

End of school bullying?

July 14 2015

Victoria University developmental psychology expert Vanessa Green believes the solution to school bullying is at our fingertips.

It is [KiVa](#), a Finnish-designed programme that was introduced in 2007 and is now being used in 90 per cent of Finnish schools, and extending into Europe. Extensive evaluations have seen outstanding results, with significant decreases in bullying behaviour and victimisation.

Victoria University's Accent Learning bought the programme in 2014 making New Zealand the first country beyond Europe to implement KiVa; and Professor Green hopes this is the start of changing the bullying culture in our schools.

"New Zealand has finally got a solution to a problem that's been with us for a very long time. There is no doubt that KiVa works. It's doable and it could affect a whole generation of children by changing their thinking to caring more for others," she says.

KiVa differs from other anti-bullying programmes by focussing on bystanders, as well as the bullies and victims. It provides clear guidelines on how to deal with bullying when it arises, but most notable is its preventative programme that instils in young children, a culture that is supportive of vulnerable peers and does not tolerate bullying.

"Bullies only bully when they have an audience. The whole idea of KiVa is that it teaches kids to stand up for one another, rather than turning a blind eye," Professor Green says.

"KiVa provides schools with lessons that aim to change the peer culture around bullying. There are lots of resources to supplement the lessons, and KiVa-trained experts keep an on-going relationship with the schools. Each year the children complete surveys, which are then sent back to Finland for analysis, and the results returned to the school," she says. As New Zealand's KiVa researcher, Professor Green will follow the progress of schools that sign up to the programme.

KiVa's first units are designed for students from Year 2 until Year 8, which Professor Green says is the time when attitudes towards social development are forming.

"It means KiVa is very much a long-term solution. The success in European primary schools is already having a knock on effect as that anti-[bullying](#) mentality has stayed with kids as they enter high [school](#)."

Although still new to the country, Professor Green hopes to see KiVa eventually adopted by all New Zealand schools.

Provided by Victoria University

Citation: End of school bullying? (2015, July 14) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-07-school-bullying.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--