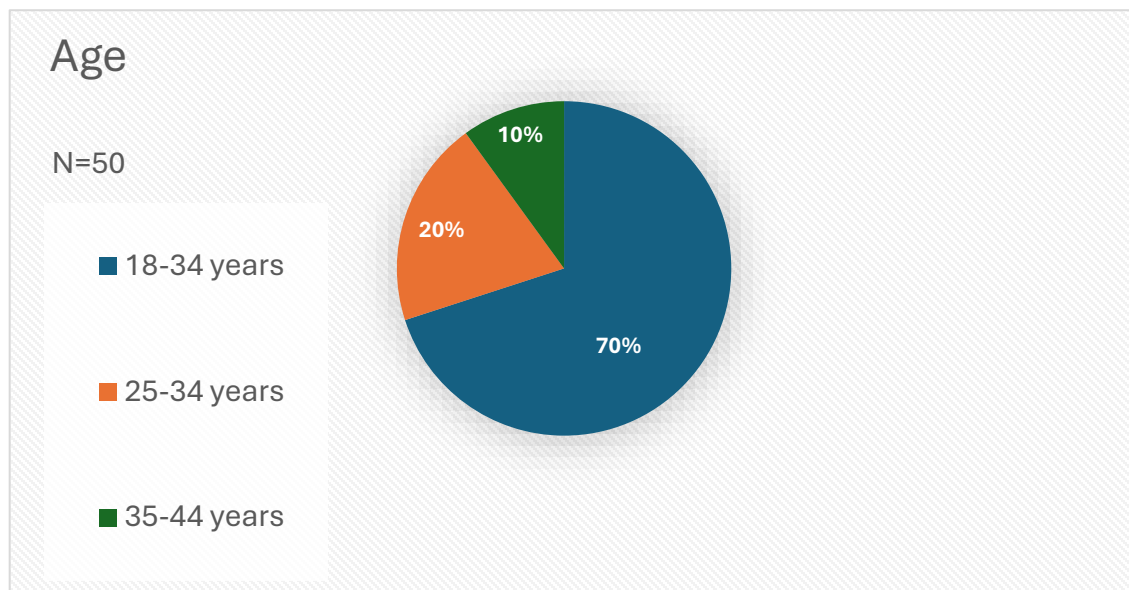
### Analysis of the observation

<i>Category</i>	<b>Observation 1</b>	<b>Observation 2</b>
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Empty, unleveled land, without recreational areas.	Absence of benches, furniture that provides shade
<i>People</i>	Children playing alone without supervision	Families walking, unable to stay in place because they have nowhere to sit.
<i>Environment</i>	Presence of garbage, dust and dirt. Lack of vegetation, areas with extreme heat without shade.	Presence of garbage, lack of vegetation, and areas with extreme heat without shade.

## 4.2 Perception Analysis Results

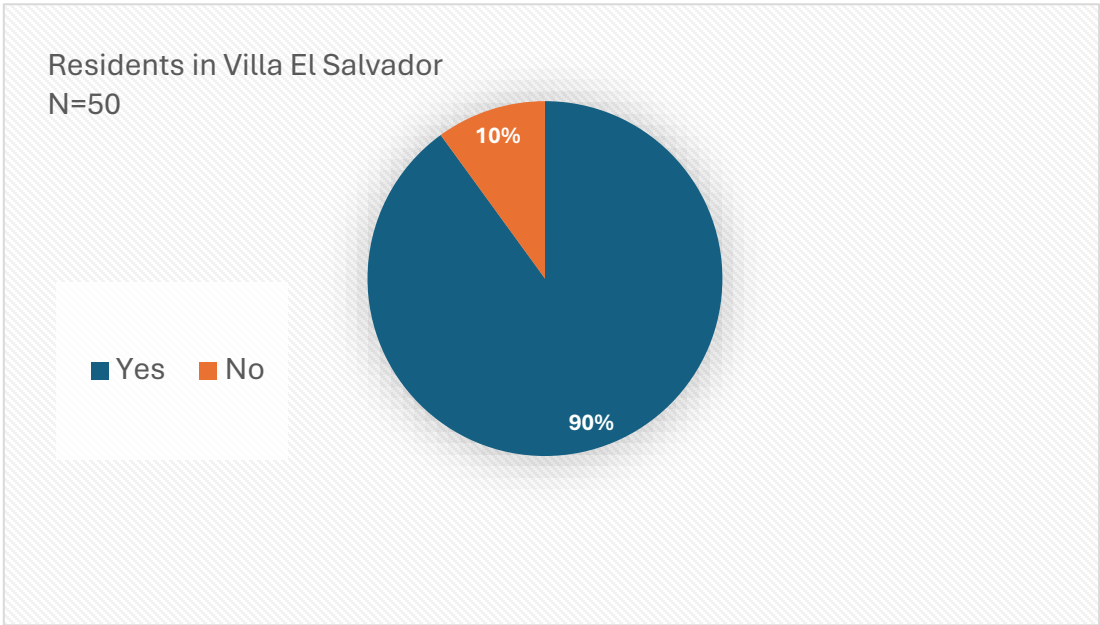
- **Question 1. Age**

50 people, including young people and adult parents, are interviewed about their perception and attitudes towards the lack of cultural spaces and awareness of sustainability as residents of Villa El Salvador. 70% are young people between 18-24 years old, so the responses are predominantly among young people, to which this study responds to their need and perception regarding the lack of cultural spaces and awareness of sustainability.



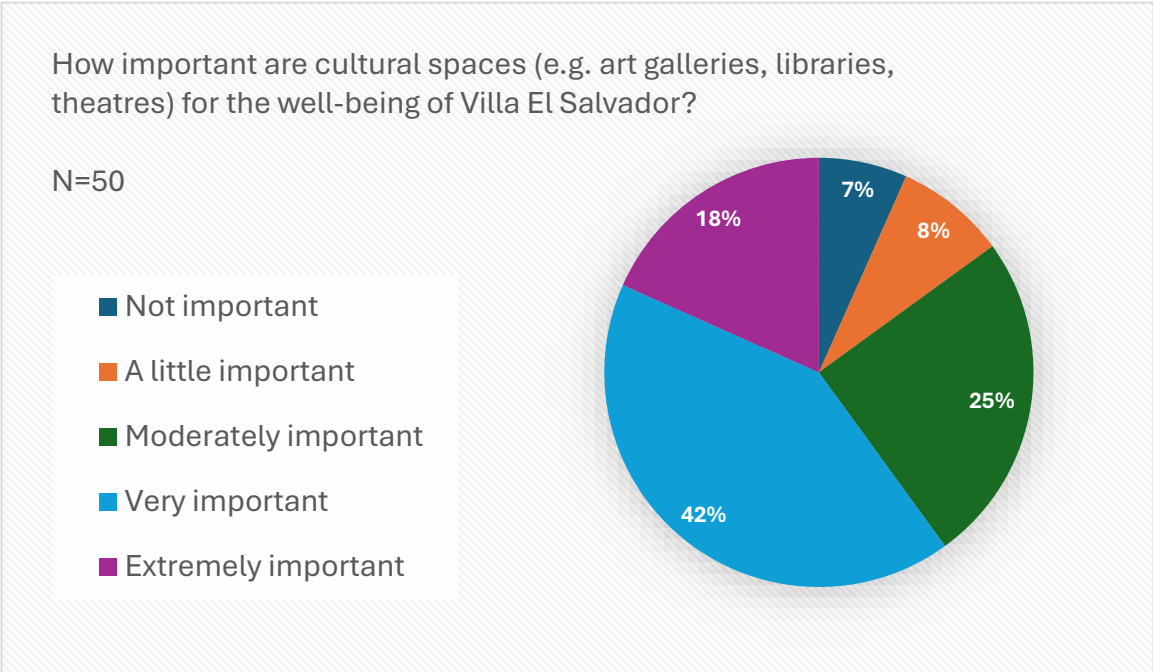
- **Question 2. Do you currently reside in Villa El Salvador, Lima?**

90% of the population currently resides in Villa El Salvador, so the study allows for more precise perceptions of residents regarding cultural spaces and sustainable awareness.



- **Question 3.** In your opinion, how important are cultural spaces (e.g., art galleries, libraries, theaters) to the well-being of Villa El Salvador?

42% consider cultural spaces to be very important for the well-being of their community and district.



- **Question 4.** Which of the following cultural activities would you be most interested in participating in, if they were available?

26% of respondents showed interest in participating in traditional music and dance performances. This perspective focuses on respecting and highlighting the community's interest and connection with local cultural expressions and appreciation for the dissemination of their traditions.

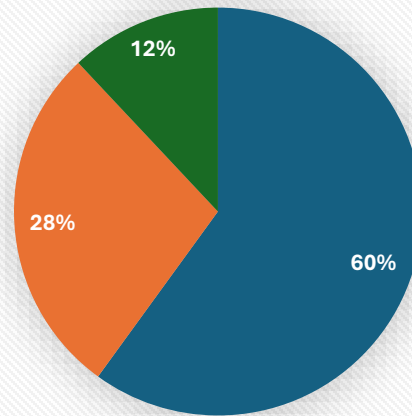


- **Question 5:** How often do you currently visit cultural spaces in Villa El Salvador or nearby areas?

60% have almost never been to one of these cultural spaces in their district

**How often do you currently visit cultural spaces in Villa El Salvador or nearby areas?**

N=50



- **Question 6:** What does "sustainability" mean to you in the context of Villa El Salvador?

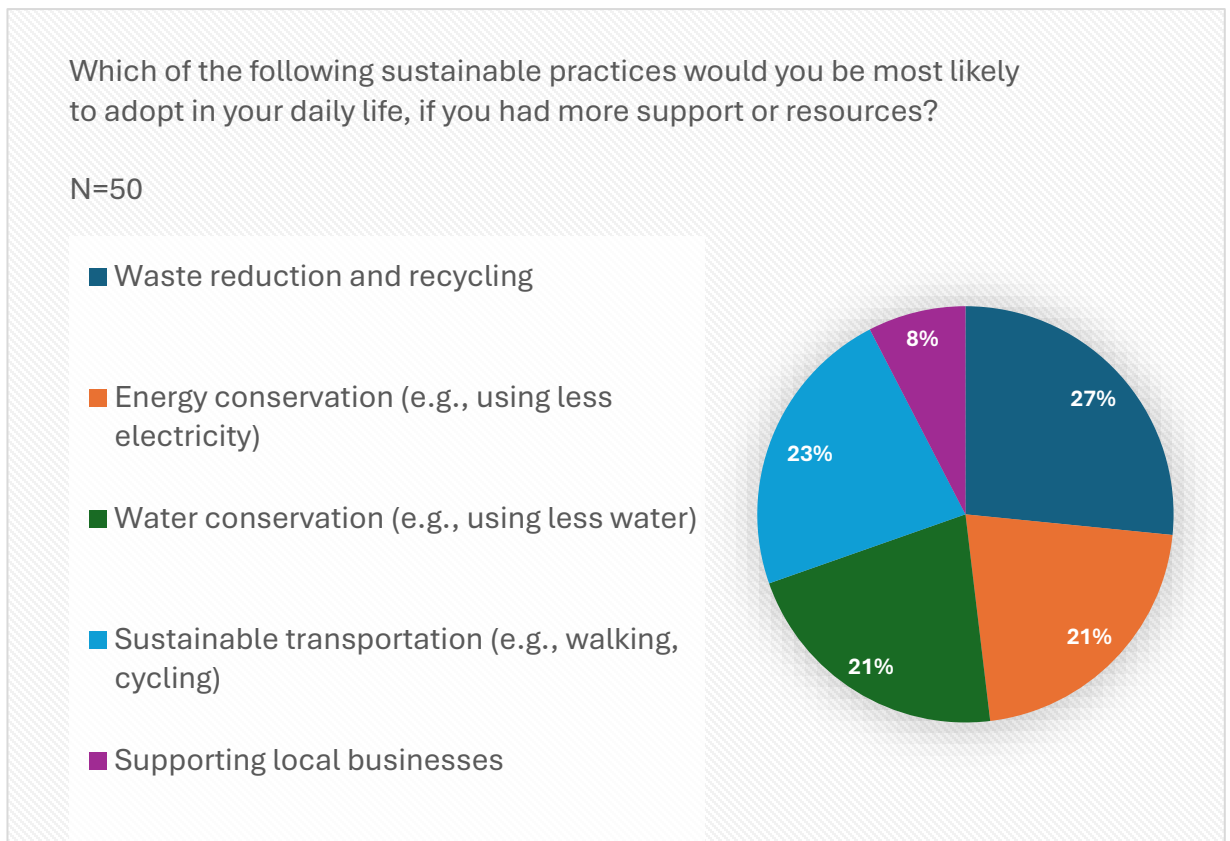
The responses of the residents of Villa El Salvador, written in the survey, reveal a diverse understanding of what sustainability means in the context of their district. Most participants associate sustainability with the balance between economic development, social well-being and environmental protection, highlighting the importance of sustainability as an opportunity to reinforce and preserve local customs and foster social well-being through cultural activities. The idea of educating new generations about the importance of caring for the environment also emerges, while others consider the responsible use of resources and the



implementation of low environmental impact practices, such as the creation of green areas and proper waste management. For respondents, sustainability involves meeting the current needs of the community without leaving any sector aside and ensuring equity in access to basic services such as education, health and employment. The desire for the district to advance in a balanced and collaborative way to improve the quality of life for all residents is reflected.

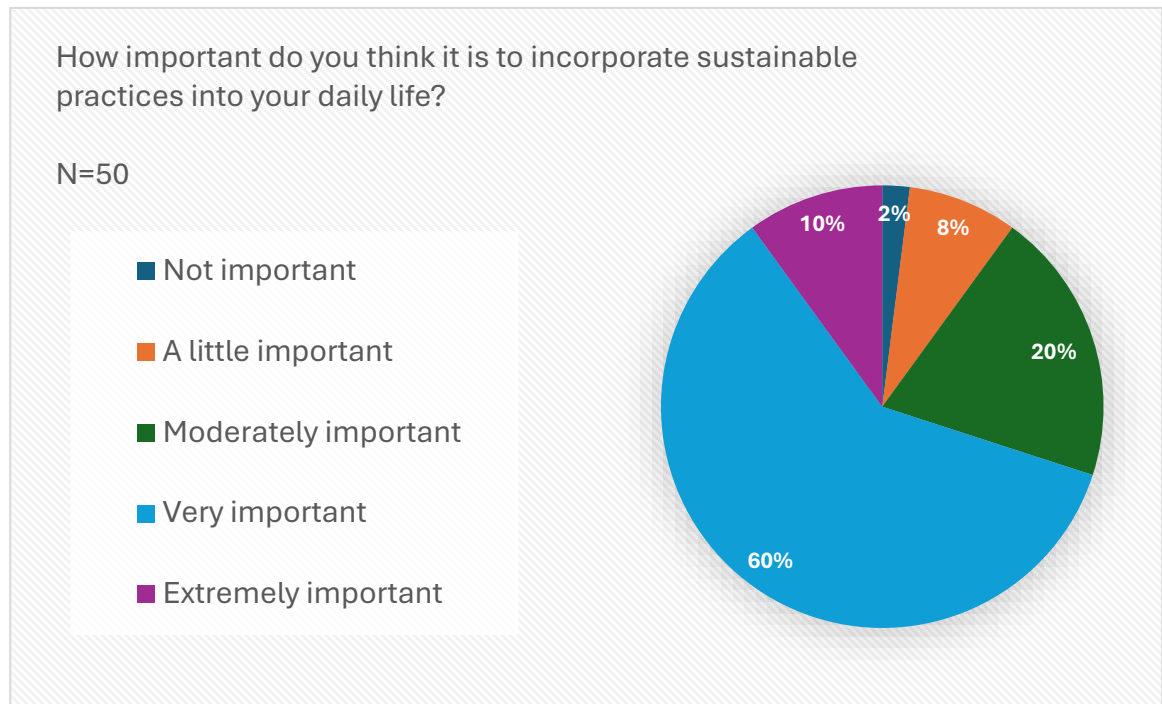
- **Question 7:** Which of the following sustainable practices would you be most likely to adopt in your daily life, with more support or resources?

27% expressed interest in adopting the sustainable practice of “waste reduction and recycling”. This perspective demonstrates the concern of residents to seek sustainable alternatives for waste reduction and promote the practice of recycling to spread environmental awareness among the community.



- **Question 8:** How important do you consider incorporating sustainable practices in your daily life?

60% consider it important to incorporate sustainable practices into their daily lives



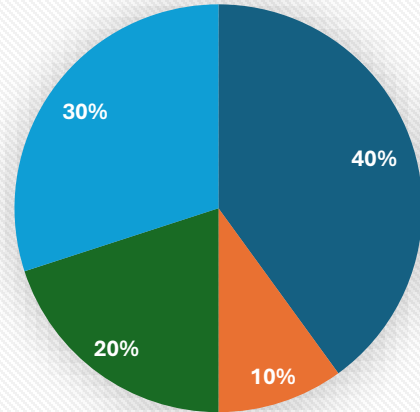
- **Question 9:** Would you be interested in attending events at cultural spaces that focus on environmental awareness or sustainability themes?

40% would be interested in attending events in cultural venues that focus on environmental awareness or sustainability issues.

Would you be interested in attending events in cultural spaces that focus on environmental awareness or sustainability issues?

N=50

■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Maybe  
■ Depends on the event



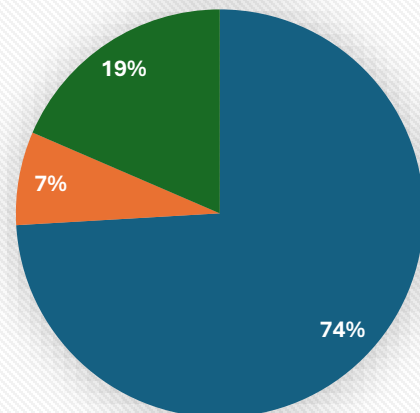
- **Question 10:** Do you think that participation in cultural activities can contribute to the sense of belonging and social cohesion in Villa El Salvador?

74% consider that participation in cultural activities is essential to contribute to the sense of belonging and social cohesion in Villa El Salvador.

Do you think that participation in cultural activities can contribute to the sense of belonging and social cohesion in Villa El Salvador?

N=50

■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Maybe



## Case Study Comparaty Analysis

- **Findings from the case study at the Las Milpitas Community Farm**

Las Milpitas is a community farm situated beside the Santa Cruz River in Tucson, Arizona. This is a natural farmland of Asian origin, from which a project was born in conjunction with the educational institution "Imago Dei" which projects an initiative to create green areas and community spaces for planting, beginning its mission to bring together residents from different parts of Tucson to build a more resilient community where they can find a unique space for meeting, learning, union and solidarity.



Figure 10: Las Milpitas Community Farm

This farm is also an educational site where they train on aspects of desert food cultivation through workshops, workdays and partnerships with local schools. They consider that the most important moments of this organization were the day it was inaugurated because they celebrated it in the community with a big party, trees were planted that are still present today, emphasizing and creating an identity between the community and the place. They hold events where awareness can be raised about environmental problems and the importance of sustainable practices that they carry out, such as compost that helps reduce waste. They create awareness of respect and care for existing nature among various people within the community, including elderly people, parents, children, and they also plant trees responsibly to create greater diversity in their cultivation. In addition, cultural activities are held at different times of the year, creating collaborations with other institutions such as schools and libraries. These events are held in English, Spanish, and sign language to provide greater reach and inclusion among the community. Folklore groups are presented, and various related resources are provided to awaken this cultural interest to strengthen the community. Another activity that is also carried out in this area is "The Market" where gardeners and external communities are invited to sell their products, crafts and local foods. With this, food workshops are also held to reach more people and awaken their interest in the activities carried out by this organization.



Figure 11: Events in Milpitas Community Farm

The diversity of events and activities contributes to the interest of various people in the community, since not only people from Tucson participate, but also different people from different parts of the world, and they have found in Las Milpitas a place where they can actively participate within the community while learning sustainable practices, crops, food and culture. One aspect that they highlight is that this union and solidarity that reinforces the feeling of community, is born from the mere exchange of ideas that they carry out within the events, since they talk about their harvest, food, books, animals and various topics that may come to their interest while they carry out these activities and if they have questions or need help they usually turn to the people of this community.

## Map Activity Results



Figure 12: Ubication of Milpitas Community Farm

The element that has contributed geographically to the organization of Milpitas is the proximity to the Santa Cruz River, since there are different programs and activities that are carried out with the county or with people who try to restore the river. Regarding the present vegetation, the ecosystem has been preserved over the years and care is taken regarding the trees that are planted so that they do not alter the known ecosystem. The neighboring communities have also been a fundamental element for growth, such as the connection with organizations, in the case of Milpitas, which relates to organizations such as: Borderlinks, Community Coalitions, Non-Profit Organizations and the University of Arizona, among others.



Figure 12: Connection between organizations

Regarding the connection of Las Milpitas with the other 2 organizations, it was said that the way they met was through personal connections, in the case of "Regeneración (Armando Barrios)" it supported the growth of Las Milpitas, so their link has been marked from the beginning. And with " Galería Mitotera " they have had conversations about the events and activities that are carried out, so they are aware of the corresponding missions of each organization for their next collaboration. It is observed that with the conversations that take place in these spaces, in these events and activities, a connection is achieved between people within the community, so that these spaces play a key role in the interaction of the community

- **Findings from the case study at the Galería Mitotera**

Galería Mitotera is an art gallery located in South Tucson, Arizona. And was born out of the need of people in search of a place where they can express themselves artistically and culturally, so this space was created to celebrate their culture, help



artists of color in the community and create a safe space for community members to interact and inspire each other through art, unity and culture. The gallery not only exhibits art, but also works on interactions within and outside the community to recover and give visibility to the different cultural expressions present in the community.



Figure 13: Galería Mitotera

[https://s3-media0.fl.yelpcdn.com/bphoto/H\\_qbuwgULES5rUIqK3EA0g/348s.jpg](https://s3-media0.fl.yelpcdn.com/bphoto/H_qbuwgULES5rUIqK3EA0g/348s.jpg)

The gallery also offers workshops and art activities aimed at local schools to promote art as an important learning resource among students. These art workshops are designed to engage young people in the creative and artistic process of creating various spaces in their community, to develop their cultural and artistic knowledge

and their identity with the place. They consider that the most important moments of this organization were during the COVID-19 pandemic, where despite the circumstances, they provided a platform aimed at making artists and their stories known, which generated requests for these artists from people who listened to or watched the videos and could help each other get ahead. Then, the Confluence Center at the University of Arizona supported them with a small grant because they considered this work important and archived it in special collections at the library.

They organize events where they learn about local plants. They have personal connections with many herbalists, Chicano artists, indigenous artists, and community members who have shared their desire to learn because they all have the same memory of having great-grandparents or nannies who would give you aloe vera if you got sunburned or chamomile tea if your stomach hurt. The people in the community share similar memories, so they turn to the herbalists who they connect with their culture and lineage. In addition, in these spaces they usually carry out teaching activities about the history of iconic figures in history, art, and culture in an entertaining way so that young people have fun learning. So, this space has a direct link with the community, and this happens simply by talking and sharing. Some artists come to collaborate and share their art, but beyond the art, there is a concern for the needs of the people in the community. Each conversation strengthens those ties and a connection with the community. The activities they carry out are open to the public because when they met older people in public housing, they realized that many were alone, without internet access and with few

personal connections. This motivated them to start a program with South Tucson Community Outreach, where every month they share a meal and activities with them and carry out art projects or lottery games to create community ties. Each meeting is a joy for both the older adults and the volunteers, who find in this space a place where they develop an identity with the place and the community.

### Map Activity Results



Figure 14: Ubication of Galería Mitotera

The element that has contributed geographically to the organization of Galería Mitotera is the proximity to educational institutions, since there are different programs and activities that are carried out with students and teachers. Many of the adults in the families in the community work a lot, so after school, the children, instead of going home alone, go to the youth center near the organization, where

they have offered art programs or simply talks with the children, they also go on school trips, such as to Arizona Arts Live in collaboration with the University of Arizona, to expose them to types of art and culture. As the organization has reached out to diverse people in the community, they find themselves in need of a larger space because it has expanded to include their network.

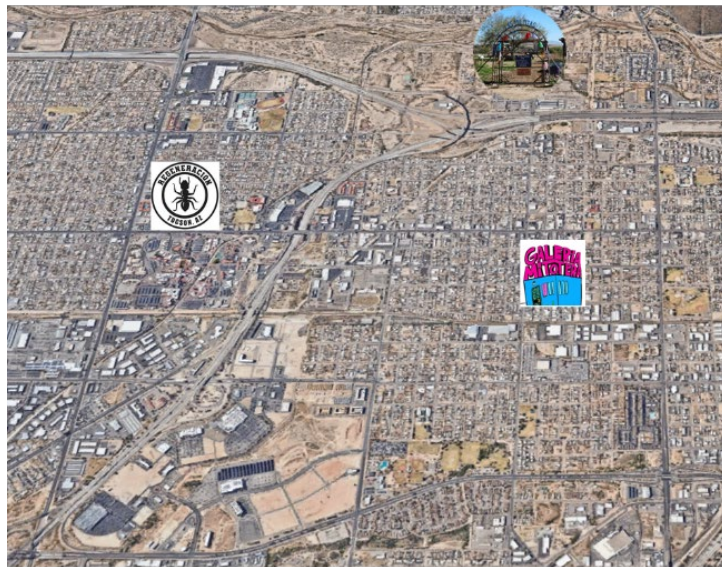


Figure 15: Connection between organizations

Regarding the connection between Galería Mitotera and the other two organizations, it was said that they met through personal connections. In the case of “Regeneración (Armando Barrios)” it was present from the beginning through events to get to know the community and its missions with its organizations. Regarding “Milpitas”, the connection was made by observing it on a map, since although they knew of the existence of Milpitas, they had not realized how close the place was, separated only by the river. But they mentioned that they appreciate the natural environment of

that organization, and their relationship is developed through collaborations and exchange of knowledge, since although they are different organizations, they are all part of the same community, and they highlight their commitment to share resources and experiences to enrich knowledge within the community.

- **Findings from the case study at the Regeneración (Armando Barrios)**

Regeneration (Armando Barrios) is a project that is being carried out on 12th Ave, in Tucson, Arizona. It is a project that was born in partnership with the Southwest Folklife Alliance, which together has the mission of creating and expanding green areas, planning the use and care of the land, ensuring its health and vitality over time while considering at the same time the environmental, cultural and community impacts of how that land is used. In addition, this space contributes as a public space for people to meet, participate in activities, learn and share traditional knowledge.



Figure 16: Regeneración (Armando Barrios)

This project is established as a CLT after the community commented through conversations and interviews during the work of La Doce Barrio Foodways, which is a neighborhood well known for Spanish-speaking people, they conducted surveys and conversations for the collection of data on what the community wants for their space. Therefore, they propose in their project that the land be accessible for public use, the participation and community development work in these spaces, and they will promote community members to acquire various environmental knowledge so that they can develop their businesses and the development of emerging markets in this space. In addition, they propose a computer space that seeks to be an accessible space so that the community can use technology for free or at a low cost, so it would include computers with an internet connection, and among people in the community can provide support to help each other, especially those who do not have experience with technology.

### **Map Activity Results**



Figure 17: Ubication of Regeneración (Armando Barrios)

The element that has contributed geographically to the organization of Regeneración is its location in the southern area of Tucson and its proximity to Calle 12, which is an area that is distinguished by its gastronomy and its cultural connection with Mexico, particularly from the north of Mexico, such as the state of Sonora. Along this street, from 44th to the end of the stretch, there are numerous restaurants and food stands, including influences from different regions of Mexico, such as Puebla, Guanajuato and Guadalajara, thus reflecting the cultural traditions and different stories of people who develop a community identity through their focus on food and the exchange of ideas.

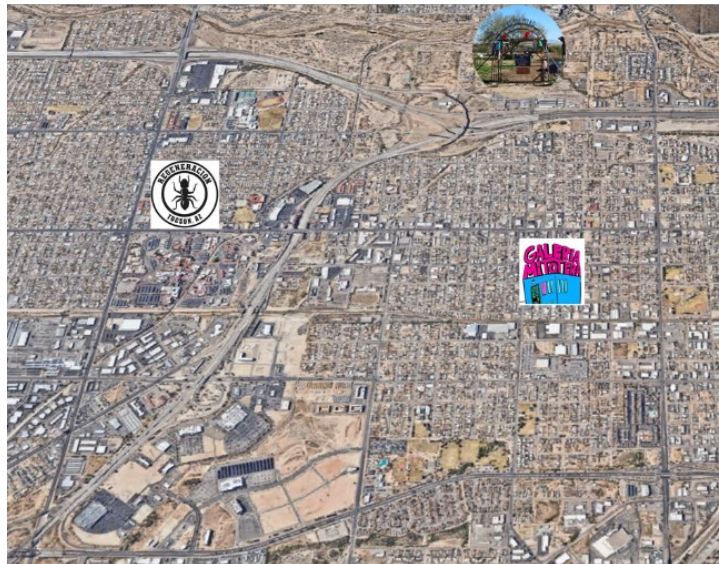


Figure 18: Connection between organizations

Regarding the connection between Regeneración and the other two organizations, it was said that they met through personal connections, community events and collaborations focused on promoting cultural expression and sustainable practices in the community. In addition, it is close to the organizations, and they share similar strategies to fulfill their focus on cultural and sustainable development

### Comparative analysis

<i>Category</i>	<b>Milpitas</b>	<b>Galería Mitotera</b>	<b>Regeneración</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<i>Mission</i>	Foster unity and connection among community members by creating green areas and community spaces for sustainable agriculture, learning, and solidarity.	Promotes artistic and cultural expressions, in a safe and inclusive space for the community.	Expanding green spaces, promoting community engagement, and developing spaces for environmental and cultural growth.	They focus on strengthening the community through participation in different approaches such as sustainability, environmental management and cultural and artistic expression.
<i>Origen</i>	Originated through collaboration with	Born out of the need for space to	Developed through a partnership with the	Driven by the need for farmland,



	the Imago Dei educational institution, modifying natural farmland into a community farm.	provide support for artistic and cultural expression.	Southwest Folklife Alliance, which arises from the community's need for green areas.	environmental sustainability, green areas, and cultural expression (Regeneration).
<i>Milestone/event</i>	Opening day, celebrated with tree planting and a community gathering.	Supporting local artists and the community through digital platforms during COVID-19.	Community surveys conducted during “La Doce Barrio Foodways” shape project design.	Each milestone reflects their missions regarding sustainability, agriculture and cultural resilience, the events have consolidated ties with their communities.
<i>Challenges</i>	Limited resources to expand workshops	Insufficient space	Balancing environmental conservation with community needs	There are complications regarding the lack of resources and space for a high capacity of people.

*Water reuse*

Utilizes composting and promotes use of grey water	Non-direct approach by raising awareness about sustainability through cultural means.	Plans to implement water reuse systems to maintain green spaces.	Water management is important to activities at Milpitas and Regeneración, while Galería Mitotera integrates sustainability through cultural awareness.
--	---	--	--

*Natural resources*

Plants trees, engages in sustainable agriculture, and grows food to preserve desert biodiversity	Raise awareness about the cultural and historical importance of native plants and their connection to identity and community.	Raise awareness about responsible and sustainable land use	They focus on natural resources, but each connects them to the community's identity and environmental goals.
--	---	--	--

*Workshops*

Offers agriculture and sustainability workshops, in collaboration with	Offers arts and culture workshops, including the use of native plants	Plans to include workshops on environmental care and technology use	Their workshops reflect the missions of each organization, such as agricultural skills, artistic and
--	---	---	--

*Events*

schools and community groups.			cultural expression, and environmental education
Organizes "The Market," where local gardeners and artisans sell their natural products	Organizes cultural events, storytelling, and art exhibits	They will include learning activities related to sustainability, and knowledge exchange about technological resources	Events serve as platforms for the exchange of ideas, community interaction, and raising cultural and sustainable awareness.

**Summary Reflexion of the analysis**

The analysis reveals that all three organizations (Las Milpitas, Galería Mitotera, and Regeneración) are committed to strengthening community unity by creating bonds through participation, with a focus on sustainability and cultural expression. While their missions differ, each is driven by the needs and opinions of their community, with challenges arising from limited resources and limited space to accommodate large numbers of community participants. Both Milpitas and Regeneración emphasize water management as an important part of carrying out their activities, emphasizing the use of greywater, while Galería Mitotera is driven by awareness and cultural practices, with each using and raising awareness about

natural resources in ways that are linked to the identity of their community. Thus, the workshops and events organized by these groups reflect their missions while encouraging interaction between people in the community, the exchange of ideas, and cultural and sustainable awareness.

## 2. Discussion

This study investigates the impact of cultural spaces and sustainability awareness on residents of Villa El Salvador, Lima. It analyzes the strategies implemented by three successful organizations in Tucson, Arizona, and their potential application in the context of Villa El Salvador. Key findings are that there is a strong interest in cultural and artistic activities linked to sustainability, but there is a gap in adequate cultural infrastructure and different perceptions about sustainability in the district.

Observations in the area show that there are spaces that lack the necessary infrastructure to support children and family activities. The safety of children is at risk due to an abandoned plot of land near Óvalo Las Palmeras, which is frequented by children on weekdays after school hours, is in poor condition and without adequate recreational facilities, which poses a risk to children's safety and health. The absence of green spaces doesn't encourage environmental awareness, so this observation highlights the need for safe, accessible and environmentally friendly places that support sustainability and community participation.

The survey results reinforce these observations, as 70% of respondents are young people and 90% of participants currently reside in Villa El Salvador. This group reflects a strong

interest in cultural spaces, as 42% consider them fundamental to the well-being of everyone in the community. However, only 60% of respondents frequently visit cultural spaces, indicating a gap in the accessibility or reach of these spaces. The survey also highlights a desire for greater participation in sustainable practices, as 60% of participants recognize the importance of integrating these practices into their daily lives, and while residents' definitions vary in their perception and understanding of sustainability, they include the importance of balancing it with economic development, environmental protection, and social well-being. 27% of respondents expressed a greater interest in adopting sustainable waste reduction and recycling strategies, so it could be understood from the observations that waste is a problem in the district and that these sustainable practice strategies could help reduce it. Furthermore, 40% of respondents expressed interest in attending events that focus on sustainability and environmental issues, suggesting that the creation and development of cultural spaces can be an effective platform for promoting awareness and action on sustainability issues and practices.

27% of respondents expressed a greater interest in adopting sustainable waste reduction and recycling strategies, so it could be understood from the observations that waste is a problem in the district and that these sustainable practice strategies could help reduce it. Furthermore, 40% of respondents show interest in attending events that focus on sustainability and preserving the environment, suggesting that the development of cultural spaces can be an effective platform to raise awareness and encourage action on sustainable issues.

Most importantly, 74% of respondents believe that cultural activities foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion, so this percentage indicates that this perception is consistent and aligns with the work of the three successful local organizations under analysis: Las Milpitas, Galería Mitotera, and Regeneración and these organizations emphasize the value of community unity through sustainable practices and active participation, taking into account community needs and creating spaces for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and education on sustainable practices. However, these organizations face challenges in accommodating a larger number of participants due to their limited resources and space. The willingness of locals to engage in activities that support sustainability, however, is a common element that comes out of both scenarios examined.

### **3. Conclusion**

**Sustainable strategies from the Tucson cases can foster engagement in spaces in Villa El Salvador are:**

The reuse of grey water for irrigation, a practice successfully implemented in Tucson organizations. Villa El Salvador has a water shortage, so water consumption is significantly reduced by reusing water from washing machines, showers and sinks for the maintenance of green areas and the planting of native plants and transforming vacant lots, promoting environmental awareness and contributing to the sustainability of the district.

**Cultural strategies from the Tucson cases can foster engagement in spaces in Villa El Salvador are:**

Organizing cultural and artistic workshops and events, a practice successfully implemented in Tucson organizations. In Villa El Salvador there are various colorful artistic murals made by various people who are part of the community as a form of expression of equality

and community unity, so children and families are interested and curious to participate in workshops, art exhibitions and events that address both cultural and sustainable aspects.

**Weel-being strategies from the Tucson cases can foster engagement in spaces in Villa El Salvador are:**

The use and knowledge of natural resources for community well-being, a practice successfully implemented in Tucson organizations. At Villa El Salvador, green spaces are created using native Peruvian plants, such as the molle costeño, which require little water and are adaptable to local climate conditions. In this way, physical and mental well-being is contributed to, and awareness is raised about natural resources and the benefits of local native plants, reinforcing the connection of residents with local natural resources, promoting a sense of belonging and care for the environment.

#### 4. References:

Miguel Azcueta Gorostiza. (1983). DISTRITO.

<https://www.munives.gob.pe/WebSite/DISTRITO.pdf>

Fundación Princesa de Asturias. (n.d.). Villa El Salvador de Lima (Perú). Copyright 2024.

FUNDACIÓN PRINCESA DE ASTURIAS. <https://www.fpa.es/es/premios-princesa-de-asturias/premiados/1987-villa-el-salvador-de-lima-peru/?texto=trayectoria>

Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática - INEI. (n.d.). Plataforma Del Estado Peruano. <https://www.gob.pe/inei/>

Abbot, T. (2018, December 3). Lima's Villa El Salvador: a story of structured informal development. TheCityFix. <https://thecityfix.com/blog/lima-peru-villa-el-salvador-story-ordered-informal-development-thomas-abbot-robin-king/>

Castells, M. (1983). La cuestión urbana: La transformación de la ciudad y el proceso de urbanización. Ediciones Siglo XXI.

Al-Shami, H. W., Al-Alwan, H. A., & Abdulkareem, T. A. (2023). Cultural sustainability in urban third places: Assessing the impact of “Co-operation in Science and Technology” in cultural third places. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, 15(3), 102465. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2023.102465>



Manthey, N. A. (2024). The role of community-led social infrastructure in disadvantaged areas. *Cities*, 147, 104831. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104831>

Brewster, Victoria, "Ciudad Disidente: Addressing social and infrastructural deficiencies in villa salvador--Part 1" (2014). *Architecture Senior Theses*.277.[https://surface.syr.edu/architecture\\_theses/277](https://surface.syr.edu/architecture_theses/277)

Florian Steinberg, Liliana Miranda,Local agenda 21, capacity building and the cities of Peru,*HabitatInternational*,Volume 29, Issue 1,2005,Pages 163-182,ISSN 0197-3975,<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2003.07.001>.

Carmona Ramirez, K. (2015). ESPACIO PÚBLICO COMO ELEMENTO GENERADOR DE INCLUSIÓN Y COHESIÓN SOCIAL EN LA CIUDAD CONTEMPORÁNEA LATINOAMERICANA. Tesis, Universidad

Spinozzi, P. (2018). *Cultures of Sustainability and Wellbeing. Cultures of Sustainability and Wellbeing. Theories, Histories and Policies*, 1st edition. Ferrara. [https://www.academia.edu/42281475/Cultures\\_of\\_Sustainability\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_Cultures\\_of\\_Sustainability\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_Theories\\_Histories\\_and\\_Policies\\_1st\\_Edition](https://www.academia.edu/42281475/Cultures_of_Sustainability_and_Wellbeing_Cultures_of_Sustainability_and_Wellbeing_Theories_Histories_and_Policies_1st_Edition)

Barlow, S. (2024, January 12). How Cities Use the Arts to Promote Youth and Community Development - National League of Cities. National League of Cities. <https://www.nlc.org/article/2023/06/28/how-cities-use-the-arts-to-promote-youth-and-community-development/>

Eden, N. C. A., Chisom, N. O. N., & Adeniyi, N. I. S. (2024). CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN EDUCATION: STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, 6(3), 383–392. <https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i3.895>

UNESCO.(2021).Cutting Edge: All Aboard! Culture and social inclusion. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-all-aboard-culture-and-social-inclusion>