



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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MARIA PAULA
JASSIR

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.

Open access

Protocol

BMJ Open Which resources help young people to prevent and overcome mental distress in deprived urban areas in Latin America? A protocol for a prospective cohort study

Stefan Priebe,¹ Catherine Fung,¹ Luis Ignacio Brusco,² Fernando Carbonetti,² Carlos Gómez-Restrepo,^{3,4} Miguel Uribe,⁴ Francisco Díez-Canseco,⁵ Melanie Smuk,⁶ Nicola Holt,⁷ James B. Kirkbride,⁸ Ricardo Araya,⁹ Craig Morgan,⁹ Sandra Eldridge,¹⁰ Paul Heritage,¹¹ Victoria Bird¹

*The OLA protocol paper has been published online in BMJ Open!
Please click [here](#) to read the full article.*

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.

Updates per country

Congratulations to the teams for starting the main ESM study last week!

- **Colombia** have recruited 557 participants and completed baseline data collection with 462 participants.
- **Argentina** have completed baseline data collection with 420 participants.
- **Peru** have recruited 610 participants and completed baseline data collection with 459 participants.

Longitudinal cohort study (WP3) – Expected to start in mid 2021

- **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.

Latin America: Far Apart

Aims: The 10-month research project aims to understand how community-based arts organisations have adapted their activities, during COVID-19, as well as explore how these changes are being experienced by art workers and young people aged 14-24 years old.

Update since May 2021:

- The project is currently at the **analysis stage**.
- All interviews have now been coded, thanks to Ana Lucía, Jimena and Santiago!
- The team are now working on the **thematic analysis** and they will aim to have it finished in the next few months.
- They are also working on the **descriptive analysis of the survey** they conducted earlier this year. Here are some of its main findings:
 - All young people that participated in the survey mentioned joining online arts activities had a **positive impact** in their life.
 - Joining these activities helped them **feel happy (52%), less bored (48%) and more excited (39%)**.
 - However, **4 out of 5 young** people agreed that doing online activities is different from doing them in-person.
 - **According to 76% of the respondents**, the loss of the physical interactions that go beyond the activities (e.g. having a coffee after a face-to-face arts activity) affects the way young people communicate and interact during these online activities.
- **Impact & Dissemination:**
 - An online event with the arts organisations took place in **June 2021**, to discuss the research process and preliminary findings.
 - They will also aim to present all findings in an online event before the end of the year (*a zoom link will be shared closer to time*).
 - The team will also be at the **IAAH Conference in November 2021** to present some of the arts work that was created during the project.

Arts Partners Involved



Research Team Involved

Professor Paul Heritage (QMUL, PPP)

Mariana Steffen (PPP)

Professor Stefan Priebe (QMUL)

Catherine Fung (QMUL)

Dr. Victoria Bird (QMUL)

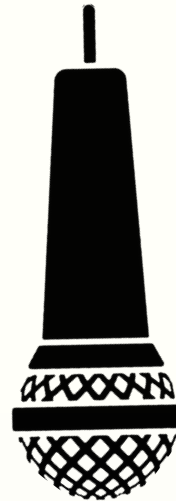


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people's
palace
projects

INTERVIEW WITH...



“

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

I believe that building resilience in youths living in Latin America is a key aspect to the progress of our society. This relates not only to the benefits resilience offers in relation to mental health, but also the necessary aspect of resilience when aiming to build healthier communities.

”

“

What do you hope will be the impact of OLA?

I hope that OLA helps our participants to consider their mental health as a priority and I hope that this project will serve not only as a platform to future research, but as evidence and as aid in the planning and execution of strategies by Colombian stakeholders when addressing mental health issues in our youth.

”

MARIA PAULA JASSIR
RESEARCH ASSISTANT
THE PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA
COLOMBIA

“

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

The biggest challenge I've encountered while working in the OLA project is trying to raise awareness and interest in a topic that is still considered taboo in our society and is still subject to a heavy load of stigma. Nonetheless, I have observed, throughout my previous experiences and during my time in OLA, that people are, in general, genuinely interested in talking about their mental health.

”



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