How to prevent bullying and ensure safe relationships between children: Practices and approaches in the world

Professor Christina Salmivalli
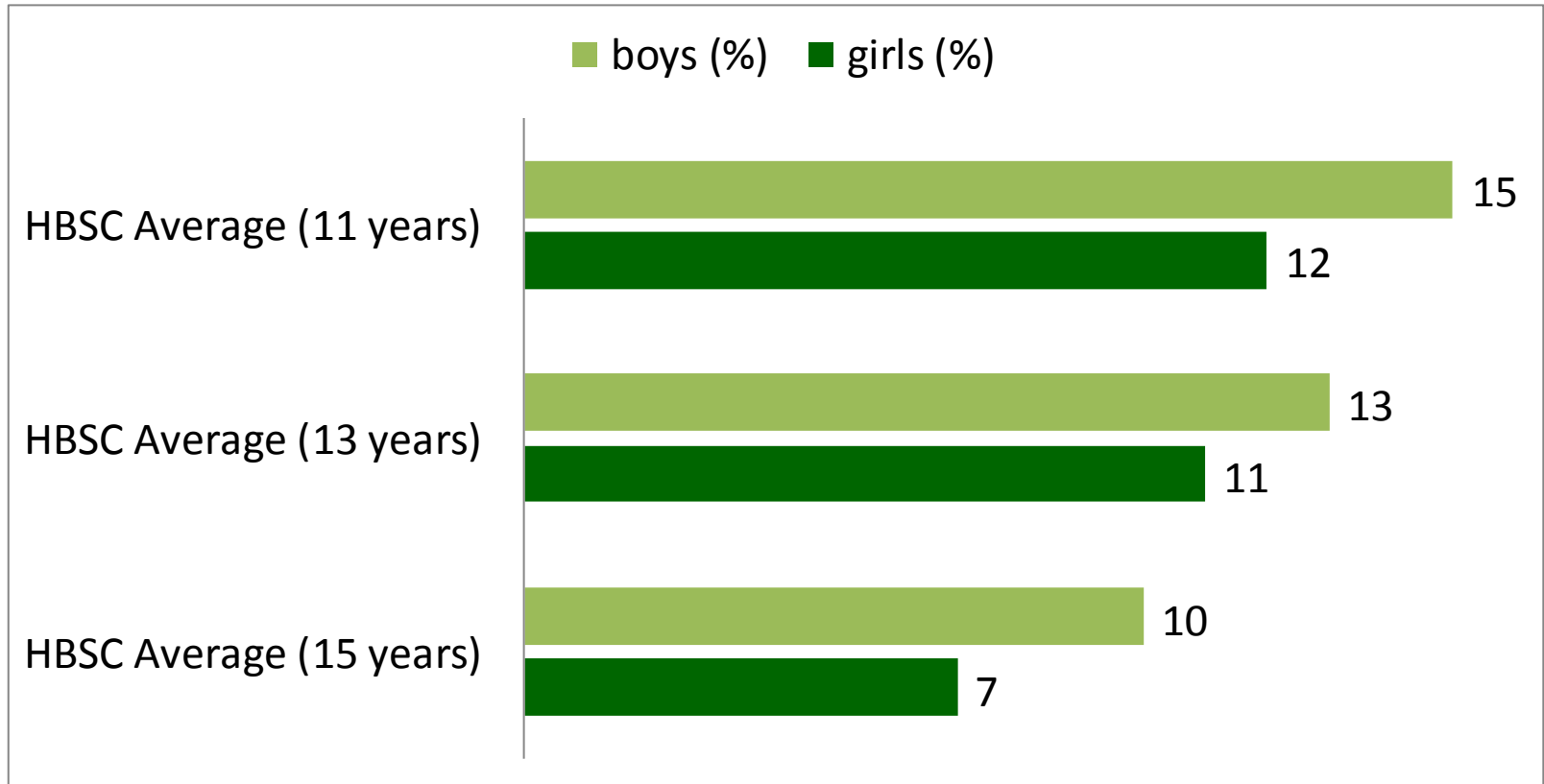## University of Turku, Finland

Bullying

- Systematic aggressive behavior against a person who finds it difficult to defend him/herself against the perpetrator(s)
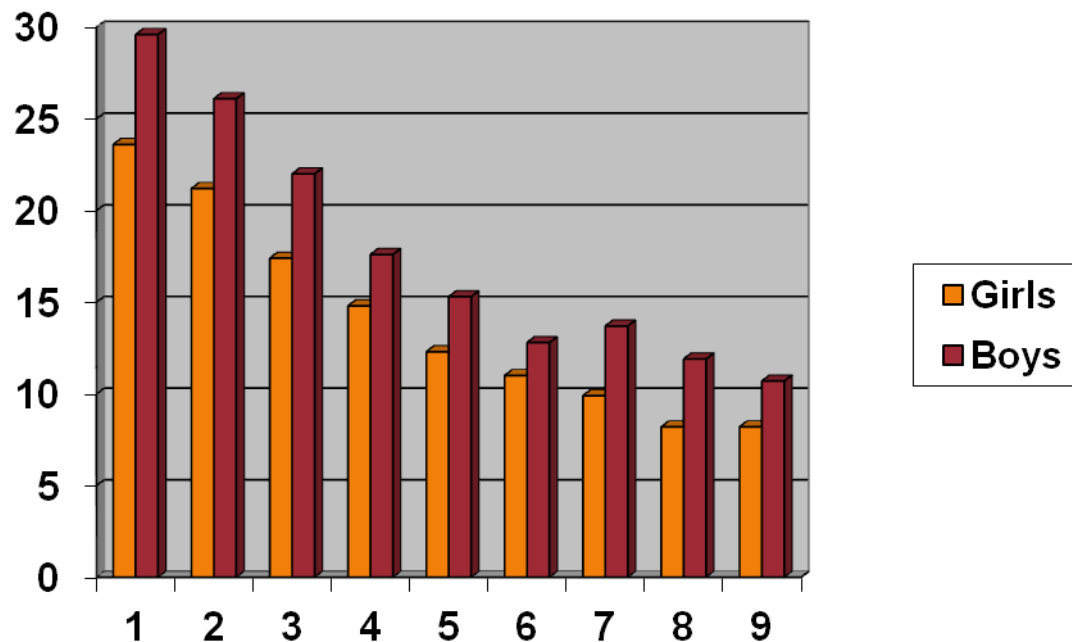 - **Repeated** attacks and **power differential** are central features

HBSC Study 2009/2010: being bullied by others

Legend: boys (%) (light green), girls (%) (dark green)

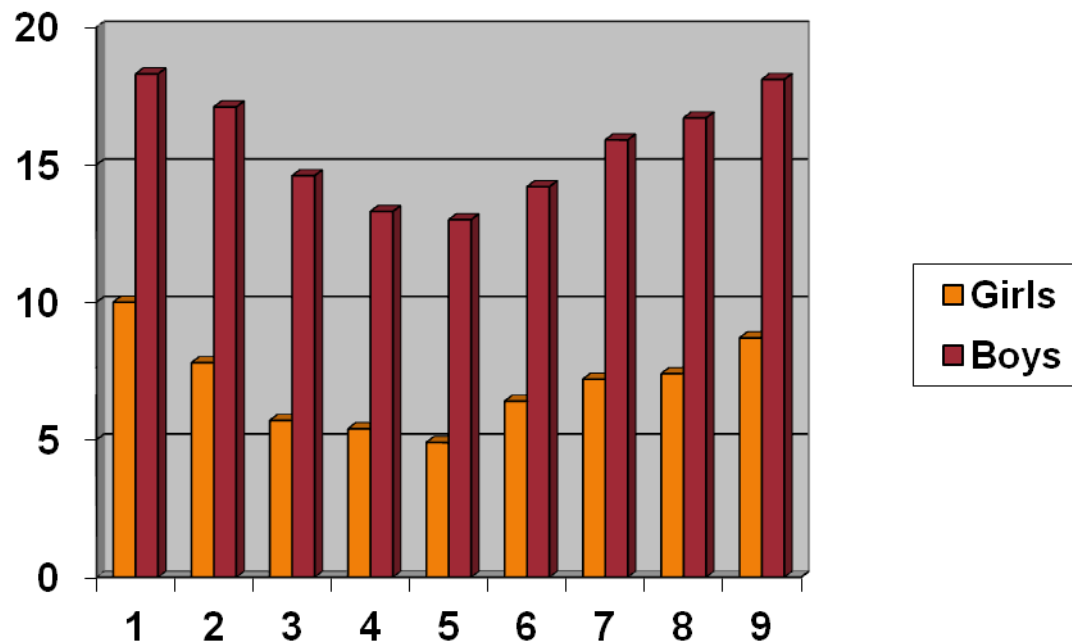|	boys (%)	girls (%)
HBSC Average (11 years)	15	12
HBSC Average (13 years)	13	11
HBSC Average (15 years)	10	7

Finland: Been bullied, %

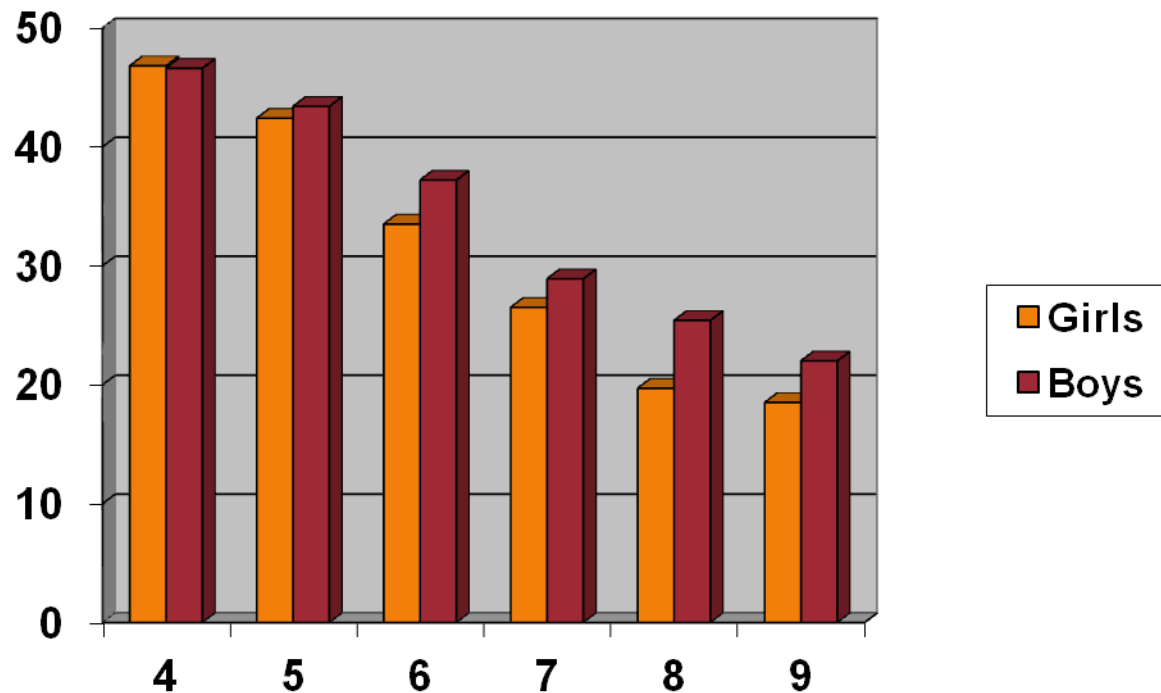Spring 2009, N > 150 000

Finland: Bullying others, %

Spring 2009, N > 150 000

# Finland: Teachers can do "much" or "very much" to decrease bullying, % respondents

Bullying

- Takes numerous forms
- Most often verbal abuse, public ridicule
- BUT many other forms as well: physical, relational, cyber, …
- Most victims are targeted by several forms
- More than just single attacks
  - bullying represents a rather **stable relationship** embedded in **the larger peer setting**
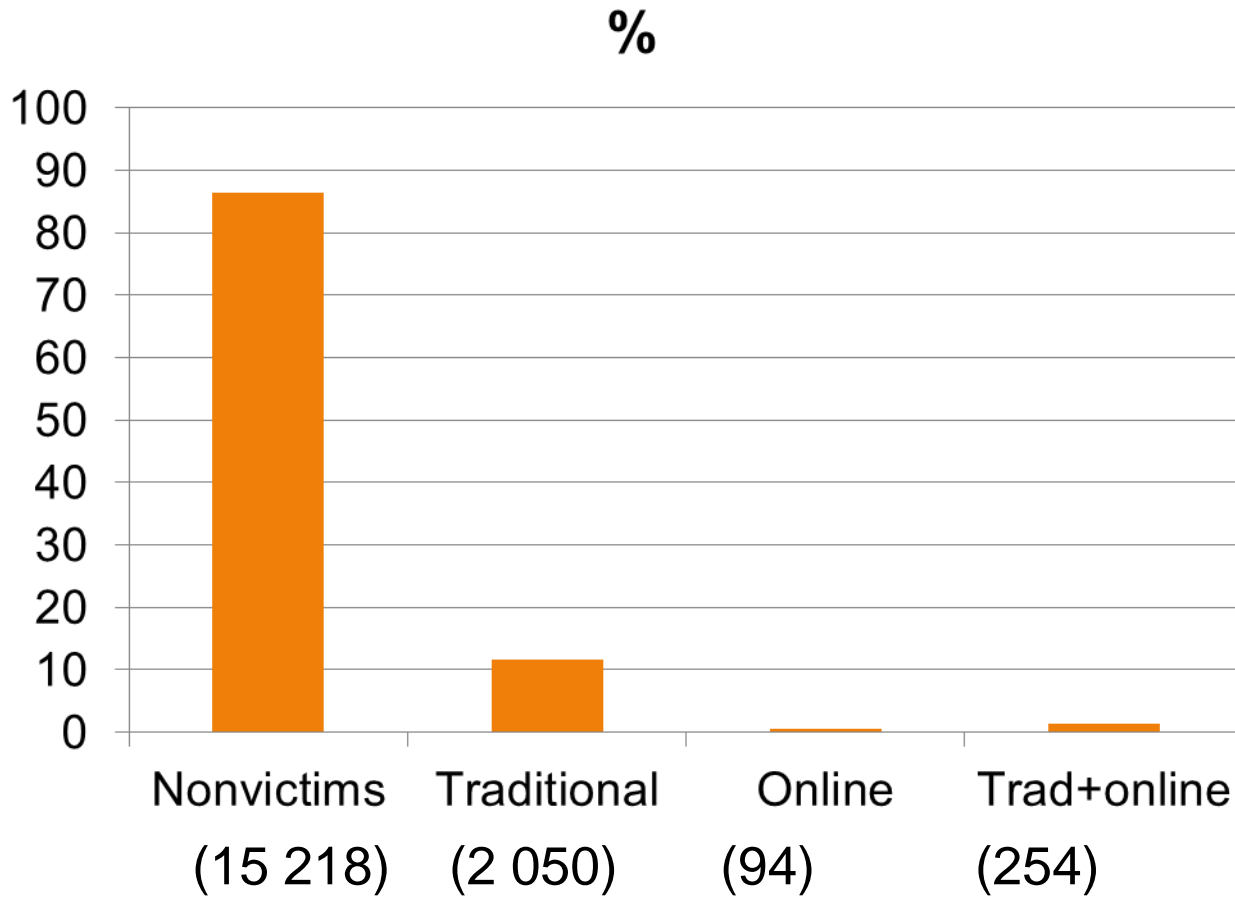
Victims targeted by different forms
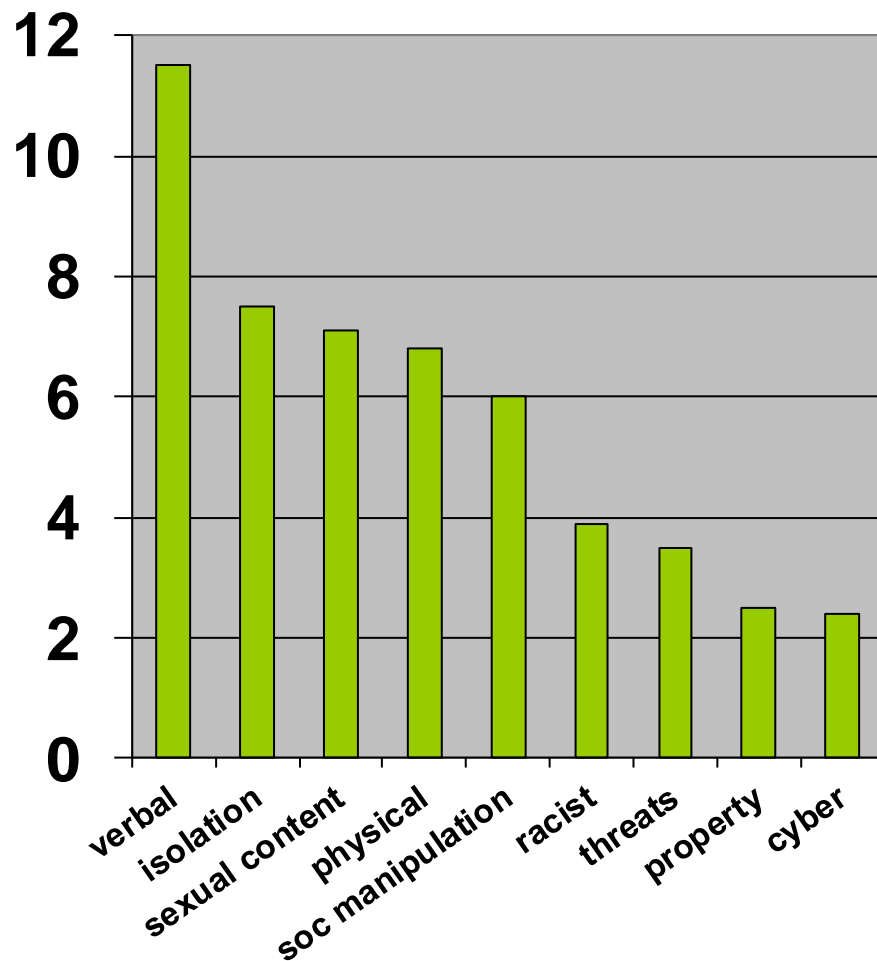
Has bullying moved from schoolyard to cyberspace?

%

| | Nonvictims (15 218) | Traditional (2 050) | Online (94) | Trad+online (254) |

Keep in mind that...

- Online victimization is rare, and almost always accompanied with traditional (verbal, physical, relational) victimization

- Rather than shifting the attention from traditional to online victimization, educators should continue their efforts on reducing victimization in general

Negative short- and long-term consequences of bullying

- Ultimate tragedies – school massacres, youth suicides
  - rare, but often associated with prolonged victimization

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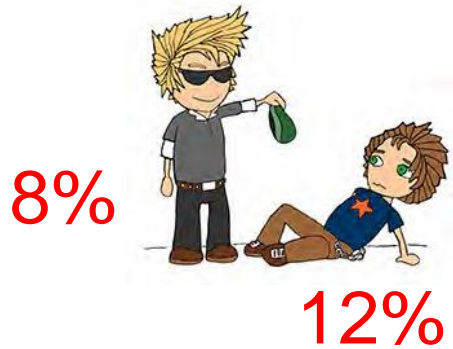- Adverse developmental trajectories of perpetrators of bullying
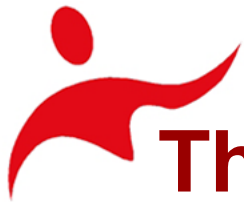
The social architecture of bullying

- Bullying as proactive, goal-oriented aggression
- What is the *function* of bullying?

The social architecture of bullying

8%

12%

The social architecture of bullying

8%

12%

Bullies are perceived as popular (Caravita, DiBlasio, & Salmivalli, 2008)

Bullying helps to maintain status (Juvonen & Galvan, 2008)…

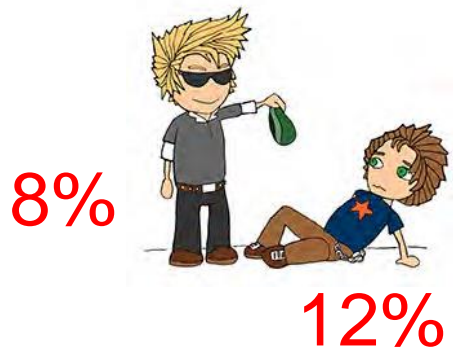…and to increase status over time (Cillessen & Borch, 2004)

The social architecture of bullying

assistants of the bully

7%

8%

12%

reinforcers of the bully

20%

24%
outsiders

17%
defenders of the victim

The behavior of onlookers *does* matter

- Individual effects: short term
  - the defended victims are better adjusted than the undefended ones (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, & Salmivalli, 2010)

- Individual effects: long term
  - the most negative memory related to bullying is often "no-one cared" (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2000)

The behavior of onlookers *does* matter

- Classroom level:
  - Bullying behavior is more frequent in classrooms where reinforcing the bully is occurring at high levels (Salmivalli, Voeten & Poskiparta, 2011)
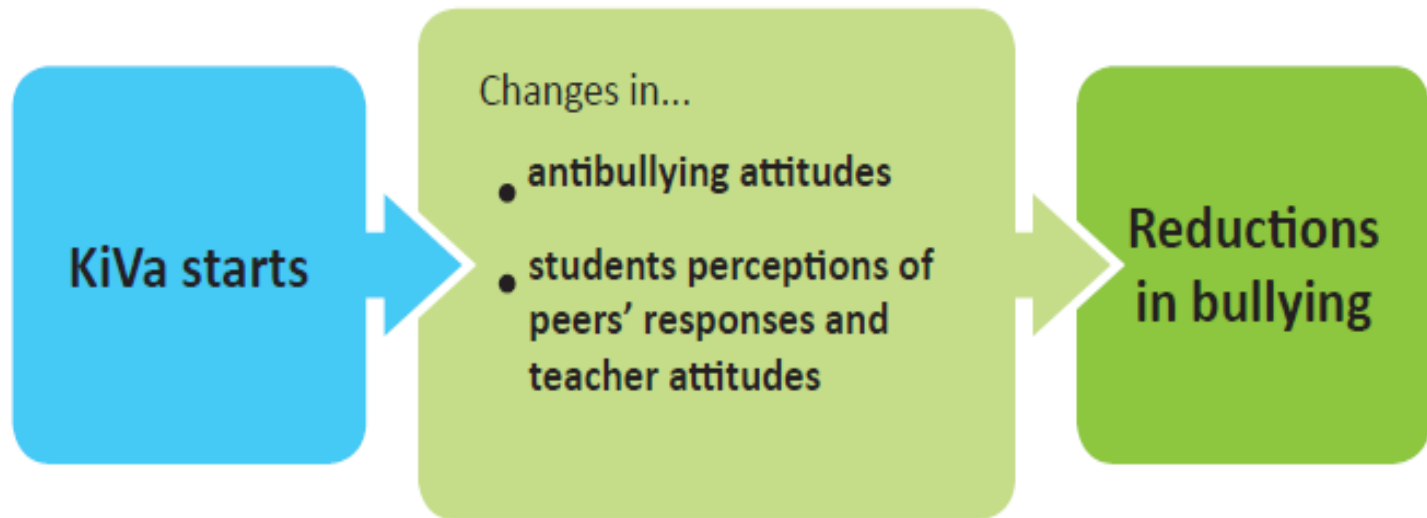
The role of the teacher

- Classroom differences in bullying can also be predicted by teacher characteristics, and students' perceptions of their teachers' attitudes and efforts

Mechanisms of KiVa

KiVa starts → Changes in...
- antibullying attitudes
- students perceptions of peers' responses and teacher attitudes

→ **Reductions in bullying**

(Saarento et al., 2014)

What is being done about bullying across the world?

- Legislative approach
  - legal obligations for schools
- "Philosophical/ideological" approach
- "Intervention machine"
  - let's put these ideas into practice, they will probably work…
    - mainly prevention
    - mainly intervention
    - different approaches across schools
    - various short "projects"

The "intervention machine" approach

self-invented program self-invented program self-invented program
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RESOURCES?? EFFECTS?

What if the same approach was used in medicine?

What is being done about bullying across the world?

- Evidence-based approach
  - programs / practices /policies that have proven effective
- The approach that is increasingly taken

KiVa antibullying program

- **Universal** actions, **indicated** actions + constant **monitoring**
- A large amount of concrete tools
- 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,...
- **Strong evidence of effectiveness**

KiVa™ universal and indicated actions

Student lessons and materials involved
(teacher manuals, short films)
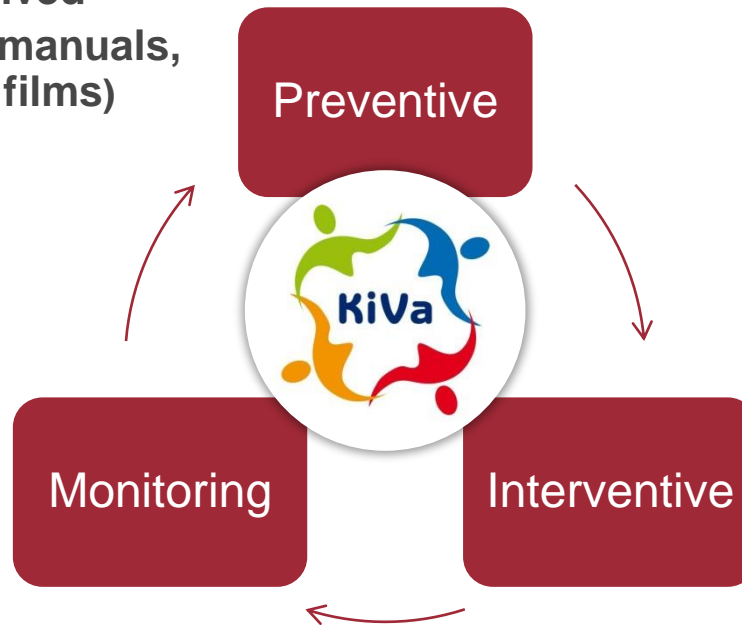
Presentation graphics for student lessons, for the meeting of the school staff, and for meetings with parents

Visible vests for persons supervising recess time

Online antibullying games

Preventive

Monitoring

Interventive

Online surveys with feedback of progress
Monitoring implementation and long-term effects

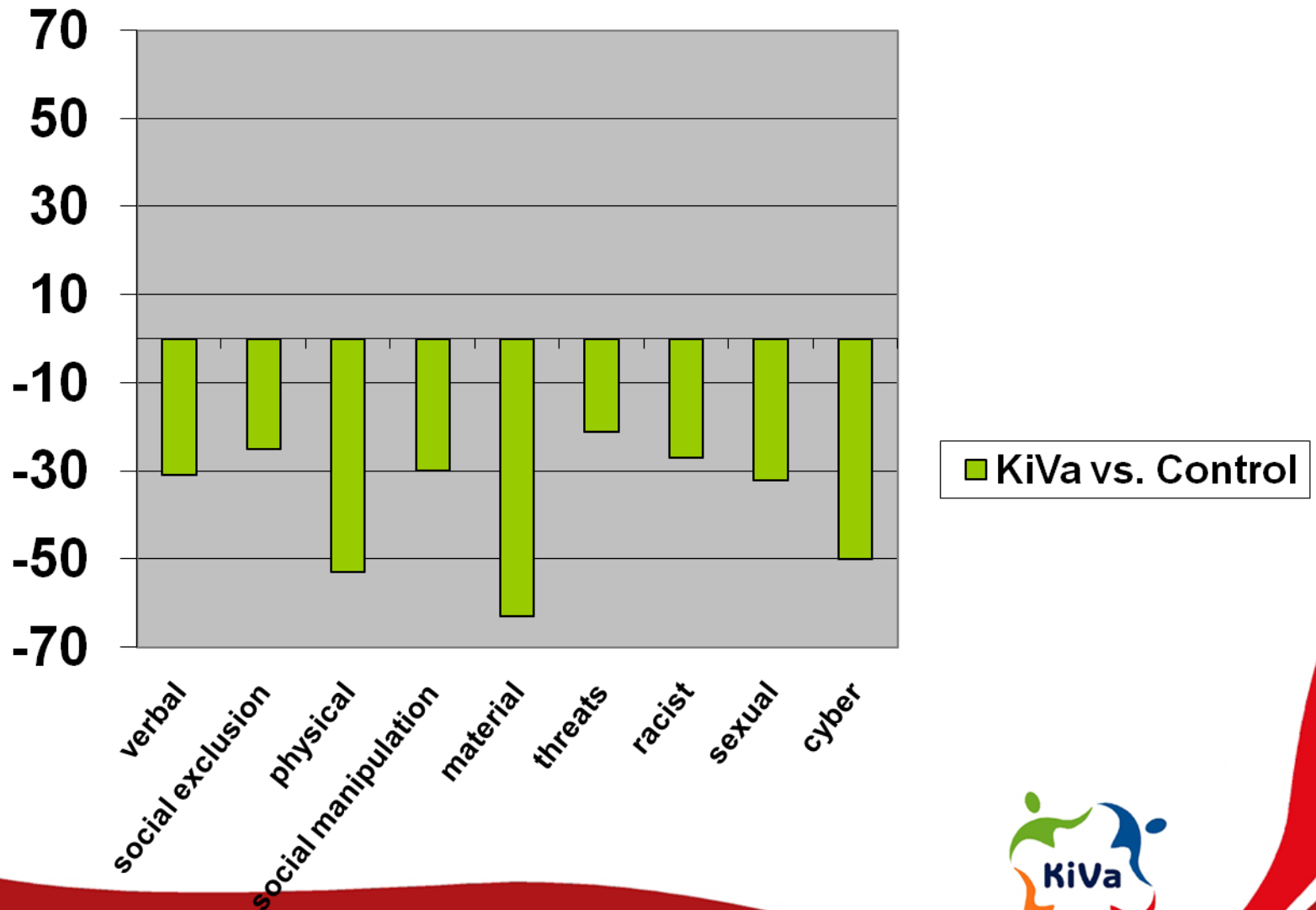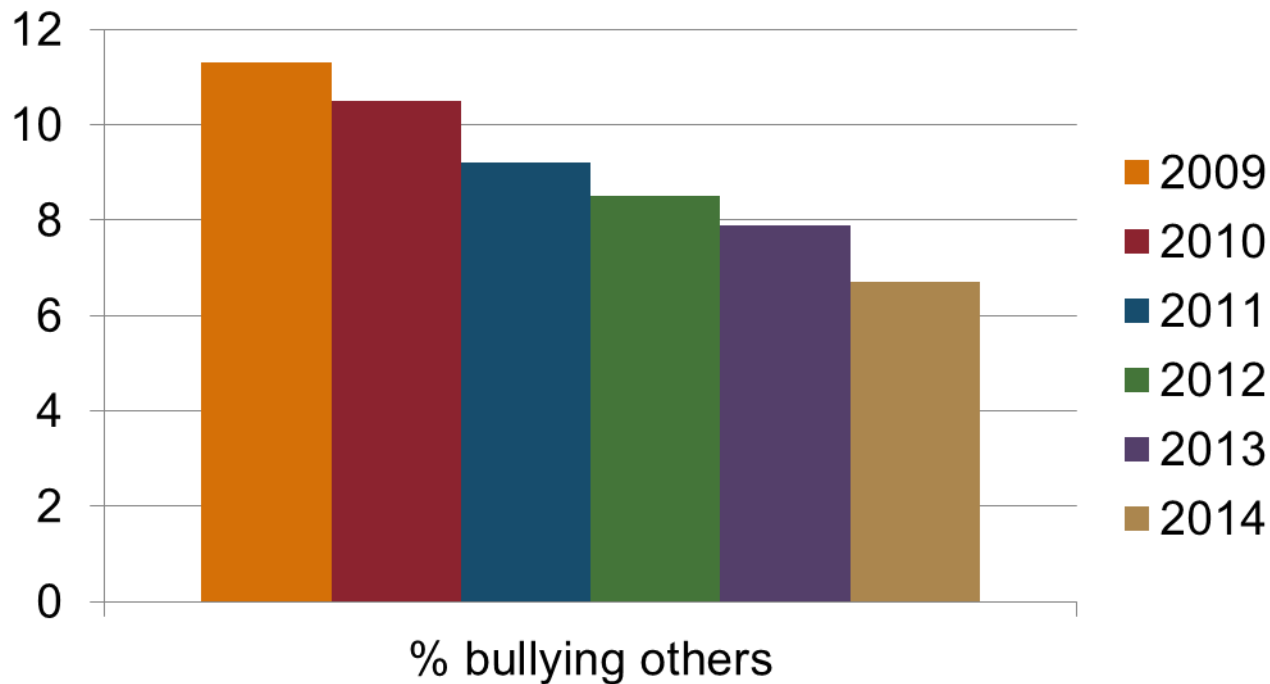KiVa™ team
Clear guidelines for tackling bullying

Changes in being bullied by different forms during one school year

Proportion of students (grades 1-9) who are bullying others; Finnish schools implementing KiVa, 2009-2014

% bullying others

Legend: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

- 2006-2009 Development and evaluation of effectiveness
- 2009: Roll-out in Finland: 1465 schools
- 2010: + 817 schools
- 2011: + 290 schools + Åland Island
- 2012: + 31 schools
- Evaluation study in the Netherlands
- Evaluation study in Delaware, US
- Pilots in Wales, Luxembourg, Sweden
- 2013
- **Evaluation study in Estonia**
- Evaluation study in Italy
- Evaluation study in Wales
- A pilot in Japan
- 2014 The first training for international trainers
- Roll-out in Belgium, in the Netherlands, in the European school network, in New Zealand, in UK…

Implementation challenge

- Even programs or practices that were proven effective do not necessarily lead to good results if not well-implemented

Programs are toolkits

"It is not enough that the hammer is there, unless someone starts hammering"
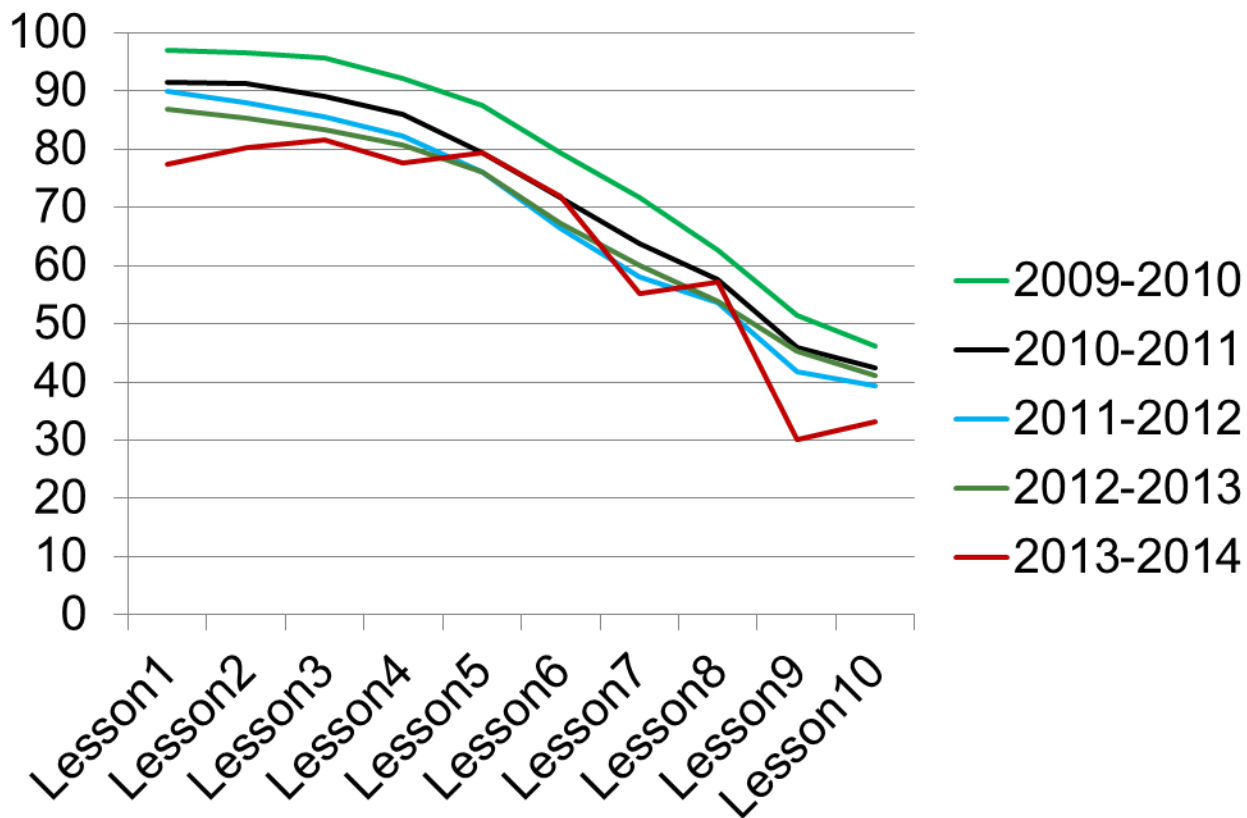
Implementation and sustainability

- Dissemination
- Adoption
- **Implementation**
- **Maintenance**

KiVa lesson implementation, 2009-2014

What predicts good implementation

- Positive beliefs regarding program effects
    - Important for initial implementation
- Principal support for anti-bullying work
    - Key for sustained implementation

Important for sustainability

- Plan for it, from early on!
- Coordination of efforts
- Gathering evidence
- Recognizing best practices
- Support, capacity building

Evidence-based &systematic prevention of bullying is needed

- Negative consequences of bullying are well-known

- "Not all ideas are good ideas"
  - Need to use resources wisely

- Concrete tools are beneficial (even in teaching values)

- Sustanability is a challenge

- Evidence-based prevention of bullying can work, even at the national level

www.kivaprogram.net