Between Perception and Reality.

Socio-spatial Factors Affecting Youth Wellbeing in Public Space in Cuenca and Ambato

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Appendix 1. Glossary

Affordances: Physical, spatial, or social features that enable or encourage certain behaviours, uses, or interactions within an environment. In the context of youth and public space, affordances refer to opportunities for play, rest, gathering, or creative expression offered by the built environment.

Placemaking: A collaborative process through which communities transform public spaces into meaningful and engaging places. In this study, youth-led placemaking is understood as a strategy to strengthen well-being, safety, and a sense of belonging in urban areas.

Renovarte: A youth-led placemaking intervention in Ambato that revitalised an abandoned and stigmatized space through urban art and cultural activities. The project significantly increased perceived safety and community ownership of the site.

ESS (Espacio Sano y Seguro / Safe and Healthy Space): A cultural and sports- based activation in Ambato aimed at reducing alcohol consumption and promoting positive youth engagement in public space. Events led by young people improved safety perceptions and fostered new forms of social interaction.

Bibliorío: A youth initiative carried out on the banks of the Yanuncay River in Cuenca, involving reading, recreation, and artistic activities. It increased the perception of safety and emotional well-being, turning a natural urban setting into a supportive space for youth development.

Arteria: An urban intervention in Cuenca that transformed a grey and unsafe corridor into a green, pedestrian-friendly space connected to the city's mobility system. The project enhanced active mobility, comfort, and social use of the space, particularly among students and youth.

Mental Health: The emotional and psychological condition that allows individuals to cope with everyday stress, work productively, and contribute to their communities. In

this research, mental health is shaped by experiences of safety, autonomy, and access to inclusive public spaces.

Well-being: A multidimensional condition encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social health. For young people, well-being is linked to their ability to move freely, participate in city life, feel safe, and find spaces for social connection, leisure, and creative expression.