



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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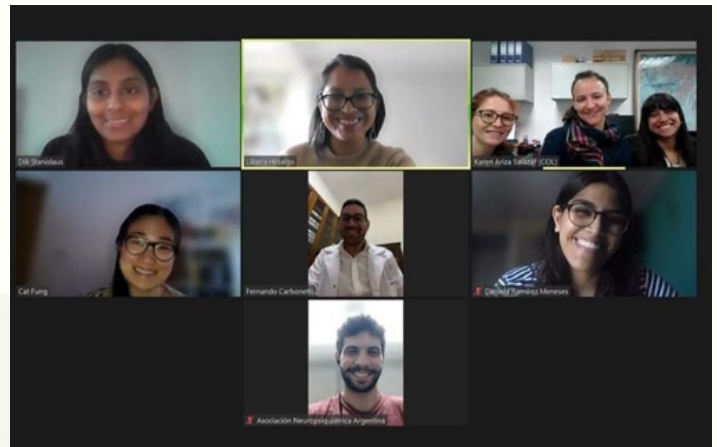
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WITH
KAREN ARIZA
SALAZA

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 screenshot taken during a LEAP subgroup zoom meeting with researchers from Argentina, Colombia, Peru and the UK. We were discussing the joint LEAP meeting across the three countries!

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.

Updates:

- **6 m follow up:** **Argentina:** 141 participants | **Colombia:** 609 participants | **Peru:** 454 participants
- **12m follow up:** **Argentina:** 114 participants | **Colombia:** 351 participants | **Peru:** 296 participants

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.

Updates:

- **Completed interviews:** **Colombia:** 21 interviews | **Peru:** 16 interviews | **Argentina:** 16 interviews

Experience Sampling Method (ESM Study) updates:

- **Baseline data:** Data is currently being analysed.
- **12 months follow up:** Small number of participants left to complete the follow ups in March 2023.

General updates:

- Peru and Argentina have received approval to complete **24m follow ups**. Colombia are still waiting on their approval.
- OLA consortium to meet in **Cartagena on March 29th** for 3 days for a project meeting.
- A **joint LEAP** meeting will take place online with the young people across all three countries on the 11th of March. During this meeting, one LEAP member from each country will present **1-2 key mental health challenges** they face in their country. At the end of this meeting, the LEAP members will produce a **short video** addressed to the Principal Investigators (PIs) of the OLA study, which the PIs will respond to in a short video when they're all together **in Cartagena**.

GENERAL UPDATES

Additional Creative Workshops

- Argentina and Peru teams have now **received ethics approval** for the creative workshop study.
- Currently, the **CVLP facilitators** are receiving training on general principles of research, recruitment/informed consent, data collection and REDCap.
- The aim is to **start recruiting** participants next month (March 2023).
- The theme of the workshop is '**Traveller's to the future**', and will begin in April 2023.



Arts meeting in Buenos Aires in 2023

- **All arts organisations** from OLA (Fundación Batuta, Crear Vale La Pena and Teatro La Plaza) will meet in person along with Paul Heritage (Director of People's Palace Project) and Stefan Priebe (Chief Investigator) for 3 days (**March 7 - March 10**).
- In this meeting, they will discuss findings from OLA, future arts activities and dissemination plans.
- Also big congratulations to People's Palace Project who got awarded **Follow On** funding from **AHRC**. Paul and the arts organisations will brainstorm ideas on how to make best use of this additional fund - **watch this space!**

Arts partners involved:



Research teams involved:



Pontificia Universidad
JAVERIANA
Colombia



Facultad de Medicina
UNIVERSIDAD DE BUENOS AIRES



Queen Mary
University of London



UNIVERSIDAD PERUANA
CAYETANO HEREDIA

Funded by:



INTERVIEW WITH...



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

Building resilience of our Latin American youth contributes largely to strengthening their governance over the management of their own life situations. Faced with a changing and increasingly challenging world, in terms of social and cultural inequities for access to goods and services that promote quality of life; it is relevant that young people understand, empower and boost their resources for the preservation and promotion of their mental health, understanding it as a fundamental value for a dignified life. It is not about eliminating the responsibility of governments around the issue of mental health, but about contributing to the opportunity that young people have to understand and manage some situations of emotional distress on their own when the services available around them could be insufficient or inaccessible.

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What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

I hope that OLA study raises the voice of young people around the issue of mental health and allows us to know what their discoveries have been in terms of their own strategies and accessible resources for managing and improving their mental health. This will provide us with innovative and more relevant knowledge to understand and treat the phenomenon of mental health among young people in Latin America. I believe that it is time to refresh knowledge in this and other fields of health with the power, creativity, and resourcefulness of young people, and for this, it is necessary to give voice to their experiences and contributions.

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

My main challenge working on the OLA study has been to keep level the expectation about OLA's achievements among our participants, parents, and allied institutions. In Bogotá, only a few of our participants have had the opportunity to receive help or guidance in dealing with situations of emotional distress and -in a new way- OLA asked about this complex and personal issue. It has been challenging to make OLA's scope clear in each phase of the study while telling participants the importance of their contributions. The OLA study is paying attention to the issue of mental health in young people and, without looking for it, has motivated our participants to reflect on their mental health, which has generated high expectations.

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