Evidence-based prevention of school bullying: Case Kiva antibullying program

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Finland and bullying?
Situation before KiVa™

- 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)
‘Each school should have their own policy...’

• Each school develops their own policy...??
  self-invented program  self-invented program  self-invented program
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RESOURCES?? EFFECTS?
– Evidence-based prevention of bullying is needed
Taking action at the national level in Finland

• The Finnish government decided that bullying prevention is a priority
• Contracts with the University of Turku
  – development and initial evaluation of KiVa (2006–2009)
  – diffusion of KiVa to Finnish comprehensive schools (since 2009)
KiVa™ antibullying program: Special features

- Both *universal* and *indicated* actions
- Theory-based (influences whole group)
- Evidence-based (evidence of effectiveness)
- Concrete and easy to use materials (not merely a "philosophy")
- Utilizing ICT: virtual learning environments
Contents of KiVa™

**UNIVERSAL ACTIONS**

- Annual online surveys
- Staff meeting
- Kick-off
- Student lessons
- Online KiVa games
- Parents’ newsletter, guide and Back-to-School night
- Posters, vests

**INDICATED ACTIONS**

- Tackling the cases coming to attention
- KiVa team
- Classroom teacher
KiVa™ is evidence-based antibullying program

• Randomized controlled trial 2007–2009
  – 117 intervention and 117 control schools
  – Around 30 000 students (grades 1–9, 7–15 year old)
• First year of nationwide implementation (2009–2010)
  – 880 Finnish schools (cohort longitudinal design)
  – Around 150 000 students (grades 1–9)
• KiVa annual survey since 2009
Percentages of children being bullied and bullying others (2009–2015)
Effectiveness of KiVa™ antibullying program

• KiVa was effective in reducing bullying and victimization, during the first nine months of implementation and the broad roll-out (Kärnä, et. al. 2011; 2011; 2013)

• KiVa reduced students’ anxiety and depression (Williford et. al. 2011)

• KiVa had positive effects on school liking and academic motivation and improved students’ well-being (Salmivalli, Garandeau & Veenstra, 2012)

• The effects generalize to multiple forms of victimization, also to cyberbullying (Salmivalli, Kärnä & Poskiparta, 2011; Williford et. al. 2013)
Forms of bullying: Prevalence of targets bullied in different ways (%), N = 21880
Changes in being bullied by different forms during one school year

(Salmivalli et al., 2011)
High quality implementation

• Principal support for the Kiva antibullying program predicts the implementation adherence (Ahtola et al., 2013).

• The more teachers delivered KiVa lessons and the higher their quality the more bullying was reduced in the classroom. (Haataja et al., 2014)
Decrease of implementation after the first year: Delivery of the lesson reported by the school staff and students (2009–2015)
KiVa™ antibullying program going international

• International evaluations and implementation outside Finland
  – The Netherlands, Italy, Wales, Estonia, Delaware
  – First results are promising (Hubbard et. al. 2016; Hutchings & Clarkson 2015; Nocentini & Menesini 2016; Treial 2015; Veenstra 2015)

• Several awards

• Blueprint since 2015
Conclusion

• KiVa is an example of how commitment from part of politicians, researchers, and educators can make a difference in the lives of numerous children and youth.
  – Development, implementation, effectiveness, sustainability

• Future questions for research
  – KiVa works - Under which conditions?
  – By which mechanisms?
  – Where? When? How? With whom?
  – Quality of implementation? Sustainability?
Ready to act?
More information: www.kivaprogram.net
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References

References