

Acknowledgements

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Background

As a school principal I have a responsibility to my school community to provide a safe physical and emotional environment in which my students can grow and learn. For the past 5 years we have been part of the PB4L programme which has made a significant changes to school wide behaviour. One of the reasons is because the ownership of PB4L lies with the classroom teachers. In 2012 alongside PB4L we implemented a school wide skill streaming programme (Arnold Goldstein) which is taught daily in the classroom. All these programmes and interventions are successful but we still saw little change in particular students and or groups of students. School wide data still showed that our school had a bullying problem.

In 2015 our school attended an anti-bullying presentation about a programme that has been develop in Finland. Kiva (meaning peace) is now implemented in 15 European countries and randomized controlled trials the program has been shown to reduce both self- and peer-reported bullying and victimization significantly. It influences multiple form of victimization, including verbal, relational, physical, and cyberbullying.

New Zealand has appalling statistics when it comes to bullying and what can happen when bullying is not addressed. In the latest TIMSS study shows that out of 50 countries that took part in the study, New Zealand ranked in 46th place, indicating that bullying rates in the country continue to be high. According to bullying statistics collected from the TIMSS study, approximately 31% of students aged 8 and 9 in New Zealand had suffered from bullying, not just once or twice, but on a weekly basis .

New Zealand has a history of bullying that goes back to 1994. Since that time, schools have shown little progress in putting a stop to bullying behavior, particularly at the primary level.

When it came to bullying percentages for Year 5 students, the TIMSS study showed that New Zealand had higher bullying rates than 43 of the countries that participated in the survey. Such figures show that New Zealand still has a ways to go in controlling its bullying problem.

In a recent study undertaken by Dr. Vanessa Green, the head of Victoria's School of Educational Psychology and Pedagogy, and some of her postgraduate students conducted a teacher survey to get more information about bullying from the perspective of schools . Approximately 860 teachers and staff from primary through secondary schools across New Zealand were asked to share their personal experiences, insights and attitudes about bullying in their schools.

The following bullying facts from the survey show why schools are so concerned about this behavior:

- 94% of teachers in New Zealand report that bullying incidents occur in their school
- Approximately 45% of teachers and staff said incidents of verbal and social/relational bullying were reported to them weekly
- 25% received at least one report of physical abuse on a weekly basis
- 46% of teachers and staff consider cyberbullying a threat among 11-14 year old students

These percentages expose just how deeply bullying has integrated into the New Zealand's school system. They also expose the need for schools to work harder to enforce their anti-bullying policies and take a decisive course of action against bullying on school grounds.

The KiVa anti-bullying programme was developed at the University of Turku in Finland by a team led by PhD, Professor Christina Salmivalli. Through funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture they developed a systematic method of dealing with bullying issues as they arise and a step by step process to follow in order to prevent bullying. The KiVa Programme includes both universal and indicated actions. The universal actions are focussed at preventing bullying. Students are taught lessons based on social skills and social interaction and align with the New Zealand curriculum (Essential Learning Areas, Values, Principles and the Key Competencies).

The indicated actions are used when bullying has been identified. Handled by the 'KiVa Team' which comprises of the school leader, KiVa Lead teacher and one other staff member. The intervention are targeted specifically to the children who have been involved in bullying as perpetrators or victims, as well as to several classmates who are challenged to support the victim; where the aim is to put an end to bullying. "The KiVa program helps to provides schools with a methodical method for dealing with bullying issues as they arise and, most importantly, a step-by-step process to follow in order to prevent bullying. It's not just a reaction to problems but it also helps to reduce the number of bullying incidents. The success of the KiVa programme in Finland has now seen the programme taken up in most Northern European countries and in central and northern Wales.

Central and Northern Wales

Part of my Sabbatical was to spend time visiting schools throughout Wales and the effect the KiVa programme has had in both special schools and mainstream schools. Working with Professor Judy Hutchings who is based at Bangor University we looked at what they had found out so far and how the KiVa programme was tackling bullying in UK schools. A recent review of 44 anti-bullying programmes by Professor Hutchings and her colleagues shows that there is a significant reduction of both bullying and victimization when parents are involved. They concluded that anti-bullying initiatives needed to go beyond the scope of just the school and target wider systematic factors such as the families involved. Parents needed to be informed and that they (parents) needed to be sensitized about the issues of school bullying through presentations and teacher parent meetings.

One of the interventions singled out for praise in their review was KiVa, the evidence based Finnish programme targeting children aged 7-15.

Benefits of a school introducing the KiVa programme included:

- There was an identified KiVa team that comprised of teachers and associated staff that dealt with incidents of bullying;
- A parent meeting was held to help them recognise what is and is not bullying, and what is being done within the school to combat bullying. This was also an opportunity to share the online guidebook;
- A whole school introduction assembly;
- An annual online survey of bullying and victimisation completed by all students in a school; Ten monthly lessons, each lasting one and a half hours, that teach children the core KiVa rules;
- Online games to help children rehearse ways of dealing with bullies; playground staff wearing KiVa tabards to remind children of the schools commitment to KiVa; School-wide posters demonstrating the core KiVa principals.

How are parents involved?

Schools are encouraged to hold a parents' evening ("Back to School night") early in the school year at which the definition of bullying is discussed. There is a pre-prepared slideshow informing parents about the program, and the results of the student survey may also be shared. If there is a lot of bullying at the school, head teachers (principals) are advised to show parents that the school is aware of the problem and taking it seriously. Parents are typically told how the school tackles bullying incidents (ie, via the KiVa team) and how it keeps in touch with parents during and/or after tackling a bullying case.

There is also an online KiVa Parent Guide (www.kivaprogram.net/parents/). This includes a summary of current research in bullying and what can be done to prevent it. It discusses different types of bullying (visible or hidden), how bullying can affect a whole class, and how to recognize when a child is being bullied. The KiVa definition of bullying as involving a power differential – and being a repeated act – helps teachers, parents, and children to differentiate between bullying and arguments, disagreements, and misunderstandings between children.

The guide also provides advice about what parents can do at home. This includes asking questions that allow children to express their thoughts and feelings (such as "How was school today?"). Parents are encouraged not to settle for a short answer (like "Fine") but to have a dialogue with their child. Advice is given on how to support a child who is being bullied – for example, not over- or under-reacting; increasing the child's self-esteem; helping the child to think about tactics to survive bullying incidents (such as walking away); and talking to school staff about what is being done to stop the bullying. Parents whose children are displaying bullying behaviour are urged to provide the child with more adult supervision, teach them to respect others, and not accept excuses, like: "We were only playing".

Involving bystanders

KiVa offers an innovative approach to bullying. In addition to a very structured method for dealing with instances of bullying, a common element of most bullying initiatives, it focuses on bystanders – students who witness bullying events. Class lessons and online games teach children to recognize what is and is not bullying, and how to respond when they see bullying. This strategy builds on research showing that victims report the worst thing about being bullied is when others did nothing to help and the fact that bullies tend to behave aggressively to attain higher status, and are reinforced by onlookers' apathy or encouragement. Generally, other children are present when bullying takes place and, although many believe that it is wrong, they often do not intervene or tell a teacher. When they do intervene, bullying tends to stop.

What Success was seen in Finland?

KiVa is probably the best-evidenced bullying prevention program available. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) in Finland involving more than 8,000 children in 78 schools found that it was effective at reducing bullying, particularly in the mid- to late-primary school years. Compared with control schools, KiVa schools reduced self-reported victimization by 30% and self-reported bullying by 17%. Importantly, the effects were seen across all types of bullying, including verbal, physical, racist, sexual, and cyber-bullying. Following this trial, the Finnish government supported the roll-out of KiVa across the country, and it is now delivered in more than 90% of schools in Finland. Evaluation of this wide-scale roll-out demonstrated smaller but still positive effects.

KiVa in the UK

One reason for importing KiVa from Finland is that bullying is an entrenched problem in the UK, showing little change over the years. Like Finland, the Welsh government requires local authorities and schools to have anti-bullying policies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying. However, it was not until KiVa was funded by the Finnish government that bullying started to fall in Finland, demonstrating the need for both policies and tools. KiVa provided the means to implement the policies in Finland and, based on our pilot trial in Wales, seems likely to do the same here.

Evaluating KiVa in the UK

The program was delivered in 13 Welsh and four Cheshire schools to children in Years 5 and 6 (age 9–11). Children completed the online bullying survey at the beginning and end of the school year. Preliminary analysis of results showed that teachers found the program easy to deliver and the lessons and activities very engaging for the children.

The first trial provided useful background information for a larger and more comprehensive Lottery-funded RCT in primary schools across Wales. This was run by a team from the Social Research Unit at Dartington, the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention (CEBEI) at Bangor University, and the Children's Early Intervention Trust. Adaptations since the pilot trial include the translation of all classroom, school, and parent materials into the Welsh language. Like the pilot trial, this trial has support from the program developer and was implemented in Years 3–6 (age 7–11) in 21 schools. Schools have been randomly selected to

run KiVa either in the first (2013/14) or the second (2014/15) year, with 11 schools in the first phase and 10 in the second phase. The study will rigorously test whether KiVa reduces bullying and victimization in schools in Wales, and whether it impacts on children's well-being and school attendance. It is also trying to find out whether KiVa is acceptable to schools in Wales and, if effective, whether it could be rolled out to all primary schools in the country in a way that ensures quality while being affordable. This is being done in consultation with policy makers, anti-bullying NGOs, teachers, and parents.

Conclusion

In the last few years, many schools across the country have adopted Anti Bullying policies in an effort to curtail bullying. Anti-bullying policies are specifically designed to protect students from abusive behaviour and to help establish a safe environment where students can get a quality education. The purpose of these are to protect students from verbal or physical harassment so they can benefit from a quality educational experience.

Schools have a responsibility to provide a safe setting for their students. By adopting anti bullying programs, we show the parent's whanau and wider community that Te Awa School is serious about upholding this responsibility. Anti-Bullying policies outline a school's stance concerning abusive behaviour on their property and specify what measures school officials will take against perpetrators of this crime. By discussing these policies in advance with teachers and staff, parents can get a better idea of how bullying is handled in their child's school.

KiVa is evidence-based and has been designed to prevent bullying and to tackle the cases of bullying effectively. Prevention and intervention are both crucial, as no prevention efforts will make bullying disappear on their own.

Schools need effective tools for when a case of bullying comes to light. A key aspect of KiVa is constant monitoring of the situation in one's school and the changes taking place over time; this is enabled by the online tools included in KiVa. The surveys, for example, produce annual feedback for each school about their implementation of the program as well as shifts in behaviour.

Community Aspect

The most important duty of every parent is love his or her child unconditionally and to provide constant love and support. Many parents when faced with a situation of their child being bullied at school are unsure what to do or how to support their child. Parents whose child has been bullying others are also often not sure what they can do to help their child either. The consequences of bullying can manifest in students in many ways. Many signs pointing to bullying may also be a result of other problems in the child's life. Sudden illness of family members, parents' divorce, conflicts between parents and/or siblings and unemployment can and may make the whole family's life difficult and manifest in children as symptomatic behaviour. A successful KiVa programmes supports parents to look for signs that their child may be bullied at school or online. KiVa supports parents with strategies that

they can use to support their child at home and also opens up a direct line of communication with the school. The school and parents can then develop a support plan that can be implemented at home and at school. The “victim” needs to sense that a support network is in place, this support network will include the parents, the school management, the classroom teachers and their friends.

It is also important for the wider school community to know that Te Awa School has an effective anti-bullying programme that is working to develop global and well-rounded citizens who care about their community and support each other to the best of their ability.

How KiVa links to the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) - and supports teachers' development and practice?

Pedagogy

KiVa is evidence based with annual feedback that teachers can use to support decision making around their own Teaching as Inquiry. It presents a variety of approaches to teaching as examples.

KiVa provides collaborative strategies that promote changes and development in teaching practices e.g. use of role play, more student involvement

Vision, Values, Key Competencies

KiVa activities and learning focusses on the development of all that is the intent of the NZC.

- The development of young New Zealanders to be confident, resilient, and participants in a range of life contexts
- The development of aspects in students of self-management, inclusion, respect, empathy to name a few

Health and Physical Education

By becoming a KiVa school you are working towards the four underlying concepts of this learning area: hauora, attitudes and values, socio-ecological perspective, and health promotion. KiVa makes a significant contribution to the well-being of students beyond the classroom (p22 NZC)

Social Science

KiVa assists in the development of student knowledge about themselves, how societies work and how people can participate as critical, active, informed, and responsible citizens

The Arts

KiVa uses the Drama elements of role play, action, and tension, to express human experience and see another's point of view

English

KiVa supports the concept that literature creates feelings of empathy and an understanding of living in the shoes of others.

Learning across the curriculum

KiVa links all learning areas through conceptual understanding e.g. Change

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