

## Sustainable awareness in the university: analysis of Reciclos program at Complutense University of Madrid

**Sensibilización sostenible en la universidad: análisis  
del programa Reciclos en la Universidad Complutense  
de Madrid**

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### Abstract

Currently, the dimensions of sustainability should be ingrained in the DNA of universities (Tilbury, 2010). Universities should promote an increase in awareness of sustainability. This article evaluates student participation in the "Reciclos" recycling program at UCM and their level of awareness of sustainable development. Additionally, the relationship between sustainability and the application of storydoing is presented to motivate users to move from theory to action (Luque de Marcos and Baraybar, 2018; Schiller, 2018). A content analysis is conducted on TikTok, and a survey is administered (N=150). The results highlight key factors for achieving sustainable communication. It is found that young people prefer useful content such as hacks, and although they have a high level of ecological consciousness, they are unaware of the dimensions of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, university, environmental sensibility, urban youth

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## Resumen

Actualmente, las dimensiones de la sostenibilidad deberían formar parte del ADN de las Universidades (Tilbury, 2010). Las universidades deben impulsar el aumento de una conciencia sobre la sostenibilidad. Este artículo evalúa la participación de los estudiantes en el programa de reciclaje “Reciclos” en la UCM y su nivel de concienciación sobre desarrollo sostenible. Asimismo, se presenta la relación entre la sostenibilidad y la aplicación de un storydoing para motivar que el usuario pase de la teoría a la acción (Luque de Marcos and Baraybar, 2018; Schiller, 2018). Se realiza un análisis de contenido en TikTok y se aplica una encuesta (N=150). Como resultado se muestran las claves para realizar una comunicación sostenible. Se encuentra que los jóvenes prefieren contenidos útiles como hacks y aunque tienen un alto nivel de conciencia ecológica, desconocen las dimensiones del desarrollo sostenible.

**Palabras clave:** desarrollo sostenible, universidad, sensibilización ambiental, joven urbano.

## Introduction

Spain has become the third EU country that has increased its plastic packaging waste recycling rate the most in the last decade. In 2019, each Spanish citizen recycled 13.2 kg of plastic packaging from the household, which is almost 1 kg more per capita than the previous year and ten times more than in 2000 (Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, 2020). Then, in 2022, 708,596 plastic packaging, 666,344 pieces of paper, 243,360 pieces of metal; 112,431 briks; 9,012 wooden objects were recycled in Spain. In total, 1,627,313 tons of recycled products were recycled (Ecoembes, 2022).

The recycling data in Spain shows people are more aware of the issue, but there are still problems in waste management and the inadequate Infrastructure in the country. Another problem is the contamination of recyclable waste. The incorrect sorting of different materials, such as mixing plastic, paper, and glass, can lead to contamination, reducing the quality and value of recyclables. This can make the recycling process less efficient (Greenpeace, 2019).

The reality is the need to improve and promote recycling actions in Spain, because in addition to having more containers in the streets, it is also necessary to achieve greater understanding of the issue among the population. To achieve a change in behavior, joint actions are needed between the government, companies, schools and citizens. In this context, the university represents a potential agent of change to achieve social transformation, because it has the capacity to directly or indirectly influence the values and attitudes of individuals.

The theory establishes that the university should have the interest to solve its own environmental impacts, making its practice coherent with its principles. Therefore, it should provide students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that allow them to be trained with respect to the environment within the schemes of sustainable development. To achieve social change requires educational participation. Universities are instrumental in educating and equipping the next generation of leaders, professionals, and scholars with the knowledge and skills needed to address sustainability challenges. They can engage with local stakeholders, including businesses, government bodies, community organizations, and citizens, to address sustainability challenges collectively. Consequently, universities can support local sustainability goals, participate in regional development plans, and drive positive change beyond their campus boundaries (Wals, 2014 and Tilbury, 2010).

Nowadays, the sustainability values should be part of the institutional purposes of the university and part of their DNA (Tilbury, 2010). Additionally, universities can engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about sustainability challenges and promote sustainable practices among their stakeholders and society at large.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the students' participation in "Reciclos" program created by Ecoembes, a non-profit organization in Spain, who is dedicated to the promotion and coordination of recycling and the eco-efficient management of packaging waste. The case of study is focused on the implementation that Reciclos had at the Complutense University of Madrid (CUM), a public education institution in Spain. Furthermore, this study analyzes the profile of Ecoembes on TikTok, because that is one of the social media most used by college students. Also, the research shows the relation

between storydoing and sustainability; adding some keys for making a sustainable communication.

This essay uses as a starting point the theoretical review of three thematic axes: sustainable communication, storytelling & storydoing and Z Generation characteristics. Also, it should be noted that the “Reciclos” activity promotes two SDGs and contributes to the 2030 Agenda goals. These are SDG 13- Climate action, and SDG 17- Partnerships to achieve the goals.

Ecoembes bases its activity on public-private collaboration to coordinate a collective response to an increasingly strong social demand: to advance the circularity of packaging. To this end, it generates alliances between civil society and organizations such as companies and schools. Ecoembes described that they provide several advantages for the environment:

- Packaging waste recycling: one of the primary advantages of Ecoembes is its contribution to packaging waste recycling.
- Circular economy promotion: The organization encourages the design of sustainable packaging and supports the implementation of eco-design principles by companies. This helps to minimize waste generation and promote a more sustainable and resource-efficient economy.
- Environmental education and awareness: The organization develops initiatives to inform and engage citizens, schools, and businesses about the importance of recycling, waste reduction, and sustainable consumption. By raising awareness and promoting responsible behaviors, Ecoembes helps to foster a culture of environmental stewardship and encourage individuals and organizations to take action for the environment. This is the activity that the organization started at the Complutense University of Madrid.
- Collaboration and partnerships: They facilitate cooperation and knowledge sharing, fostering innovation and best practices in waste management and recycling.
- Environmental impact reduction: Through its recycling efforts, the organization helps to reduce the environmental impact associated with the extraction and production of virgin materials used in packaging. These actions are aligned to the principles of sustainable development and support Spain's efforts to mitigate climate change and preserve biodiversity.

(Ecoembes, 2023).

Overall, Ecoembes has several advantages for the environment in Spain, including increased recycling rates, promotion of the circular

economy, environmental education, collaboration with stakeholders, and a reduced environmental impact. The organization activities contribute to a more sustainable approach to packaging waste management, supporting Spain's transition towards a greener and more resource-efficient society.

### **1.1. The relationship between universities and sustainable development**

First, sustainable development is briefly conceptualized. According to the United Nations (UN), sustainable development is "meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (2020). It consists of three dimensions and in a balanced manner seeks to achieve: economic development, social development and environmental protection (UN, 2020).

The definition proposed by the UN is the dominant one, because it integrates the word sustain from three approaches: social, economic and ecological, considering that when something is sustainable, it means that from the three points of view it proposes mechanisms to raise the quality of life of the population; to conserving and restoring natural resources, maintaining ecological processes, taking care of biological diversity, gender, race and creed equity and pursuing the responsible distribution of resources. The idea of sustainable development is to improve the quality of life of society (UN, 2020). Sustainable communication's main objective is to support, encourage, activate and promote sustainable forms of human development for sustainable societies. It enhances the values of sustainability, dialogue, people's identity, transparency, legitimacy, governance; it creates community and increases the sustainability of the system as a whole (Belz, Peattie & Galí, 2013; Gili, 2017). A sustainable communication must have the power to transcend between public and scientific opinion.

Regarding the participation of sustainable communication in the university system, it helps to raise awareness among students, faculty, staff, and the wider university community about sustainability challenges, opportunities, and solutions. Educational institutions have the power to contribute to shaping public opinion, influencing policies, and driving positive change beyond their campus boundaries, because they have the potential to be leaders in the transition to a sustainable society.

On the other hand, Wals (2014) shows that there is a lot of enthusiasm and interest within universities in relation to their involvement in initiatives towards sustainable development. This involvement has led to the emergence of competitiveness in terms of their environmental performance through evaluation and recognition systems (Grindsted, 2011).

Since 2017, Complutense University of Madrid (CUM) has promoted environmental programs, projects and services with the aim of reducing energy and water consumption, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting sustainable mobility and recycling. In addition, the Complutense University of Madrid has once again been evaluated in the world ranking of Green Universities and the result revalidates the Complutense as the first Spanish University to be sustainable, and has the 31st place worldwide, among the 1,050 universities in 85 countries that have participated in this new edition of the ranking. This fact recognizes the effort made by CUM to reduce its carbon footprint in order to contribute to the fight against global climate change.

### **1.2. Storytelling and storydoing faced sustainable communication**

Currently, there is an evolution in communication platforms and consequently the way of transmitting the message changes, both in the form of the content and in the communication channels used. In recent years, digital networks are considered the main platforms to get information to reach young people and have greater reach (Hansen, 2017).

Therefore, social media platforms offer powerful tools for sustainable communication because organizations can leverage visual media, such as images, videos, and animations, have the opportunity to raise awareness about sustainability issues and engage with audiences. Campaigns can encourage user-generated content, such as sharing eco-friendly practices or participating in sustainability challenges. Also, digitalization avoids the unnecessary generation of waste.

An efficient way to transmit a message is through storytelling (Castelló, 2019). It is necessary to create creative content to have the audience's attention. This approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of sustainability issues by leveraging different media,

such as films, websites, social networks, games and interactive experiences.

The relationship between sustainability and storytelling is multifaceted and interconnected, because it offers a powerful framework for communicating sustainability by enabling the diffusion of information, promoting engagement, and fostering a deeper understanding of complex sustainability issues (Leal & Consorte-McCrea, 2018).

The use of this narrative allows exploring the application of storydoing, a narrative technique that through the visualization of actions or experiences, manages to provide social meaning and increase the credibility of the organization. Storydoing refers to the practice of organizations actively embodying and living out their values and narratives through meaningful actions. The purpose of storydoing is to create an experience that is easily remembered by the user and at the same time communicates the values and purposes of the organization executing the campaign (Luque de Marcos and Baraybar, 2018).

The concept of storydoing can help to overcome cognitive barriers associated with sustainability. Hahn et al. (2014) highlight that managers often face paradoxical cognitive frames when addressing sustainability issues, such as the tension between environmental protection and economic performance. Storydoing can provide a cognitive frame that integrates these seemingly contradictory aspects by reframing sustainability as a strategic opportunity. Through storydoing sustainable actions can be promoted and organizations can reconcile these tensions and develop a more holistic understanding of sustainability.

### **1.3. Overview of the Spanish youth: Gen Z**

Generation Z, also known as the millennial generation, refers to those individuals born approximately between 1995 and 2010. In this case it is a range of young people who are college students, because they are between 18 and 23 years of age. This generation has grown up in a world marked by environmental and social challenges, which has influenced their attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability. Some studies (Deloitte, 2022; Atrevia and Deusto, 2017; Injuve, 2016) argue that the relationship between Generation Z and sustainability is close, as this demographic cohort shows a greater awareness and commitment to environmental protection and the

search for a sustainable future (Salvatore, 2018). In addition, the younger Spanish people have a very high recycling rate and show that they are very aware. In fact, 71% of them say that it is a source of pride to recycle packaging correctly and contribute to reducing the footprint and the impact we leave in our wake (INE, 2023).

The Centennials are "children of technology, of virtual learning" (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017, p. 1), so their relationship with technology has changed the paradigm in the communicative ecosystem. Centennials claim that their information consumption is focused on social networks and web portals, since traditional media, such as television, radio and newspapers, do not broadcast the news they are interested in.

Generation Z has grown up at a time when climate change, environmental degradation and social inequality have been prominent issues in the media and society at large. This constant exposure to global issues has awakened a sense of urgency and responsibility in Generation Z to address these challenges. A study by the Nielsen Institute found that 73% of Generation Z consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products and services (Nielsen, 2019). This finding suggests that this generation values sustainability and considers it important to support companies and brands that have an ethical and environmentally responsible approach.

In addition, Generation Z has used social networks and other digital platforms to voice their concerns and promote sustainability. They are known for their online activism and their ability to mobilize large groups of people around social and environmental causes. For example, the Fridays for Future movement, led by climate activist Greta Thunberg, has been largely driven by young people from Generation Z who are demanding concrete action against climate change.

In Spain, there are more than 8 million young people and 51% of the centennials consider themselves mobile-dependent and almost 40% spend between six and ten hours connected (Injuve, 2016). For them, the phone is the center of their universe, they socialize on the Internet. However, one of the main disadvantages of the network is that it forces them to be multitasking or multitasking and this makes it difficult to pay attention. Although some authors specify that they are a less mobile-dependent generation, and only identify with certain social networks, as is the case of Instagram, TikTok and

Twitch (García-Rivero, Martínez-Estrella and Bonales-Daimiel, 2022).

## **Materials and methods**

This research was developed based on a descriptive non-experimental methodological design. A documentary review of the theory on the role of universities in the formation of awareness and participation in sustainable actions is carried out, specifically at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). This type of review is used to conduct a descriptive study that aims to collect information independently of academic concepts (Hernández, 2010).

This information serves to contextualize the participation of the CUM in the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, the participation of the Complutense University of Madrid in the Reciclos initiative, proposed by Ecoembes and dedicated to the recycling of plastic packaging and cans, is analyzed. With this, the level of participation of students in the campaign is known and the elements that were used to have a sustainable communication are also evaluated.

Finally, an exploratory survey was conducted with 150 students, who were asked how often they recycle, whether or not they participate in the "Reciclos" program and how they learned about this activity. Through the survey we can study the behavior of a sample (Sampieri et al., 2006). It also evaluates their degree of knowledge about the values that these students have about sustainable development. The questionnaire was distributed online through email and institutional profiles on social networks and it was open from May 18 to 26, 2023, this survey showed that the social network most used by students is TikTok; therefore, the study analyzed Ecoembes profile on TikTok.

Based on the work of Stewart & Arnold (2017) for the review of TikTok 6 qualitative and quantitative attributes were considered, description of the storytelling, message intent, call to action, reach, number of views and interaction. The videos chosen correspond to the use and promotion of the Reciclos machine and those are compared with the more "famous" videos on that profile. This is with the intention of knowing the characteristics those have.

## **Results and Discussion**

### 3.1. Case study: Reciclos at the Complutense University of Madrid.

The Complutense University is the first university to install automated machines in its faculties to collect cans and plastic bottles for recycling. CUM has thus joined the Reciclos initiative, a Return and Reward System (RDS) developed by the Ecoembes Association. To make use of this system, all you have to do is download the free app Reciclos and scan the barcode on the plastic can or bottle you want to recycle before throwing it in the bin.

This system means that every time someone recycles their cans and plastic bottles, they advance awareness of recycling and responsible consumption, and contribute to social causes. In exchange for depositing the containers in the machines, students, teachers and administrative and service staff who register with Reciclos receive points that can be donated to social and environmental projects such as Banco de Alimentos (food bank) or Aldeas Infantiles (entertainment spaces for kids).

*Figure 1.* Reciclos` website.



Source: Ecoembes, 2023.

They can also use the points they generate to participate in raffles for backpacks, electric skates, bicycles, phone accessories, and water flasks, among other uniquely sustainable products. In this way, Ecoembes motivates and rewards environmental responsibility.

The collection from the machines is carried out by Ecoembes' partner companies and thus begins the journey to be recycled and reintroduced into the consumer chain. The collection trucks do not

mix waste (a widespread myth), but there are places where the same trucks and drivers take different routes depending on the day and the type of waste. They decide which products to transform these recycled containers into (My Science, 2023).

These recycling actions are addressed in two SDGs. In the case of SDG 13, the aim is to improve education for citizenship, carrying out this activity at the university and generating awareness of the reality and effects of climate change. With SDG 17, the goal is to promote the development of technologies for the diffusion of sustainable development, as is the case of the app that is being built to obtain and accumulate points.

As reported by the CUM Vice Rectorate for Technology and Sustainability, the project has been a success among students. Data from April 2023 indicate that more than 8,500 bottles and more than 6,500 cans have already been recycled, thus contributing to the reduction of the environmental impact of the daily consumption that takes place on the Complutense campuses. In addition, registered users of the app have donated 73% of the points obtained to collective projects, with the remaining 27% going to raffles for sustainable products (Sostenibilidad UCM, 2023).

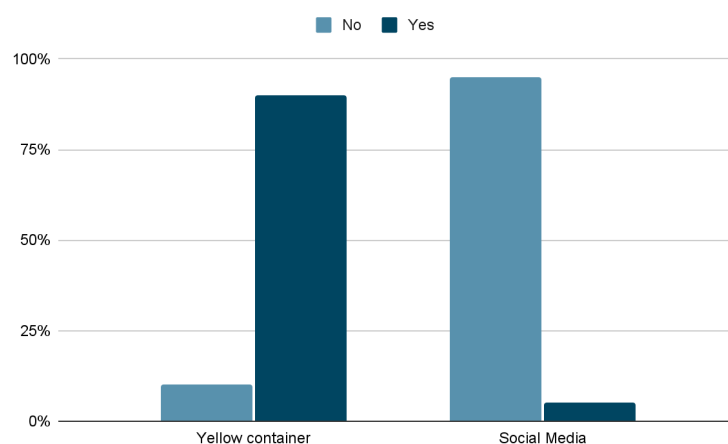
Reciclos' activity is sustainable because in addition to caring for the environment, it seeks to motivate the participation and awareness of society. The interactive nature of new narratives allows audiences to become active participants, shaping the story and influencing its outcomes. Ecoembes contents have interactive elements, such as online discussions, user-generated content and online contests. Therefore, they create immersive experiences for the followers, the keys of a storytelling are applied (Jenkins, 2009; Schiller, 2018). This fact empowers audiences to take ownership of sustainability issues. Especially while working with young people, it is important that they feel empowered and become part of the processes of change.

### **3.2. Students participation**

On the other hand, 150 CUM students participated in the survey, 80 women and 70 men. The average age of the sample was 21 years old. It was found that 70% of the sample assured that at the beginning of the campaign, they used Reciclos because they wanted to win a prize. However, when they saw that many points were needed, they decided to donate that amount to social causes, but they were also

demotivated, as they had the impression that it was not possible to be able to purchase a sustainable product through the application. Despite the fact that Ecoembes and the Complutense University of Madrid carried out a dissemination campaign about the Reciclos program, 90% of the students stated that they knew about the activity because they saw the yellow container, but it was not through content on social networks. Only 3% of the sample follows Ecoembes on social networks. This means that the students learned about Reciclos because they saw the machine on campus, not through communication on social networks.

**Figure 3.** Reciclos awareness.



Source: Own Elaboration.

They were also asked about the social network they use the most. Students answered that the one they use the most is TikTok (53%), followed by Twitch (44%), Instagram (40%) and Twitter (37%). The use of LinkedIn (18%), Facebook (12%) and Youtube (15%) is lower. Students use these platforms for three actions: 1) communicating with their friends, 2) entertainment, 3) professional training and university activities. Nevertheless, sixty-seven percent of the sample does not follow the university's social networks; they only get information through the website.

Regarding their knowledge about sustainability values, 85% of the sample answered that sustainability is only taking care of the environment, being recycling, hybrid mobility and water care, the

most repeated actions. In general, students know how to contribute to environmental care.

It is noteworthy that only 12% mentioned that sustainable development also implies a social dimension, such as inclusion and equality between groups. Another interesting fact is that more women had concrete answers and showed a higher degree of knowledge about sustainability issues. Finally, 77% affirmed that the main problem for recycling is the location of the containers, because it is easier to throw away the waste in the first trash can you find.

Based on the survey results, it is refuted that millennials are irreverent and although they need to be more practical in sustainable actions, this work corroborates that they have a wider social conscience, as it was indicated by the reviewed authors. This is confirmed by the fact that most students have decided to donate Reciclos points to help a social interest (Deloitte, 2022; Atrevia and Deusto, 2017). However, it is found that students in their personal networks do not follow the university nor Ecoembes. They prefer to get information through the official websites; this shows that organizations need to have a communication system that covers several communication channels and maintain congruence in their message as Leal & Consorte-McCrea (2018) affirmed in their research.

Moreover, with the creation of the Reciclos program, the goal was to get students to perform a concrete action: recycling. For this reason, Ecoembes focused on building a storydoing, where the only important thing is to recycle plastic containers and cans correctly; to motivate participation, a reward system was created. Sustainability and storydoing share a common foundation in the integration of values and action. Storydoing goes beyond storytelling, as it emphasizes the active engagement of organizations in aligning their actions with their narratives. Similarly, sustainability requires organizations transform their values into concrete actions that address social and environmental challenges, like recycling.

The relationship between sustainability and storydoing lies in the shared emphasis of integrating values and action, fostering stakeholder engagement, and overcoming cognitive barriers. In this case, the university and Ecoembes want to achieve a higher engagement and participation from the students. Nevertheless, the survey showed that not all the students have a sustainable lifestyle,

most of them didn't know which are the 3 dimensions of sustainability.

Despite CUM is carrying out projects about sustainability, with the specific case of Reciclos, I believe that there was a lack of joint content between Ecoembes and the university. Also, they should adapt the contents to the characteristics that students at CUM have; for example, they are young people from all over Spain, most of whom no longer live with their parents, share a student apartment, use public transportation and have a limited income. A high percentage of students have to study and work at the same time, so their time spent in the university facilities is also reduced.

Therefore, the recycling of plastic bottles is limited to the studying timetable, since no student came to the university carrying containers brought from home. It should be noted that young people indicated that they do not recycle because containers are not at hand. This tells us that they prefer their convenience and that infrastructures also need to be adjusted to have sufficient containers for recycling. To achieve this goal, the active participation of more social actors, such as school boards and the government, is needed.

### 3.3. @Ecoembes, TikTok Analysis

On the other hand, in the specific analysis of TikTok's profile, it is found that the contents are more humorous and adopt the visual trends of the moment, as is the case of using human faces in objects, as shown in Figure 4. The yellow container becomes the main character, since they give it a voice, eyes and mouth.

*Figure 4.* Reciclos machine



Source: Ecoembes, 2023.

Despite being one of the networks most used by young people, there is little interaction on Ecoembes TikTok profile. The account has 4,980 followers and 163.3 K likes. In a follow-up of 11 months (June 2022 to May 2023), only 4 videos were about the Reciclos machine. These videos had a low interaction rate, as they do not generate comments among followers and are rarely shared.

**Table 1.** *Videos of Reciclos on Ecoembes TikTok*

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Like</b>	<b>Share</b>	<b>Views</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Video 1	June/2022	18	0	268	0
Video 2	March/2023	24	0	720	0
Video 3	March/2023	19	1	514	1
Video 4	April/2023	23	3	684	0

Source: Own Elaboration

There is no engaging storytelling and the four Reciclos videos only call for the same action: learning how to use the machine. However, it does not seek to generate more interaction with users. Given that millennials are curious people (García-Rviero et al., 2022), Ecoembes could create videos to explain what is done with the collected waste and motivate ecological awareness.

The Reciclos narrative consisted of explaining how to use the machine. No specific content was designed to communicate the benefits of its reward system, which may have been a mistake. If they had posted these explanations, it might have been possible to increase student participation. Mainly, the most important part of the Reciclos campaign is to have its own container at the university, which generates visibility about recycling and through the use of the yellow color, reinforces the identification that this is the correct container to deposit the containers. This makes it easier for students to recycle at their place of study and thus get the audience to storydoing.

Since these types of videos did not generate interaction or have a significant reach among users, the TikTok platform was explored to identify videos with high engagement. The goal was to understand the elements that made these videos different and potentially contributed to their success on the social media platform. Therefore, the videos with the highest interaction and outreach on TikTok are those that show fragments of interviews made to different professionals who recycle in their daily lives; for example, a supermarket worker who always brings her own tupperware to buy food and thus avoids the use of plastics. Surprisingly, those videos have more than 800k views. The videos have a black and white image, which evokes emotions like surprise and sadness. This video clip invites you to watch the full interview posted on its Youtube channel.

**Figure 5.** Interview video



Source: Ecoembes, 2023.

Another type of video that is very successful on TikTok is the one that shares tips for organizing recycling at home, which means that users are interested in the topic and want to learn more about it. This type of publications reach more than 300K views, which means that the message has a reach of more than 300% of the number of followers that the account has.

**Figure 6.** Ecoembes's tips



Source: Ecoembes, 2023.

It is found that the content formula that young people like the most is the one that provides useful data for recycling issues, such as tips and advice, or those that share "real" stories. This situation indicates that it is necessary to produce more creative content that is closer to the user's reality, they like the use of emotions and local scenes.

One of the strengths of Ecoembes' content is that it is not specialized; it is dedicated to the general public because it is easy to understand and brief. These attributes help to generate sustainable communication.

Ecoembes get dispersed systematically across multiple channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment and educational experience. Their work has the intention to help the public to participate in the contents, because they can ask questions about the tips that are published, discuss which ones work or not, and improve their recycling actions.

For instance, sustainable communication plays a vital role in promoting behavior change among any user like students, professors and administrative personnel. It can influence attitudes, values, and actions at providing compelling information, highlighting the benefits of sustainable practices, and showcasing positive examples, such as the recycle campaign organized at the Complutense University of Madrid.

## **Conclusion**

The Complutense University had demonstrated its commitment to sustainability through various initiatives such as Reciclos, which seeks to minimize its environmental and social impact, while at the same time aiming to educate students. With this, it is committed to strengthening environmental education and also to seek a positive

change in the environment. By implementing sustainable practices on campus, universities demonstrate their commitment to reducing their environmental impact and serve as role models for students, staff, and the broader community. University actions can be transcendent and have a real impact on students and their immediate social circle.

The success in carrying out activities related to sustainability depends on the involvement of the faculty and that the actions are consistent with the values of the institution. In the case of CUM, it seeks to collaborate with society, to be respectful and equitable. In general, it is necessary to have greater diffusion of the concept of sustainability at all levels, with the purpose of raising awareness and sensitizing the entire university community. This sustainable communication can be reinforced from the university with practical courses on sustainability that are structured outside and within the compulsory classes. Also, the social orientation of teaching could be strengthened, integrating collaboration with social organizations for the development of teaching focused on the treatment of real socio-environmental problems.

The communication strategies analyzed have the potential to shape attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions towards sustainability, contributing to informed decision-making, and behavior change. Storydoing provides a platform for organizations to involve stakeholders by inviting them to participate in the narrative and be part of the journey towards sustainability. By grasping storydoing, organizations can bridge the gap between their sustainability narratives and tangible outcomes, creating a more meaningful and impactful approach to sustainability. It is evident that there is still a need to generate greater interest among the general population in order to improve recycling rates in Spain.

The key advantage of storydoing is that it creates a sense of authenticity and credibility. Sustainability initiatives can inspire and empower individuals to become active participants in creating a more sustainable world. This approach moves beyond traditional communication methods by encouraging people to do actions and make a positive impact.

On the other hand, when you are working with centennials, it is necessary to adapt the content to their consumption habits, such is the case that one of the most used networks is Twitch, which can become another channel to amplify the reach of the message. It is

found that there is still a need for training in sustainability issues, since most young people are not clear about the meaning of sustainable development, limiting their interpretation to environmental issues.

Although this research can't confirm that Ecoembes followers are doing recycling hacks at home, the interaction in the posts demonstrates that storytelling has the potential to amplify the impact of sustainability initiatives by reaching a bigger audience and mobilizing individuals towards shared goals.

In summary, It is a reality that there is a need to promote actions on sustainability, but not only in terms of environmental care; all dimensions need to be considered, since the social and economic dimensions have little recognition. In this context, universities play a critical role in mobilizing the university community and towards a more sustainable future nurturing a new generation of sustainability-minded leaders. But, they need to work with other social actors, like associations and companies. Also, this research finds that people like to learn. Therefore the keys of a sustainable communication in social media are: innovation, clarity, hacks and emotions. In fact, if the organization wants the participation of the youth, they need to use social media.

Capturing the attention of young people is not an easy task, as Generation Z is highly demanding when it comes to the content they consume. Therefore, it is essential to consider their needs and interests. They take for granted that environmental care is important and have a more sustainable lifestyle. Consequently, the content should be more specialized, avoiding generalized information. This provides an opportunity to truly grab their attention. It is necessary to take into account the opinion of students and encourage them to develop sustainable proposals so that they themselves become empowered and have the ability to be agents of change.

Finally, one limitation of this study is that the survey data represents an exploratory sample, and it would be beneficial to expand the number of participants. Furthermore, as future research directions, the acceptance level of other sustainability-related programs offered by Complutense University could be evaluated. For instance, the study could examine the impact of shared mobility initiatives or inclusion workshops.

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