



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** is taking 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)**.

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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.



A photo taken during the music workshop led by Fundación Batuta in Bogotá, with a group of adolescents.

Cross sectional study (WP2) - *In progress*

- 2040 young people across the three countries (half experiencing depression and/or anxiety), will complete questionnaires developed in WP1. These ask about characteristics, resources and activities they use routinely.

Longitudinal cohort study (WP3) - *In progress*

- 1020 young people with depression and/or anxiety from the cross-sectional study will complete a short number of questionnaires after 6 months, and then all questionnaires again after a period of 12 months.

WP2 & WP3 updates:

Congratulations to the Colombia and Peru teams on completing recruitment as we approach the recruitment deadline at the end of September 2022. Six and 12 month follow-ups are progressing well in all countries.

- **Colombia:** **Baseline:** 967 participants (completed) | **6m follow up:** 374 participants | **12m follow up:** 61 participants
- **Peru:** **Baseline:** 817 participants (completed) | **6m follow up:** 284 participants | **12m follow up:** 77 participants
- **Argentina:** **Baseline:** 564 participants | **6m follow up:** 139 participants | **12m follow up:** 37 participants

Experience Sampling Method (ESM Study) updates:

- Baseline data collection completed.
- The ESM team are currently in the process of developing the coding list for the ESM questionnaire and cleaning the dataset.

What next?

- All teams are working towards starting WP4 activities. This will begin with in-depth interviews with participants from WP3 to find out more about the personal, social and local resources that have and have not helped with their recovery over the last 12 months.
- The UK team will host a project meeting with the Principal Investigators of OLA this September. We look forward to discussing all things OLA!

OLA... Trial Within Cohort Study

Music workshop update (Colombia | Fundación Batuta):

- Completed two workshops with 5 sessions and 32 participants (from OLA cohort)
- 56% of the participants attended all 5 sessions

Results:

- **Quantitative data:** no change in measures of depression and anxiety symptoms taken before and after the workshops
- **Qualitative data (content analysis):** Participants enjoyed learning, but found the workshops too short



Creative workshop update (Peru | Teatro La Plaza):

- Completed two workshops with 3 sessions completed in Lima
- 18 participants attended the workshops; 14 from the OLA cohort and 4 from the local arts organisation
- 56% of the participants attended all 3 sessions
- The team are currently working on the data analysis



Creative workshop update (Argentina | Crear Vale La Pena):

- The team are waiting on their ethics approval
- They are in the process of identifying all eligible participants and finalising documents



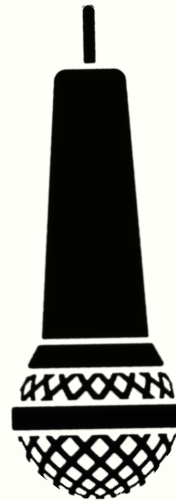
Arts partners involved:



Research teams involved:



INTERVIEW WITH...



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

Getting access to mental health services can be a really challenging process in a lot of Latin American cities, especially in the case of people living in low-income settings. So, identifying different resources that help young people overcome these kinds of struggles, such as sports, artistic activities or even just talking to someone they trust can be really useful in their mental health journey.

”

“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

I would hope for it to promote the development of new mental health-based programs that can be more accessible to the youths. And even on a smaller scale, I hope the people involved in the process had a space for them to think and reflect about their own mental health while they were helping us with this project.

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“

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

Recruitment in the case of the adolescent participants was a bit more difficult, contacting their tutors could be a real challenge due to their usual hectic work schedule. Despite the process being longer than usual, once everybody involved heard about OLA and its purpose, they typically were excited to be a part of it.

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DANIELA RAMIREZ

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