



WHAT IS OLA?

Depression and anxiety are leading causes of youth disability worldwide. Adolescents and young adults who live in big cities more commonly experience stressful events such as **violence, poverty, substance misuse and social isolation**, which puts them at greater risk of developing one or both conditions.

This includes adolescents and young adults from **Latin America**, which is one of the most urban parts of the world with approximately **80% of the population** living in large cities. In addition, young people represent a **¼ of the population** in Latin America. Estimated levels of depression and/or anxiety for adolescents and young adults within the region range from **17% in Colombia** to **26% in Argentina**. Although many individuals experience stressful events, most do not develop depression and/or anxiety. Of those who do experience mental distress, evidence suggests that **50-60% of individuals recover after one year** without accessing treatment from mental health services.

The **OLA study** will take place across **under-resourced** areas of three large Latin American cities: **Buenos Aires (Argentina), Bogotá (Colombia) and Lima (Peru)**. The overall aim of the programme is to identify which characteristics, resources and activities help young people living in urban environments in Latin America to prevent and recover from depression and/or anxiety, using **4 Work Packages (WP)**.

IN THIS ISSUE

WHAT IS OLA?

PROGRESS
UPDATE

ARTS
PARTNERS

INTERVIEW
WITH LILIANA
HIDALGO

PROGRESS UPDATE

Study aims of OLA:

- ✓ **WP1:** Develop appropriate methods for assessing resources in young people.
- **WP2:** Determine if resources differ between young people with and without depression and anxiety.
- **WP3:** Identify which resources are linked with recovery from depression and anxiety in young people.
- **WP4:** Exploring examples of what works for young people either to prevent depression and anxiety, or in supporting them to recover.



Here is a screenshot of Dr. Gomez (Principal Investigator in Colombia) in a Facebook live meeting with SENA (National Training Service in Colombia) members. In this meeting, Dr. Gomez introduced project OLA and extended an invitation to students from SENA to participate in the study.

Pilot Study (WP1) – *Phase completed*

Cross sectional study (WP2) – *In progress*

- **WHAT:** Participants will complete the questionnaires developed in WP1.
- **WHO:** 2,040 young people (15-16 years old and 20-24 years old) across the three countries: 1,020 participants experiencing depression and/or anxiety and 1,020 without.
- **WHY:** to understand if characteristics, resources and activities are different in young people who are, and are not experiencing depression and anxiety.

Updates per country

- **Colombia** have recruited 27 participants and completed baseline data collection with 21 participants.
- **Argentina** have recruited and completed baseline data collection with 62 participants.
- **Peru** have recruited 78 participants and completed baseline data collection with 71 participants.

Longitudinal cohort study (WP3) – *Expected to start in mid 2021*

- **WHAT:** Participants will complete a short number of questionnaires after 6 months and then all questionnaires again after a period of 12 months.
- **WHO:** 1,020 young people (aged 15-16 years and 20-24 years) across the three countries, who took part in the cross-sectional study and who were experiencing depression and/or anxiety when they joined the study.
- **WHY:** to understand which characteristics, resources and activities in young people are linked to recovery from depression and anxiety.

New Project Alert...

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES LABORATORY APPLIED TO THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the prevention and treatment of people with experience of substance abuse through the wellbeing produced by the engagement in creative and artistic activities.

GOALS

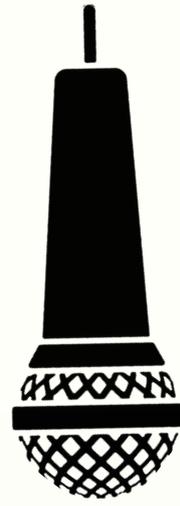
- **Discover new perspectives** through the collective creative experiences of patients and professionals, that can expand therapeutic reach.
- Contribute to the **development of creative tools** for prevention of abusive use of substances in **artists' community groups**.
- To **transfer the creative and education methodologies** developed by Crear Vale la Pena to outreach programmes in healthcare settings.
- **Evaluate and compare** the results of applied arts in educational settings, in relation to achieving wellbeing, in healthcare settings.
- Develop a **sustainable plan** for using creative tools as a preventive intervention in the treatment of substance abuse, which **governmental organisations and community primary care facilities** can use.
- **Strengthen collaborations** for the improvement of therapeutic practices.
- **Strengthen the capacity of supporting communities** through the dissemination of relevant information on the subject.
- **Train people** on the importance of **early proactive and preventive action** when it comes to the use of alternative interventions within the patient support network.
- Develop a **sustainable programme** for supporting people with experience of substance abuse in **Jujuy and San Isidro (Buenos Aires) neighbourhoods**.
- To nurture young people's capacity to express themselves creatively, based on their own therapeutic experiences, both as **preventive work and in treatment centres**.

Partners Involved



- Crear Vale la Pena
- Jujuy's Ministry of Health

INTERVIEW WITH...



“

From your knowledge/experience, why do you think building resilience in youths living in Latin America is important?

I believe that building resilient young people will help the next generation face the political, economic and social adversities that many of the Latin American countries face today.

”

“

What is the biggest challenge you've encountered so far working on the OLA project?

So far, the biggest challenge has been adapting the study's procedures to virtuality, especially considering that not all young people have the same internet access.

”

“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

I hope that it will allow the development of strategies and interventions tailored to the Latin America youth and built from the bottom up in order to incorporate the experience of young people with and without experiences of mental health problems.

”



LILIANA HIDALGO
STUDY COORDINATOR
CRONICAS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN
CHRONIC DISEASES OF THE UNIVERSIDAD
PERUANA CAYETANO HEREDIA
PERU

WANT TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH OLA?



Visit our website:
<https://www.theolastudy.com/>



Follow us on twitter:
@StudyOla



Follow us on instagram:
@theolastudy