

KiVa Program in a Nutshell

The Finnish ministry of education has funded the development and evaluation of a new national anti-bullying program, KiVa (2006-09). The program has been developed and initially evaluated in the University of Turku, in collaboration between the Department of Psychology and the Centre for Learning Research. The KiVa project is co-led by Christina Salmivalli and Elisa Poskiparta. We have just renewed our contract with the Ministry to include also program diffusion in Finnish schools. Already in fall 2009, 1400 Finnish comprehensive schools (about 50% of all comprehensive schools in the country) started implementing the program.

In KiVa, there is a strong emphasis on influencing the onlookers, who are neither bullies nor victims, to make them show that they are against bullying and to make them support the victim, rather than encourage the bully (Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2009; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Toward this end, there are several universal actions, such as student lessons, and an anti-bullying computer game. However, we believe that also indicated actions are needed to tackle the actual cases of bullying that come to the attention. Such indicated actions include individual and small group discussions with the bullies, victims, and prosocial classmates who are challenged to support the victimized peers. These discussions are effectuated by so-called school teams, together with classroom teachers.

Contents of KiVa Universal actions Student lessons

In grades 1 and 4, the universal actions of KiVa include twenty hours of student lessons (ten double lessons) that are given during a school year by classroom teachers. They involve discussion, group work, short films about bullying, and role-play exercises. As the lessons proceed, class rules are adopted one by one. Each rule is based on the central theme of the corresponding lesson(s). At the end of the school year the class rules are put together as the KiVa-contract, which is signed by everyone. In the secondary school (grade 7) the program involves four themes. The program manual gives recommendations regarding the time to be used for working on each theme, but the schools themselves decide how they organize the school year around the themes (e.g., as whole theme days or a series of student lessons).

The central aims of the student lessons (as well as the themes) are (a) to raise awareness of the role that group plays in maintaining bullying, (b) to increase empathy towards victims, (c) to promote children's strategies of supporting the victim and their self-efficacy to do so, and (d) to increase children's coping skills when victimized. Essentially, the lessons try to help children resolve the social dilemma they are faced with, that is, doing what they know is right or doing what seems to be normative in the group.

The Virtual Learning Environments: Anti-Bullying Computer Game and KiVa Street

A unique feature of the KiVa-program is the anti-bullying computer game included in the primary school versions (grades 1 and 4) of the program. The students play the game during and between the KiVa lessons. For secondary school students, there is a virtual learning environment called KiVa Street: an Internet forum where the students can go around, visiting different places. For instance, they can go to a library and find information about bullying, or they can enter a movie theatre and watch short films about bullying. Similarly to the computer game, KiVa Street aims at providing knowledge, skills, and motivation to change one's own behavior related to bullying.

Involving Both School and Parents

To prevent bullying in the schoolyard, we provide vests for teachers supervising the recess, in order to enhance their visibility and to signal that bullying is taken seriously in the school. There are other symbols, such as posters, reminding the students and the school personnel about KiVa. We provide schools with PowerPoint slides they can use when introducing the program for the whole personnel and to parents. A parents' guide includes information about bullying and advice concerning the parents' possibilities to prevent and to reduce the problem.

Indicated actions: Tackling the acute cases

To effectuate the indicated actions, there is a team of three teachers (or other school personnel) in each participating school that tackles, together with the classroom teacher, the cases of bullying that come to attention. This happens through a set of individual and group discussions that one or two team members have with the victim and with the bullies, and systematic follow-up meetings. In addition, the classroom teacher arranges a meeting with 2-4 classmates in order to encourage them to support the victimized child. The teacher manuals and the training provided include detailed information about how the discussions are carried through. The indicated actions of KiVa concern all grade levels.

In the evaluation phase of KiVa, half of the intervention schools were instructed to utilize a non-punitive, shared concern - type of approach (Pikas, 1989) whereas the other half adopted a more authoritarian approach in the discussions between school teams and children involved in bullying. The data concerning the relative effectiveness of the two approaches are currently being analyzed and the findings will be reported in the near future.

What Is Unique in KiVa? In comparison to many other bullying prevention programs, KiVa has some unique features,

including 1) an exceptionally wide variety of concrete, easy-to-use materials for both preventing bullying and intervening in it, 2) targeting the whole group by, for instance, providing students with safe ways to support their victimized peers, and 3) utilizing the virtual learning environment. We believe that rather than mere "philosophy" that bullying needs to be taken seriously, or obligation to develop action plan against bullying in each school, the teachers need concrete, research-based tools to meet the challenge they are faced with. It is unrealistic to expect that each school develops their own action plan; furthermore, not all actions are necessarily good actions.

Evaluation of KiVa The evaluation study of KiVa will provide novel information about the effects of anti-bullying actions. Previous studies of anti-bullying intervention programs (for reviews, see e.g. J. D. Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004; P. K. Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004) have been so-called black box evaluations (Chen, 2005; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004), in that they mainly address the relationship between the intervention and the outcome, ignoring underlying processes.

KiVa evaluation study overcomes many of the previous limitations by (a) measuring the hypothesized mediators and moderators of program effects and (b) following the development of individual students over time. Theory-based research on the processes underlying program effects (Chen, 2005; Rossi et al., 2004) can provide us with important knowledge about key factors in bullying problems. In addition, it can be assumed that the program effects vary across different students and school classes, and we can learn about these differential effects on the students' and classes' trajectories by following them longitudinally. In this way, the design enables to answer three major questions:

- Is the program generally effective?
 - For whom is it effective?
 - How does the program produce its effects?
- Answering these questions will address several important issues, both applied and theoretical ones.

The applied research questions include whether the KiVa program is truly effective and thus ready for broad dissemination (Flay et al., 2005). In addition to knowledge about the program effectiveness, the implementers of the intervention also need to know how to implement the program in order to gain the best results. Furthermore, it is being investigated which factors predict the implementation of the KiVa program. Knowledge of the predictors of implementation allows one to estimate what kind of staff members and schools are likely to implement the program to a large extent and are thereby more probable to benefit from it (e.g. Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Conversely, by identifying schools likely to fall short of implementation, support can be tailored to the needs of the specific schools. This knowledge can then be used to make decisions about introducing the program and allocating resources to support its implementation.

The sample of the KiVa evaluation study is exceptionally large, involving more than 30 000 students from more than 1000 classrooms in 234 schools, randomly assigned to intervention and control conditions. The study involves three assessment points utilizing web-page questionnaires for students and teachers. Self-reports, peer-reports, and teacher-reports are included, as well as dyadic questions (such as "Who bullies you?" and "Who defends you when victimized?")

The results from the first phase of evaluation (grades 4-6) are exceptionally good: KiVa halved the risk of bullying others and of being victimized in one school year (Kärnä, Voeten, Little, Kaljonen, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, in revision), and had significant positive effects on numerous outcome measures including bystander behaviors, school motivation and perceptions of classroom and school climate.

Diffusion of KiVa Diffusion has been defined as the process by which members of a social system learn about, decide about, and act on new ideas or practices (Rogers, 1995). The diffusion of KiVa-program for national use has its unique challenges. On the other hand, we have a strong backing from both Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE). The latter organization (working under the auspices of the Ministry) is the agency responsible for the development of education in Finland. It draws up National Core Curricula, which determines the core objectives, contents and guidelines for teaching in Finland. Education providers prepare their own local curricula based on these national documents. We have collaborated closely with the FNBE during the development of KiVa. It has been ascertained, for instance, that the topics covered by the student lessons are in accordance with the national core curricula. This allows us to present the KiVa program to teachers and school principals as an effective tool for something they should be doing already, rather than as an "extra burden" to be carried through in addition to the actual curricula.

Following the four-stage process of program diffusion (Rohrbach, D'Onofrio, Backer, & Montgomery, 1996) we will next describe the strategies to promote the 1) dissemination, 2) adoption, 3) implementation and 4) maintenance of KiVa in Finnish schools.

Dissemination: Raising awareness of KiVa among Finnish schools and municipalities The diffusion of the program started in the fall of 2008 in the form of a national information campaign. A press conference was organized by the Ministry of Education, where the program developers presented the first findings regarding the effectiveness of KiVa to national media. After the press conference, newsletters were sent to all Finnish schools giving comprehensive education, informing the schools about the possibility to register as KiVa schools by the end of the year. Similar newsletters were

sent to the municipalities, which are the local authorities responsible for organising basic education for all children residing within their area.

Adoption: Encouraging the schools to make commitment Evidence of effectiveness

We believe that evidence of the program effectiveness encourages Finnish schools to adopt KiVa. The Finnish Basic Education Act (since 1999) states that every student has the right to a safe school environment. Education providers have the responsibility of making sure that students do not experience acts of violence or bullying while at school. The legislation concerns all educational levels. It was further amended in 2003, stating that "the education provider shall draw up a plan, in connection with curriculum design, for safeguarding pupils against violence, bullying and harassment, execute the plan and supervise adherence to it and its implementation". Tools to efficiently tackle bullying have been lacking so far, however, and despite the legislative changes of the past decade, bullying and victimization have not decreased in Finland. Thus, efficient tools to fulfil the responsibilities defined by legislation are needed and have for long been requested.

Free material and training - low total costs

In order to promote the adoption of KiVa, all material included in the program as well as the staff training are provided for free for schools registering themselves as KiVa schools during the first two years of the national diffusion (starting to implement KiVa in 2009 or 2010). Although schools need to take care of the substitute costs and travel costs (created, for instance, by the staff training days), the total costs of the program will be kept as low as possible even after the initial two-year period.

Feasible, user-friendly, and attractive materials

It is important for program adoption that all materials are user-friendly, attractive, and presented in language and format that are convenient to practitioners. It has been found that in the early stages of decision making about an innovation, teachers and other school staff might pay even more attention to the practical characteristics of the innovation than to evidence of its effectiveness (Rohrbach et al., 1996). Thus, from the very beginning of developing the KiVa materials, we have paid attention to their high quality and appearance that is both affirming and appealing.

Supporting implementation Pre-implementation training

Program adoption does not guarantee successful implementation. Studies have shown, however, that implementation is a critical factor in the effectiveness of bullying interventions (Eslea & Smith, 1998; Olweus, 2004; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, & Voeten, 2005) and pre-implementation training increases program implementation (Connell, Turner, & Mason, 1985; Flay et al., 1987). In order to enable schools to implement KiVa program with fidelity, their staff is provided with two full days of face-to-face training before the implementation.

Program manuals

KiVa includes comprehensive and detailed program manuals, one general implementation manual and three grade-specific manuals including the curricula for the student lessons in grades 1, 4, and 7. The contents of the KiVa program are described in such a detail that they can be carried out with fidelity by teachers.

Maintenance: Encouragement to continue using KiVa Virtual training

We are currently constructing a virtual learning environment for schools registered as KiVa users. This virtual training can be used by new staff in schools already implementing KiVa, as well as the new schools adopting the program. In addition to the virtual training, the web site will also enable access to Internet-based questionnaires and all curriculum materials along with the KiVa computer game. Furthermore, the website includes a discussion forum for the staff of registered KiVa schools to share experiences and discuss problematic issues.

Tools to monitor implementation and outcomes

Importantly, KiVa schools have the possibility to monitor the outcomes obtained by using the program. They are provided with an evaluation tool including web-based questionnaires for students. The questionnaires include some of the key measures utilized in the pilot phase of KiVa, and the implementers get immediate feedback on the prevalence and forms of bullying and victimization in their school. The data collected in new KiVa schools will be available to program developers as well, enabling to study the diffusion of KiVa in Finnish schools as well as the outcomes obtained at the national level

KiVa conference days

Biannual KiVa conference days are organized in Finland, starting in the fall of 2010. The personnel from KiVa schools can participate in these gatherings to hear about latest research on bullying, to share their experiences, and to get further training.

Read more about KiVa: Kärnä, A., Voeten, M., Little, T., Poskiparta, E., Kaljonen, A., & Salmivalli, C. (submitted, October 2008). A large-scale evaluation of KiVa anti-bullying program. *Child Development*.

Salmivalli, C., Kärnä, A., & Poskiparta, E. (2009) From peer putdowns to peer support: A theoretical model and how it translated into a national anti-bullying program. In S. Shimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (eds.), *The Handbook of*

School Bullying; An International Perspective. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Salmivalli, C., Kärnä, A., & Poskiparta, E. (in press). Development, evaluation, and diffusion of KiVa, a national anti-bullying program. In B. Doll, W. Pfohl, & J. Yoon (Eds.), *Handbook of youth prevention science*. New York: Routledge.

If you want to join KiVa mailing list, send an e-mail to mairka@utu.fi, with the title: KiVa list. You'll be updated of all publications emerging in the KiVa project.

References
Chen, H. T. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation, and effectiveness*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage, 2005.

Connell, D., Turner, R., & Mason, E. (1985). Summary of findings in the school health education evaluation: Health promotion effectiveness, implementation, and costs. *Journal of School Health*, 55, 316-321.

Flay, B. R., Biglan, A., Boruch, R. F., Castro, F. G., Gottfredson, D., Kellam, S., et al. (2005). Standards of evidence: Criteria for efficacy, effectiveness and dissemination. *Prevention Science*, 6(3), 151-175.

Flay, B., Hansen, W., Johnson, C., Collins, L., Dent, C., Dwyer, K., Grossman, L., Hockstein, G., Rauch, J., Sobol, J., Sussman, S., & Ulene, A. (1987). Implementation effectiveness trial of a social influence smoking prevention program using schools and television. *Health Education Research*, 2, 385-400.

Kallestad, J. H., & Olweus, D. (2003). Predicting teachers' and schools' implementation of the olweus bullying prevention program: A multilevel study. *Prevention & Treatment*, 6(1)

Kärnä, A., Voeten, M., Little, T., Poskiparta, E., Kaljonen, A., & Salmivalli, C. (in revision). Multilevel evaluation of KiVa bullying intervention program *Child Development*.

Olweus, D. (2004). The Olweus bullying prevention programme: Design and implementation issues and a new national initiative in Norway. In P. K. Smith, D. Pepler & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* (pp. 13-36). New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, E.M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Rohrbach, L., Dónofrio, C., Backer, T., & Montgomery, S. (1996). Diffusion of school-based substance abuse programs. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 39, 919-934.

Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, c2004.

Salmivalli, C., Kaukiainen, A., & Voeten, M. (2005). Anti-bullying intervention: implementation and outcome. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75, 465-487.

Salmivalli, C., Kärnä, A., & Poskiparta, E. (2009) From peer putdowns to peer support: A theoretical model and how it translated into a national anti-bullying program. In S. Shimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (eds.), *The Handbook of School Bullying: An International Perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Björkqvist, K., Österman, K. & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a Group Process: Participant Roles and Their Relations to Social Status within the Group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22, 1-15.

Salmivalli, C., & Voeten, M. (2004). Connections between attitudes, group norms, and behaviors associated with bullying in schools. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 28, 246-258.

Smith, D., Schneider, B., Smith, P., & Ananiadou, K. (2004). The effectiveness of whole-school antibullying programs: A synthesis of evaluation research. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 547-560.