



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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SOFIA MADERO

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 one of the LEAP meetings in Bogota (Colombia), earlier this month.

Cross sectional study (WP2) – *Completed*

- 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.

In-depth interviews (WP4) – *In progress*

- 30 in-depth interviews with participants from WP3 will be conducted 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.

WP2 & WP3 updates:

Congratulations to all teams for completing baseline recruitment!

- **Colombia:** **Baseline:** 967 participants (completed) | **6m follow up:** 537 participants | **12m follow up:** 342 participants
- **Peru:** **Baseline:** 817 participants (completed) | **6m follow up:** 407 participants | **12m follow up:** 242 participants
- **Argentina:** **Baseline:** 616 participants | **6m follow up:** 141 participants | **12m follow up:** 114 participants

Experience Sampling Method (ESM Study) updates:

- **Baseline data:** Nearly ready for analysis.
- **12 months follow up:** Started in November 2022. Only a small number of participants left to complete the follow ups.

WP4 updates:

- **Number of interviews completed:** **Colombia:** 21 interviews | **Peru:** 10 interviews | **Argentina:** 4 interviews
- Rest of WP4 is currently being planned.

ARTS PARTNERS

COMPLETED THE TWICS... WHAT'S NEXT?

We conducted two trials within a cohort (TWICs) earlier year:

1. **Music workshop** with adolescents in Bogotá (Colombia), facilitated by Fundación Batuta.
2. **Creative workshop** with young adults in Lima (Peru) and Buenos Aires (Argentina), facilitated by Teatro La Plaza and Crear Vale La Pena.

So, what's next?

We plan to recruit young adults (from outside the OLA cohort) with symptoms of anxiety and/or depression to test creative workshops in a **non-controlled trial** in Lima and Buenos Aires.

What will the creative workshop entail?

There will be a total of **3 sessions**, with each session lasting approximately **3 hours**.

The theme of the creative workshops will be **"Travellers of the Future"** in which young people will use games and artistic dynamics (theatre, poetry and painting) to express how they imagine the future based on their own experiences and dreams. The workshops will follow a guide developed and facilitated by **Teatro La Plaza (Peru)** and **Crear Vale La Pena (Argentina)**.

The contents of the workshop will primarily focus on the process of artistic creation and address expressions of mental distress only as they may come up in the workshops.

When will study take place?

March 2023 – July 2023

Where are we currently?

The **Peru team** have submitted to their ethics committee.

The **Argentina team** are finalising their documents and will submit in early January 2023.

The **UK team** will aim to submit before the end of the year.



Arts partners involved:



Research teams involved:



Pontificia Universidad
JAVERIANA
Colombia



Queen Mary
University of London

Funded by:



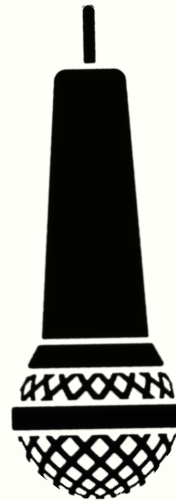
Facultad de Medicina
UNIVERSIDAD DE BUENOS AIRES



**UNIVERSIDAD PERUANA
CAYETANO HEREDIA**



INTERVIEW WITH...



“

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

It's important to build resilience in youths living in Latin America, so they are able to face without a high emotional cost the problems that await them in adult life.

”

“

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

One of the biggest challenges of working on the OLA projects was to observe the problems to which young people and adolescents are exposed to, and knowing we don't have sufficient resources - as a country - to help them.

”

“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

We can provide information that will enable the design of health policies to improve the mental health of young people and adolescents.

”



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