



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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STUDYING
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Cartagena Meeting

Twenty researchers from Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and the UK met in Cartagena in March 2023 to discuss the next steps of OLA. This included planning the additional 24-month follow ups, discussing findings from the cross-sectional study, and agreeing the first wave of papers that will be written in the coming months.



Monitoring

The UK team conducted a successful in-person monitoring visit with the Colombia team. Thanks to the team for continuing to conduct all aspects of OLA to high standards! This was also a great opportunity to meet the whole team in person.



Joint Leap Meeting

The virtual joint LEAP meeting across Buenos Aires, Bogotá, and Lima, occurred in March 2023, and it was a tremendous success. As a result of this meeting, the LEAPs produced a video addressed to the PIs of OLA, reflecting on the mental health challenges faced by young people in Latin America.

Furthermore, a reflections paper on the LEAPs in Latin America has been written and is set to be published in a Peruvian journal in the near future.



Cross-sectional & ESM Baseline Data

The OLA cross-sectional and ESM baseline data have been cleaned and analysed. Currently, both main papers are being written up and are scheduled for publication in the upcoming months.



RESEARCH STUDY UPDATES



STUDYING
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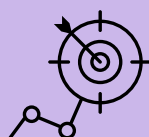
1. CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Argentina: 621 participants
Colombia: 967 participants
Peru: 817 participants



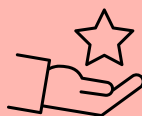
2. 6-MONTH FOLLOW UP

Argentina: 232 participants
Colombia: 609 participants
Peru: 454 participants



3. 12-MONTH FOLLOW UP

Argentina: 145 participants
Colombia: 563 participants
Peru: 432 participants



5. ESM BASELINE

Argentina: 50 participants
Colombia: 50 participants
Peru: 50 participants

First draft of the ESM baseline paper has been written.



6. ESM 12-MONTH FOLLOW UP

Argentina: 17 participants with symptoms
Colombia: 27 participants with symptoms
Peru: 19 participants with symptoms

Congratulations to the teams for completing the follow ups!



7. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Argentina: 30 interview completed
Colombia: 40 interviews completed
Peru: 30 interviews completed

Local teams are working on the analysis and will meet in Bogotá in August to facilitate this.

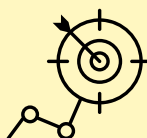


8. PERU: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Policy analysis: 20 policies identified for analysis.

Health records data: Records requested from 44 community mental health centres.

Interviews: Preparing fieldwork to conduct 37 interviews.



ARTS GENERAL UPDATE



STUDYING
MENTAL HEALTH
IN YOUNG PEOPLE



Buenos Aires Meeting

The arts organisations, Paul Heritage and Lizet Chavez (from PPP) and Stefan Priebe (UK) met in Buenos Aires for a 3-day meeting. This meeting provided them with the opportunity to plan, discuss, and exchange the findings gathered thus far on OLA. They also addressed the challenges faced and the changes experienced within each organisation over the last few years. Moreover, ideas for the dissemination phase of the project, termed "OLA Final Phase", were deliberated and shared during the meeting.



OLA Final Phase

Each arts organisation has finalised their plans to disseminate research findings from OLA. The first phase (workshops) is scheduled for November '23, and the second phase (performances and arts installations) for March/April '24. To ensure active youth participation and engagement, each organisation will recruit 3 youth ambassadors. The young ambassadors will lead this project, engaging with fellow youth, policymakers, stakeholders, and researchers to discuss their views on OLA's findings. Meetings between the arts organisations and local research teams will take place over the coming months to talk about the research findings in detail.



1. TWICS

Argentina: Total of 2 workshops with 14 participants.

Colombia: Total of 2 workshops with 32 participants.

Peru: Total of 2 workshops with 18 participants.

The Colombia research team are writing a paper about their study music workshops.



2. ADDITIONAL CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

Argentina: CVLP have completed 1 workshop with 7 participants. They are currently recruiting participants for the next workshop on social media and at a University. The next workshop is scheduled to take place in September/October 2023.

Peru: The Peru team have completed 2 workshops with a total of 32 participants in June 2023.



Arts partners involved:



Research teams involved:



INTERVIEW WITH...



“

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

Adolescence and youth can be stages of particular vulnerability, as they are times of transition in which one questions one's own identity and the future one wishes to build. In this sense, fostering resilience can be a resource that allows young people to resolve adversity based on curiosity and confidence that they are capable of devising strategies and solutions to achieve what they set out to do.

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“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

In OLA, different avenues have been used to learn about the tools used to recover from depression and anxiety. As such, I believe that the findings of the project will provide valuable information for the development of resources or interventions to support the mental health of young people in Latin America.

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SUMIKO FLORES

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

**CRONICAS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN CHRONIC DISEASES,
AT UNIVERSIDAD PERUANA CAYETANO HEREDIA
LIMA, PERU**

“

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

While there is a great interest in working on mental health and a greater awareness of the impact of mental health on our lives, it can sometimes be a little difficult to count young people's participation in some research activities. On the one hand, time constraints can be a difficulty, but on the other hand, I think they may have little information about the impact of mental health research and its benefits.

Along these lines, I believe that the OLA Project tries to establish a closer dialogue with young people, through the deployment of different activities that encourage their participation and where a space is given to listen to their perspectives and strategies on how to overcome emotional distress.

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