



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 **1/4 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)**.

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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.



Here is a photo of the OLA research team in Colombia taken right after their Christmas breakfast meeting.

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.

Longitudinal cohort study (WP3) – *In progress*

- **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.

Updates per country

Congratulations to the teams for nearly completing the main ESM study!

- **Colombia** have recruited 731 participants and completed baseline data collection with 663 participants, and a total of 10 participants have completed the 6-month CRF.
- **Argentina** have completed baseline data collection with 437 participants, and a total of 8 participants have completed the 6-month CRF.
- **Peru** have recruited 677 participants and completed baseline data collection with 514 participants, and a total of 21 participants have completed the 6-month CRF.

OLA...

Trial Within a Cohort

We are planning to conduct as part of the OLA study, a **Trial Within a Cohort** (TWIC) study.

What's a TWIC study?

- A TWIC is **nested within a large cohort study** that recruits participants with the condition of interest and follows them up over a period of time.
- Participants from this cohort are then selected as participants for an RCT to **evaluate an intervention**.
- Outcomes for the whole cohort are **measured repeatedly**, providing longitudinal information about the progression of the condition both for participants in the control group and those having the trial intervention.

We are planning to conduct a total of two TWICs, in March – June 2022:

1. Testing **music workshop in Bogota (Colombia)** for **adolescents** with anxiety and/or depression.

Led by: Fundación Batuta

2. Testing **creativity workshop in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Lima (Peru)** for **young adults** with anxiety and/or depression.

Led by: Crear Vale La Pena (Argentina) and Teatro La Plaza (Peru)

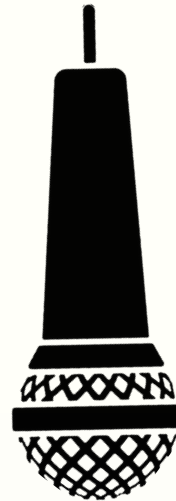
Arts partners involved:



Research teams involved:



INTERVIEW WITH...



“

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

It is very important because these resources will help them for the rest of their lives. If we build resilience early in life, we are giving them tools to navigate the difficult moments in life successfully.

”

“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

I hope OLA will shed light into which resources we should focus on strengthening within the community to promote mental wellbeing among young people, and hopefully, stakeholders will make good use of the results of the project.

”

MAURICIO TOYAMA
STUDY COORDINATOR
CRONICAS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN
CHRONIC DISEASES OF THE
UNIVERSIDAD PERUANA CAYETANO HEREDIA
PERU

“

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

Having to conduct all activities online has been very challenging, but it has also been an opportunity to think creatively and learn to use new tools we would not be able to use under normal circumstances.

”



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