KiVa Antibullying Program

Project Manager, M.Ed. Juha Ollila
University of Turku, Finland
Finland and bullying?
Situation before KiVa

• Finland’s prevalence of bullies and victims slightly below ’average’
• Bullying a big concern in society since 1990’s
  → Changes in legislation
    ’Right for a safe school environment’ (1999)
    ’Each school should have their own policy...’ (2003)
• National trend data: No changes in ten years in the annual prevalence survey (School Health Promotion Study)
Taking Action at the National Level

• The Finnish government decided that bullying prevention is a priority

– Contracts with the University of Turku:
  ▪ Development of the KiVa program and initial evaluation of its effects 2006-2009
  ▪ Beginning the broad implementation across Finnish comprehensive schools 2009-2010
  ▪ Supporting high-quality implementation and sustainability across the country 2010-2011
What I would like you to take home

- Evidence-based bullying prevention programs are needed

- KiVa™ antibullying program as an example
  - background, content, effects of the program
Evidence-based bullying prevention programs are needed

- Improving the school climate
  - no evidence of mere "positive climate" or "good atmosphere" leading to reductions in bullying
  - BUT there is evidence of the contrary effect
    - e.g., Salmivalli, Grandeau, & Veenstra, 2012
Evidence-based bullying prevention programs are needed

- Latest (and the best) meta-analyses by Ttofi and Farrington:
  - Campbell review, 2009
  - Journal of Experimental Criminology, 2011
- Our experience with KiVa in Finland

CONCLUSION: Antibullying programs can – and they often do – work
Bullying

• Proactive aggression – “means to an end”
Bullying

• Proactive aggression – “means to an end”
Background of KiVa: The social architecture of bullying

• Bullying can be a strategy to gain status and power in the peer group...
• …and it is often successful
  ▪ bullies are perceived as popular (Caravita, DiBlasio, & Salmivalli, 2008)
  ▪ bullying helps to maintain status (Juvonen & Galvan, 2008)…
  ▪ …and to increase status over time (Cillessen & Borch, 2004)
In order to demonstrate their power and renew their high-status position in the group, bullies need to choose...

- targets who are submissive, insecure, physically weak and/or in a low-power position in the group...
- optimal time and place for their attacks (peer witnesses present)
Background of KiVa: The social architecture of bullying

- Participant roles in bullying (Salmivalli et al., 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bully</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>victim</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistants of the bully</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reinforcers of the bully</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outsiders</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defenders of the victim</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The behavior of onlookers does matter

• Individual level:

  – Short term:
    ▪ The defended victims are better adjusted than the undefended ones (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, & Salmivalli, 2011)
  – Long term: the most negative memory related to bullying is often that ”no-one cared” (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2000)
In order to reduce bullying...

• We do not necessarily need to change the victims, making them "less vulnerable"
In order to reduce bullying...

- We do not necessarily need to change the victims, making them “less vulnerable”
- Influencing the behavior of *classmates* can reduce the rewards gained by the bullies and consequently, their motivation to bully in the first place
In order to reduce bullying...

- We do not necessarily need to change the victims, making them "less vulnerable".
- Influencing the behavior of *classmates* can reduce the rewards gained by the bullies and consequently, their motivation to bully in the first place.
- However, *the victims* need to feel that they are heard and helped by the adults at school.
- *The bullies* need to be confronted for their unacceptable behavior.
KiVa antibullying program

• Special characteristics:
  – Both *universal* and *indicated* actions
  – An exceptionally large amount of materials & concrete tools (not merely a "philosophy")
  – Utilizing ICT: virtual learning environments

• KiVa is **more systematic and structured** than most existing anti-bullying programs
  – What to do, when to do it, how to do it,...
Universal actions

- Commitment & coordination at the school level
- Signaling that "we are a KiVa school"
  - visible vests for teachers supervising recess time
  - posters
- Student online survey
  - Pre-implementation survey (May)
  - Survey repeated annually
    - Automatic feedback to schools
Universal actions

- Student lessons
Computer games and virtual learning environments

KiVa Game

KiVa Street
I don't want to come to school anymore. Other kids are not playing with me anymore...:
KiVa games and KiVa Street are closely connected to student lessons.

Enhancing **awareness** of the role bystanders play in the bullying process, as well as **empathy** for victims.

Providing **self-efficacy** and **safe strategies** to support and defend the victimized peers.
Parents’ guide & website for parents
KiVa games and KiVa Street are closely connected to student lessons

- Repeating & testing of what has been learnt – ”I KNOW”
- Learning to take action – ”I CAN”
- Motivation – ”I DO”
Indicated actions – tackling the cases of bullying coming to attention

- Individual discussions with the victim and with the bullying children
  - KIVA TEAM

- + utilizing prosocial, high-status peers
  - "your help is needed"
    - CLASSROOM TEACHER
      - setting standards for others
      - making the victim feel better
      - protecting the victimized child from further attacks
Evaluation of KiVa

• Randomized controlled trial

• Evaluation during broad rollout; age-cohort design
  – since 2009
Randomized controlled trial (RCT)

- 234 schools (117 intervention, 117 control) representing all provinces in the mainland Finland and both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools
- > 30 000 students
- Exceptionally wide age range (Grades 1-9, students with 7-15 years of age)
- Numerous outcome variables
RCT: Changes in being bullied by different forms (9 months of implementation, Grades 4 to 6)
RCT: Success of the indicated actions

- The proportion of cases handled by the school team in which bullying...
  - Stopped completely 79.4%
  - Decreased 18.5%
  - Remained the same 1.9%
  - Increased 0.3%

Claire Garandeau et al., Tackling acute cases of bullying: Comparison of two methods in the context of the KiVa antibullying program.
Main conclusions (RCT)

• KiVa was effective in reducing (self- and peer-reported) bullying and victimization, already during the first nine months of implementation
• The effects generalize to multiple forms of victimization
• Numerous positive effects on other outcomes, including **school liking and academic motivation and academic performance**
Primary schools, % victims and bullies in Finland, 2009-2012
KiVa™ Antibullying Program

• Research-based program to prevent and reduce bullying in schools
  – developed in the University of Turku, with funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education

• Systematic, comprehensive program with user-friendly materials
  – e.g., teacher manuals; computer games; annual online surveys with school-based feedback; guidelines for tackling the cases of bullying coming to attention
KiVa™ Antibullying Program

• **Strong evidence of effectiveness:**
  – reduces bullying and victimization
  – increases school liking, academic motivation, and academic performance
  – reduces depression and anxiety among students
  – European Crime Prevention Award, 2009

• 90% of Finnish schools are currently implementing KiVa™

• Lot of international interest

• International evaluations; implementation in schools outside Finland
KiVa™ Antibullying Program

Being bullied by peers at school is a threat to the healthy development of numerous children and youth all over the world. As in many other societies, bullying has been a big concern in Finland for several decades.

For many years there was a persistent belief that the problem can be tackled by legislative changes (i.e., putting schools under the obligation of developing their own action plans against bullying), or by a commitment of school personnel to intervene immediately whenever they see bullying taking place (‘zero tolerance’).

Based on what is known today, **reducing bullying requires systematic, ongoing efforts at the level of individual children, classrooms, and the whole school.**

Moreover, school personnel need **concrete tools for bullying prevention work** with children and youth, just as they need clear guidelines to intervene when bullying is detected.

It is not enough to do something; there is now a rich body of evidence on the mechanisms of bullying, and this knowledge must be incorporated in our antibullying measures in order for them to be effective.
KiVa™ has a strong theoretical basis and is based on decades of research done by our group in Finland and other leaders in the field from around the world.

The program is predicated on the idea that the way peer bystanders, who are neither bullies nor victims, react when witnessing bullying is crucial for either maintaining bullying or putting an end to it. Influencing the peer context is thus essential in effective antibullying work - and this is what the KiVa™ program does.

The Finnish school system has a reputation of being highly effective in terms of producing good academic outcomes (http://pisa.country.acer.edu.au). We are, however, even more proud of the fact the Finnish government wanted to take students’ school well-being seriously and decided that preventing bullying was a priority.

Funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture has enabled our group at the University of Turku to develop a comprehensive, research-based antibullying program which has already helped thousands of children and adolescents in our country. The strong theoretical and empirical base of KiVa™ leads us to believe that it will work in other contexts outside of Finland as well.
KiVa™ Antibullying Program

Contact:
email: juha.ollila@utu.fi
mobile: +358 44 0700 044
www.kivaprogram.net