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"The David and Goliath Routine can Backfire – Tread Carefully": A Focus-Group Evaluation of the Kia Kaha Anti-Bullying Kit¹

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Abstract:

This article provides an evaluation of Kia Kaha, the New Zealand Police's anti-bullying initiative. Information was generated by using three international focus-groups: (i) a group of Oxford University PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) students; (ii) a group of anti-bullying experts from Adelaide, Australia; and (iii) a group of third-year Education students from Victoria University of Wellington. After analysis of the data, several recommendations for possible improvements were made. These included retaining the bicultural theme but changing the programme, and using information from recent international research to develop a range of anti-bullying tools. It was also underlined that the onus for change should not be placed on the shoulders of the victim of bullying.

The Press of August 30, 1997 reported that Invercargill Coroner Trevor Savage found that "Bullying and victimisation were a significant factor in a 15-year-old... boy's life in the months leading up to his suicide". Matt Ruddenklau was reported to have been a victim of bullying at both Otago Boys' High School in Dunedin and Invercargill's James Hargest High School. Other recent newspaper reports brought to the fore cases of bullying at Hato Paora, a secondary school for Maori boys in Feilding, and at Christchurch's prestigious St Andrew's College (see Long, 1996).

I would suggest such cases are likely to be the tip of a massive iceberg, and the sooner schools are prepared to admit that bullying is

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endemic, the sooner it can be appropriately dealt with. Lind and Maxwell's (1996) study supports the view that bullying is widespread. In a survey of Form 1 and 2 students, bullying was identified as one of the worst of experiences:

... the death of a person close to them was most often mentioned but physical or emotional bullying by other children came second. (p. 5)

In the context of the increase of violence in society in general, the study comes up with a startling assertion. The authors claim that when considered in terms of overall acts of violence, school bullying accounts for a massive proportion. They state that, "... 90% of the incidents of emotional abuse and most of the physical violence between children occurs at school." Specifically, they found 49 percent of respondents reported having been punched, kicked, beaten or hit by children; 23 percent reported having been in a physical fight and 5 percent reported having been hurt or threatened with a weapon.²

What is more, research shows the stereotypical boy-on-boy physical bullying on which the media tends to focus is only one type of bullying, that other types such as psychological/emotional bullying and bullying by exclusion can be as damaging, and bullying also occurs amongst girls.

To date, three major initiatives have been developed in New Zealand to address the issue of school bullying: the Foundation for Peace Studies Aotearoa/New Zealand's *Cool Schools Peer Mediation Programme*, the Special Education Services' *Eliminating Violence – Managing Anger*, and the New Zealand Police's *Kia Kaha: A Resource Kit about Bullying for Students, Teachers and Parents for Standard 3-Form 4*.³

Although *Kia Kaha* has been in existence since 1992, it has not been thoroughly evaluated.⁴ The purpose of this article is to provide a qualitative evaluation of *Kia Kaha*, using focus-group research to suggest some insightful answers to the research questions, "What works in the *Kia Kaha* kit?" and "What improvements can be made?" Since *Kia Kaha* was released, bullying has become a prominent international educational issue. The efforts of researchers and practitioners have been expended on understanding the dynamics and characteristics of bullying in its various forms and in finding ways to deal practically and effectively with it (see, for instance, Olweus, 1993 [Sweden]; Smith & Sharp, 1994, Sharp & Smith, 1994, Cowie & Sharp, 1996, Tattum & Herbert, 1993, Maines & Robinson, 1992, Robinson & Maines 1997, Besag, 1989, 1992 [UK]; Rigby, 1996, Slee, 1997 [Australia]; Rubin &

Pepler, 1989 [Canada]; O'Moore & Hillery, 1989 [Ireland]; and Sullivan, forthcoming 1998 a, b and c [New Zealand]).

This article is structured as follows. It begins with an introduction to the methodology that was developed to research the programme, and then a description of *Kia Kaha* is provided. This is followed by a discussion of the themes and findings that emerged from the research, and some final conclusions and recommendations.

The Methodology

The research relies on the triangulation of three international focus-groups.⁵ The focus-groups were made up of individuals with different and complementary qualities which in combination provided a rich cross-section of perspectives. With the author as facilitator, participants brainstormed, critiqued and evaluated the *Kia Kaha* resource kit. Group One was made up of 12 PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) teacher trainees whom the author tutored while a visiting scholar in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Oxford, England, in 1995. Group Two was composed of six people who were either recognised anti-bullying experts/practitioners or who were carrying out PhD research on bullying. It consisted of two academics, two postgraduate students, a school administrator/teacher and a community police officer. They participated in a two-hour seminar discussion, in May 1996, at the University of South Australia in Adelaide. Group Three was made up of 19 third-year Education students from a Classroom Studies course at Victoria University of Wellington, in Semester 2 of 1996.

I gathered relevant material at each session and made extensive field notes after each focus-group meeting. The first session acted as a quasi pilot-study, as it helped identify the main issues for the second and third sessions and made me feel that a focus-group approach would provide useful information (see also Krueger, 1988). The information from the brainstorming sheets from the second session was compiled, along with the questionnaire responses from the third focus-group.

A Description and Overview of the *Kia Kaha* Resource Kit

Introduction

The *Kia Kaha* programme was developed by the New Zealand Police (with support from Commercial Union Insurance) as part of their Law-

Related Education Programme. The programme is designed to be used for children from Standard 3 to Form 4 (approximately from 9 to 15 years of age). It consists of an attractive boxed set containing a video (14 minutes), a soft-cover booklet which provides an overview of the programme, and instructions for planning and implementation. It also includes explanatory leaflets for parents and caregivers. The kit is provided free of charge to schools. Since its release, around 2000 kits have been distributed. Police Education Officers will give assistance in planning and implementing the programme but do not apply pressure on schools to accept this assistance. From oral reports, it appears that some schools have used the programme in its entirety, that is, they have followed the 8 suggested steps of implementation, whereas others have started from step 5 and used it in classrooms without going through the preliminary stages of involving parents and caregivers. Some schools use the kit as a curriculum resource.

1. The Video

The central focus of *Kia Kaha* is the 14-minute video. This has been professionally produced using local adult actors who take on the roles of a group of intermediate/high school students. The core of the video is five bullying scenarios. Between scenes there are prompts, when questions are asked about various aspects of bullying. There is also a group that gathers around Eddie, the first victim of bullying, after the first scenario, to discuss effective anti-bullying strategies. Wanda Wagford, roving bully reporter, appears on three occasions, and is used as a device for exploring key themes. The bullies are Frankie, Billy and Lucy, the protagonists Eddie, Gemma, Karen, Philip and David. The following is a description of the content of the video.

Scenario One: Frankie Bullies Eddie

In this scenario, Eddie is bullied in the park by Frankie, who is egged on by Billy. Eddie is intimidated, has his hat taken, is thrown to the ground and is threatened.

After this scenario, Eddie discusses with a group of other kids how to deal with this incident.

"What options has Eddie got?" appears on to the screen. This and other questions are prompts for class discussion.

Three options are suggested:

- i. Gemma suggests distracting the bully's attention and taking off.
- ii. Eddie suggests learning a martial art to defend himself, and plays out success and failure scenes with this response.
- ii. Karen suggests being assertive: "Look him right in the eye and say 'What do you want?'"

The question is then asked, "Why do bullies bully?" Wanda Wagford, roving bully reporter, is introduced. She asks Frankie why he picked on Eddie. He replies that it is because Eddie acted scared of him, which made him feel good and tough.

Back at the park the group suggests that Eddie could stay away from the park. All agree that this is not a good solution. Philip then describes his recent bullying experience.

Scenario Two: Bullying Philip in the Canteen

After having pushed past everybody else, Billy bullies Philip in the canteen queue by putting him in a headlock and taking his lunch money. Phil says if it's not at the canteen then it's outside assembly or at the gate after school. "I'm not safe anywhere", he says.

"Who can Philip tell?" appears on the screen.

It is suggested that he could tell:

- i. a teacher ("That's enough of that, Billy Briggs");
- ii. parents (a scenario with supportive parents is presented: "We could call the boy's parents and have a word with them. Don't worry, we won't do anything without talking it over with you first").

Wanda Wagford then visits the home of Billy the bully and find that Billy's older brother is always beating him up and he in turn gets hit by Mum, and Dad always hits her. "So sometimes bullies bully because they are getting bullied too", says Wanda.

She signs off by saying, "Now we're really finding out what makes a bully kick. I mean tick."

Scenario Three: Lucy's Exclusion of Karen

Lucy is mean and critical towards Karen. Lucy invites Karen to her birthday party at 5 o'clock on Saturday but it actually started at 2 o'clock and when Karen arrives the others have all left to go to a movie.

"If you were Karen what would you have done?"

Karen who is Maori seeks advice from her grandfather who tells her: "Well girl. Kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui. Kia kaha is to stand strong. Kia toa is to be a warrior. Kia manawanui is to be brave."

"You mean I should fight Lucy?" Karen asks her grandfather.

"Kaore! Kaore! What it means is to stand up for yourself. Don't let people push you down and make you feel that there's something wrong with you. Do you deserve to be treated like this?"

"No."

"Well then, girl, stand up for yourself."

Karen is assertive when she sees Lucy and Gemma at school on Monday by the bike stand.

Lucy: Where were you on Saturday?

Karen: That was a really mean trick, Lucy.

Lucy: You're so dumb you fell for it, eh Gemma.

Karen: You're always going on at me about being dumb, Lucy. Just because it takes me longer to finish my work than you, that doesn't mean you can treat me like I'm not a real person.

Lucy: What's the matter, can't you take a joke!

Gemma: Karen's right. We have been really mean to her.

Lucy: You stick up for her then, Gemma. See if I care. But you're never coming to another birthday party of mine. (She goes.)

Gemma: I'm sorry, Karen. I didn't really want to do it. I guess I was glad that Lucy was giving you a hard time instead of me. Still friends?

Karen: As long as you promise to treat me like a proper friend.

Gemma: I will. I promise.

Scenario Four: "Everyone in My Class Hates Me and They Pick on Me. When I Go to School it's Really Horrible"

Part 1: David's classroom

David enters the class. Frankie takes his bag and the kids throw it around the room. "Dick, Dick, Dick, Dick", the class chants. David covers his ears.

Part 2: Why?

(Group in the park) "But why do they do it?", someone asks.

"I don't know. I wish I did", says David.

Wanda Wagford visits the classroom to ask the participants why.

Wanda: Excuse me, why don't you give David's bag back to him?

Frankie: Cos he's a jerk. ("Yeh", says girl A next to him.)
 Wanda: By calling him a jerk, how does that make you feel?
 Frankie: Like I'm not a jerk, like I'm cool.
 Wanda: And by calling David a name like jerk does that make it easier to bully him?
 Girl B: Oh yeh. Cause then I can forget that he's probably just like me, you know, feelings and everything.
 Wanda: And what do you get out of bullying David?
 Billy: If I'm in a bad mood or my friends get me really mad, I always know there's one kid in the class I can take it out on. And he won't do anything back.
 Philip: Well, I don't do it as bad as the rest. I feel sorry for David but if I say anything they might get stuck into me.

Part 3: Strategising

"What can David do?"

- i. "You have to show them you're not going to be a victim any more."
- ii. "Don't panic. Stand up straight and look them in the eye."
- iii. "Act like you're not scared."
- iv. "Don't make it easy for them to bully you. Make it hard."
- v. "Yes. Remember. Kia kaha. Stand strong. Be a warrior. Be brave."

Part 4: David's return to the classroom

Frankie unsuccessfully tries to grab David's bag.

David: Don't try to take my bag, and leave me alone.
 Frankie: So who's going to make me?
 Girl A: Yeh, jerk!
 David: You're the jerk if you get your thrills by picking on people.
 Frankie: What are you going to do about it? Fight me?
 David: Don't push me. I'm not afraid of you.
 Frankie (backing down): I've got better things to do anyway.

Scenario Five: Back to the Park, Eddie Stands Up to Frankie

Group in the park:

Eddie (to David): You did it. You stood up for yourself. I might even stand up for myself if I get the chance.

It is suggested that he will because then Frankie and Billy reappear.

Frankie: Still here are you! Want some more?

Billy: Go on, give it to him, Frankie.
 Eddie (to himself): What do I do? Run? Fight? Walk away?
 Frankie: Didn't I say I was going to do you?
 Eddie: Leave me alone. You've got no right to push me around. Leave me alone.
 Frankie: What are you going to do about it?
 Eddie: Try me and find out.
 Frankie (backing down): Next time you'd better watch out.
 Eddie: And give me my hat back!
 Frankie (Throws it at him): It's a stink hat, anyway.
 Billy: Oh come on Frankie. You can take him. He's easy meat.

Friends gather around Eddie, and Billy appears intimidated and runs off after Frankie.

Eddie: Yeh! Kia kaha!

2. The Booklet

The *Kia Kaha* booklet provides a structure for organising an anti-bullying campaign, exercises that relate to the video and a series of strategies that can be used to combat bullying. The video, on the other hand, provides examples of the types of bullying that occur in schools and offers solutions to these. The two components work in a complementary fashion to provide a programme. The pamphlet is a useful addition because it provides information to parents/caregivers and assists the involvement of the community in the programme.

The introduction provides a clear explanation of the rationale, the aim and objectives, the level the kit is aimed at, its place in the curriculum and an explanation of how to use the resource.

In *Section One: Overview of Stages of Implementation*, eight logical steps are suggested. These acknowledge that there is a need to check the awareness and readiness of school staff for the anti-bullying programme. This is then followed by two staff meetings (steps 2 and 3) designed as an overview and introduction to *Kia Kaha* in the first instance, and a planning and preparation meeting to discuss strategies for making the school a safe place. Step 4 is designed to involve the parents in the process. Two suggestions are made: to send a letter home to parents explaining what will be occurring and to hold a parent meeting.

Step 5 is a planning session with teachers. The central mechanism of the programme is the video. This meeting is intended to discuss how

best to introduce students to the video and its concepts. It is suggested that police education officers or visiting teachers could assist with this process and that age-appropriate choices need to be made.

Step 6 is teaching the programme.

Step 7 is evaluating the programme. This step is intended to see how effective the programme has been in changing student behaviour, how effective the school's guidelines and strategies have been, and what impact parents/caregivers had on helping children develop positive interactions.

Step 8 is designed to reinforce learning at intervals. "In order to maintain a school that is free from bullying it will be necessary for teachers to review learning at intervals and to reinforce what has been taught." This could be done by:

- holding regular class discussions about how students are handling bullying;
- choosing some of the activities to do as extensions;
- getting the class to review the guidelines they have set up for keeping their classroom safe;
- setting up role plays to explore incidents of possible bullying that may arise (p. 9).

The final section provides materials and guidance for some of the activities. It consists of three copysheets, a note on how to use role play appropriately and a list of school journal articles that focus on issues about bullying or relate to being assertive or frightened, etc.

Copysheet 1: Plan of Action for Bullies and Victims

This is a five-step plan intended to defuse a situation. The five steps are:

- Stop (Try to keep calm. Take some deep breaths.)
- Think (Convince yourself that you can do something about the situation.)
- Consider the options (Either: Decide what you can do to stop being a bully; or, Decide what you can do to avoid being bullied.)
- Act (Choose the option you feel most comfortable with.)
- Follow up (Decide if this was a good choice for you. Consider how you feel about the way you handled the incident. Talk to someone you trust about how you got on.)

Copysheet 2: Situation Cards

The cards provide a tool for getting kids to brainstorm about the bullying scenarios and to suggest solutions.

Copysheet 3: Billy the Bully

This is a song which makes fun of the bully "character".

Results: the Focus-Groups and Their Findings

Focus-Group One: The Oxford PGCE Students

This group provided a non-New Zealand perspective. (*Kia Kaha* was developed with New Zealand schools in mind, and it was desirable to find out if its principles and processes held up for a non-New Zealand setting).

Although members of the group were trainees rather than experienced teachers, their course was largely classroom-based and they worked with an expert teacher mentor. They were very keen to find ways of dealing effectively with bullying, which was perceived as one of the key issues of concern for them as prospective teachers. I found that both as individuals and as a group they were enthusiastic and their responses were creative and practical.

On October 30, 1995, I spent two hours running a workshop on bullying focused on the *Kia Kaha* kit, with a particular emphasis on the video. Two copies of the kit had been placed in the Education Department library for the students to view for a week beforehand, and they had been asked to prepare for a discussion. Seven students had viewed the video and critiqued it together. One of these students had previously worked at producing videos. A lively discussion ensued, focusing on bullying per se and on the *Kia Kaha* programme in particular. The group's critiquing can be seen in terms of positive and negative responses.

Positive Criticisms

From a positive point of view the group felt that the video was well edited and the specific bully scenarios useful. The script usefully identified the usual type of bullying incidents that occurred. For instance:

- i. the classroom incident involving group dynamics;
- ii. the incident of bullying in the cafeteria and the extortion of money;
- iii. bullying by intimidation in the park, where a bully is supported by at least one other person;

- iv. bullying by exclusion, in this case amongst girls.

Negative Criticisms

- i. It was felt that for the English context, at least, the age range of Standard 3 to Form 4 was wrong and that older children (aged 12-15) are more sophisticated than the intended target audience for the video. The group felt that it was better suited for children in the Standard 3 or 4 (10 to 11 years-old) range, and possibly younger.
- ii. The group considered it inappropriate for adults to portray children, and that this gave an unrealistic representation of a real children's problem. The students felt that the use of humour both trivialised a serious problem and was patronising to the audience.
- iii. They felt similarly that the use of a semi-humorous character, Wanda Wagford, roving bully reporter, did not work as it contributed to the trivialising.

Focus-Group Two: South Australian Bullying Experts and Practitioners

On Tuesday May 21, 1966, at the Underdale Campus of the University of South Australia, I led a seminar with South Australian bullying experts and practitioners to discuss New Zealand anti-bullying initiatives, focusing on *Kia Kaha* in particular. The programme was introduced, participants were given photocopies of the *Kia Kaha* booklet and the video was shown. Everyone was given a sheet of A3 paper to jot down their thoughts and a brainstorming session took place. Because of their expertise, these people were able to make informed comment on the usefulness of the programme as a whole, as well as to evaluate critically the various components of the programme.

Time was spent in analysis, before an open discussion and debate about the programme occurred. Again their critique is presented in terms of positive and negative criticisms.

Positive Criticisms

The positive attributes were:

- i. That *Kia Kaha* is culturally sensitive. Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand and by using the phrase, "Kia Kaha" (be strong), and by including the scene where the Maori girl visits her grandfather and receives advice, the programme clearly acknowledges Maori culture;

- ii. That the way the characters who are victims of bullying discuss what is happening, and their strategies, shows both that the kids have the power to seek and find solutions and also that these examples provide some useful role-modelling;
- iii. That it is important to acknowledge the role that friends play in helping to find solutions and being supportive;
- iv. That the humour is useful because it makes the situation lighter (humour is used well to provide distance);
- v. That the bully reporter works well as a way of linking scenes and developing themes;
- vi. The video is well done and the characters likeable.

Negative Criticisms

1. The Message

- i. The message is that "the only way to meet power is with power." There was concern that children were being made to think that it is necessary to use force in order to succeed.
- ii. The use of threats of violence is not equivalent to standing up for oneself.

2. The Bullies

- i. The bullies are not required to accept any responsibility for their actions.
- ii. The popular image that bullies are cowards and will run away if stood up to is simplistic and often incorrect; many bullies are looking for a fight and are prepared to fight others their own size or smaller, and are certainly not going to back down when they are challenged.
- iii. The bullies and their henchmen are characterised as being unintelligent or "thick". Many are not.
- iv. There is over-representation of the stereotypical physical male bully. There are many other kinds.

3. The Victims of Bullying

- i. The main issue in relation to the victims of bullying is that the onus is seen to be on them to change their behaviour in order to change the bullying. They can talk to teachers or parents but they are the ones who have to be proactive rather than the bullies, teachers or school authorities.

4. Unrealistic Presentation

- i. The video was described as “one dimensional”, meaning that people are generally more complex than those portrayed in the video. In particular, the stereotyping of the boy bullies was seen as unrealistic.
- ii. While humour may have some value, it may also have the effect of trivialising a serious situation. For example, when after interviewing the bully and his family Wanda Wagford states, “Now we’re really finding out what makes a bully kick. I mean tick”.
- iii. It was suggested that some of the scenarios are unrealistic, particularly the last two in which bullies back down when boys adopt *Kia Kaha*, and in the cafeteria where the bully has free rein.

Neutral Criticisms

- i. Some of the messages are clear and useful but it is not made clear that it takes time to develop both the skills and the confidence to learn effectively to counter bullying.
- ii. It is good to be assertive but not to have to meet the bully head on.

Suggestions for Improvement

- i. Children should act in the video.
- ii. There should be a pause after the solutions in the video to see if children watching have any other solutions. Developing a process of modelling the various solutions (role playing) would be useful, and would aid the group solution process that is used in the video (which was seen as being good role modelling).
- iii. Scenarios that demonstrate how subtle bullying occurs could be developed.
- iv. In the video, there are some questions posed to focus discussion, and it was suggested that this technique be developed further, that is, a range of further relevant questions would help to structure and develop important themes that are not guaranteed to be brought out in reactive non-directed discussion.

Focus-Group Three: Third-year Education Students at VUW

In the second semester of 1996, I gave a two-hour lecture on bullying to a group of third-year Education students in Educ 308 Classroom Studies. The lecture mainly focussed on *Kia Kaha*, and students were asked to answer some questions about the scheme as well as to discuss ideas about bullying generally.⁶

A bullying questionnaire was administered, three questions of which focused on *Kia Kaha*. Eleven respondents were female, 8 were males, 3 were a “present or past teacher”, 6 were “training to be a teacher” and 10 were “not a teacher nor training to be one”. This group therefore provided the perspectives of practising teachers, students in teacher training or students studying education. They all had some awareness of current educational classroom issues and could comment with some knowledge on the usefulness of any bullying scheme. As New Zealanders they could ascertain whether the schemes were applicable to New Zealand.

They were then asked to answer the following questions:

- i. *What do you think worked well for the Kia Kaha programme?*

Thirty-five suggestions were made, and from these three categories emerged: personal usefulness, group usefulness and general usefulness.

Personal Usefulness

Victims of bullying

At a personal level it was suggested that victims of bullying were being encouraged in the video to take responsibility, that teaching children to be assertive, to stand tall, was positive/productive. The programme showed that there are things children can do about bullying. It was also suggested that the skills acquired through such a programme are transferable to other areas of life, usefully addressing issues of self-esteem, peer pressure and effective decision-making.

It was suggested that a variety of constructive options (and steps to take) for “the victim” “to take action” and respond to bullying are provided.

Bullies

The technique of talking to the bullies to find out why they did things was useful.

Group Usefulness

From a group perspective, the kit showed that the students themselves could take matters in hand, that they were communicating with each other, acting as a group, initiating responses and talking about what to do. Further, that it was not necessary for adult intervention but that if needed, getting help is OK.

General Usefulness

The kit was regarded as useful because it provided a list of, and potential contact with, other resources and agencies; and because it was developed for, and was relevant to, the local New Zealand context. In addressing bullying in the manner it did, it defined what is and is not acceptable and exposed the dynamics of bullying as “silly”.

The scenarios that described bullying were realistic and easily understandable. The preventative nature of the kit was commendable, as was the fact that it attempted to show why bullies bully.

ii. *If you were designing an anti-bullying programme, what changes would you make to it?*

The philosophical basis of *Kia Kaha*

It was widely felt that the emphasis on “dealing-to” the bullies was inappropriate. As one respondent stated, “the David and Goliath routine can backfire – tread carefully.” Physical bullying is arguably portrayed inaccurately in the video, and it was felt that while *Kia Kaha* is a good stand to take, in many situations it will not actually protect the person who is being victimised.

Bullying is serious

There was an overwhelming sense in this group that the tone of the video in having an element of lightness and humour (one student used the word farcical) is inappropriate. The points being made, therefore, were that:

- there is a need to reinforce the seriousness of the topic;
- the exaggerated humour needs to be dropped.

Attempting to meet the needs of too wide an age-range

It was suggested that whereas the kit is pitched right for younger children, it is too simple for older kids and further that it is too ambitious to try to design one programme for such a wide age-range.

Child actors

Most people also felt that the video would have been more effective if children had been used rather than adult actors.

Improvements

It was felt to be important to underline that there are more ways of dealing with bullying than standing up to the bully, such as walking away.

One suggestion was that there needed to be an equal emphasis on female bullying.

There were several responses suggesting a need both to make bullies aware of the effects of what they are doing, and to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable behaviour: “It is important to ensure that the initiative to change behaviour is not left totally in the hands of the victim and that steps to taking responsibility by the bully are initiated.”

It was suggested when children discuss bullying in class that the opportunity to act out various roles – role playing as a bully, victim and onlooker – may be useful in increasing their understanding of the dynamics and feelings of bullying from several perspectives. “The inclusion of role-playing activities may ‘enhance practice’ at implementing bullying options.”

Another suggestion was to make things relate to the real world of participants, “to let children tell of their bullying experiences in their own words.”

It was suggested that more realistic solutions and follow-ups than the ones on the video should be provided, more “real life responses”. For instance, perhaps it could show how to deal with a situation when a child tries to deal with the bullying and is unable to. What strategies can be developed to deal with this?

It was further suggested that a “whole school” approach may be better, in which teachers are more accessible to bullied kids and the pressure on the peer group to solve the problems is reduced.

iii. Any other comments

The overall feeling of this group was that *Kia Kaha* was too confrontational, that while it is useful for victims of bullying to stand tall and move from fear towards confidence, in real situations it is often very difficult to confront someone bent on physical intimidation and violence and make them back down.

Discussion

The rationale and aims of the objectives expressed in the introduction to *Kia Kaha* (p. 2) are excellent, and should provide the basis for

answering the questions, “What works in the *Kia Kaha* kit?” and “What improvements can be made?”

In the introduction to *Kia Kaha*, it is stated that bullying is recognised as a problem that occurs both in the New Zealand school and in the workplace, and that it can seriously undermine the quality of life of those who are subjected to it. The booklet asks the questions:

So what makes some people good targets for someone who wants to frighten or coerce them? What makes some people want to use strength or power in inappropriate ways? How can both the victim and bully be encouraged to change their behaviour so that bullying can be stopped?

Kia Kaha recognises that change will not come about easily, and that a number of approaches will be needed. Therefore material has been prepared for students to work through in the classroom, for teachers to employ to create environments where bullying will not flourish, and for parents and caregivers to use to help their children develop positive social interactions (p. 2). Leading logically from this rationale is the following stated aim:

Students, parents, caregivers and teachers will recognise that bullying is unacceptable behaviour in both the school and wider community; they will develop skills and strategies to stop bullying and replace it with acceptable behaviour.

This then leads to seven objectives:

- to give victims the skills necessary to choose options to overcome bullying and to put them into practice;
- to enable students, parents, caregivers and teachers to define bullying and to recognise why some people bully and why others condone or support it;
- to enable students, parents, caregivers and teachers to recognise what behaviour makes someone a potential victim and how this can be overcome;
- to encourage bullies to acknowledge their bullying behaviour and to consider alternative ways of behaving which would allow them to enjoy positive social interactions;
- to provide teachers, parents and caregivers with ideas and options so that they can help and support young people who may be victims;

- to provide teachers, parents and caregivers with ideas and options so they can help the bully adopt more socially acceptable behaviour;
- to give adults ideas on ways of creating an environment where there is no payoff for bullying.

As well as having a practical application, *Kia Kaha* may be used as a curriculum resource in schools. In social studies it may help students to explore how people think, feel and act when confronting a bully or when resisting the temptation to bully, and in relation to concepts of control, bravery, alternative behaviour, positive behaviour and personal safety. It may also be used as a resource for building self-esteem, keeping safe, relating to others and responding to community health issues. Within the law-related education programme curriculum, it embodies the themes of keeping safe and exercising rights and responsibilities.

The adoption of *Kia Kaha* as both a concept and a title is good. The phrase is easily remembered, it has a ring to it, it sounds strong with its alliteration and clear vowels. At a time when Aotearoa/New Zealand is acknowledging its biculturalism, the use of the Maori concept of *kia kaha* is an acknowledgment of the importance of Maori knowledge and culture within our society.

Kia Kaha is attractively packaged and has immediate appeal. The booklet is arguably the strongest part of the programme although the video tends to attract wider comment. The booklet is logically and very well ordered. It provides the basis for introducing not only *Kia Kaha* but also any other appropriate approach to bullying.

The video is useful for the following reasons:

- i. it has been professionally produced, with a good standard of acting and dramatic arrangement;
- ii. the scenarios it presents are representative of what could happen and could be useful as a focus for discussion;
- iii. the portrayal of both the bullying behaviour and the behaviour of the victim is useful;
- iv. the suggestions that a group of students can identify both how to deal with a bullying situation (problem solving), and that the individuals can act as a group to protect themselves, are useful;
- v. the use of a Maori concept as a solution throughout is a positive affirmation of Maori culture;
- vi. the video identifies psychological bullying amongst girls as a form of bullying.

There are several clear concepts and ideas that emerge from the *Kia Kaha* video. These are as follows:

- i. That if individuals act together as a group this has several advantages:
 - from group discussions solutions may be found to a bullying problem;
 - if a group works in a combined way it can have more power than one or two bullies, and the group can protect its members from being bullied;
 - if the group works together it can institute norms that say that bullying is wrong.
- ii. That if a child is being bullied then this is a problem that can be solved.
- iii. That if a child is a bully then that child also has a problem.
- iv. That children need to be taught/supported in being assertive, to stand up for themselves – *kia kaha*.
- v. That although the bully(ies) and victim(s) are the main players in a bullying scenario, others in the group, the bystanders, play a role in supporting the bullying because it makes them feel good (have power) or because they are aware that they could be the alternate victim (self-protection).

The scenarios are illustrative of some bullying behaviour, and involve most of the players in various roles: bullies, victims and bystanders. The nature of bullying amongst the boys is represented in the video as physical – the stealing of a hat and the intimidation that this involves, the taking of lunch money, the throwing of Philip's belongings around the room. The one incident in relation to girls shows psychological bullying based on exclusion and mean behaviour.

The three discussion groups reflected varying perspectives of *Kia Kaha*. However, some key themes emerged that were frequently cited in all three, many of which are present in the bullying literature.

A principal concern is that relating to the issue of assertiveness within the bullying syndrome. Many participants in the focus-groups felt that *Kia Kaha* places the onus on the victim to adopt an assertive stance to combat bullying. Thus, it is suggested, the "fault" lies with the victim who is not assertive enough, rather than with the bully. As George Robinson stated when I interviewed him, "If the child could

have stood up for himself he would have done." The bully is the one whose behaviour is unacceptable, yet it is the victim who is expected to change.

This is a complex point. One participant explained how she had done self-defence classes after a particularly vicious physical and sexual attack. After the classes, she could consciously adopt a "tall" stance, balanced and centred with clenched fists, if she felt nervous or afraid. She was aware that this may not have deflected another attack or prepared her to take on an assailant assertively or aggressively. However, she explained that it made her feel "better, taller and stronger" and therefore less vulnerable. She thought that it may be possible that a similar change for victims of bullying may give them some psychological armour which may, in turn, deflect the bullying behaviour which they have habitually attracted.

Others appreciated this view and thought it had some validity. However, they (and she) felt that any suggestions within *Kia Kaha* which put responsibility onto the victim to end the bullying were wrong.

There was a feeling that *Kia Kaha* advocates meeting power with power. In the second-to-last and last scenarios, the solution involves the victim being prepared to fight the bully. Several participants objected to this. There is a very fine line for young people between assertiveness and aggressiveness, and *Kia Kaha* in trying to make the distinction arguably treads an even finer line between the two. Some felt that there is an implication that a victim needs to learn to bully in order to survive, and thus to rise to the top of the bully-victim heap. Any such promotion of aggression was wholeheartedly rejected by those in the discussion groups.

It was suggested by Professor Ken Rigby in the second focus-group discussion (and in Rigby, 1996) that the bullies are presented too stereotypically, as cowards and as stupid. Consequently, it was considered that several of the "solutions" are unrealistic. Very often people who bully are prepared to fight, and are experienced and successful fighters – contrary to the popular myth of the Davids of the world standing up to the Goliaths. Many participants in the discussions had experience of bullies who would not have backed down, but would have hit out with even more anger in the face of the additional provocation of a victim trying to turn warrior. What is more, when *kia kaha* is explained by the Maori kaumatua when his granddaughter, Karen, asks if she should fight, she is told no, *kaore*. According to this advice, she acts correctly, but the boys go beyond this advice. Or is she

forbidden because she is a girl?

The concept of *kia kaha* itself is clearly appropriate in some situations, such as that involving Karen and Lucy. But here there was never a threat of violence, and a good resolution was found. The notion of *kia kaha* may also give the victim psychological height, confidence and a sense of strength which may deflect negative behaviours, as the woman who was attacked explained. As an ideal it is good and laudable, but generally participants felt that the responsibility within the programme as a whole fell too heavily on the victim, and that meeting aggression with aggression may cause the violence to escalate.

Instead it was felt that a wider approach be undertaken which considers current international developments, but also keeps in mind the New Zealand context and the useful aspects of *Kia Kaha*.

One of the most successful approaches in the United Kingdom is the No-Blame Approach, which was developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson (see Robinson & Maines, 1997). Originally, they started out with an approach entitled Stamp Out Bullying. With an expansion of knowledge in the bullying area and with their own increased experience in dealing with bullying situations, their thinking evolved, and the No-Blame Approach was the result. The *Kia Kaha* programme may be in a similar state. The New Zealand Police were pioneers in developing the *Kia Kaha* approach and set the standard, but my sense is that, as with Maines and Robinson, it is now time to re-consider in the light of new knowledge and experience.

Community police officers are happy to come to schools to introduce the programme, either in its entirety or in any capacity that the school requests. It was felt in focus-groups two and three that the police are possibly not the best people to bring the programme into schools. While they may administer it, it may be better to have others carry out the implementation. Smith and Sharp's research indicates that it is only when a programme is carried out fully and embraced by the school that it is really effective. The Police do not want to seem pushy, and therefore adopt what could be regarded as a neutral approach that from a process point of view seems not to be ideal. Furthermore, *Kia Kaha* is different from the Police's other two major initiatives, D.A.R.E. and Keeping Ourselves Safe, in that the first is an anti-drug programme in the best interests of all students, and the second is about keeping children safe from sexual abuse both within their families and outside them. Bullying is more difficult because it is about particular dynamics within the school and how individuals respond to those dynamics. It

may need to be handled with more consistency and subtlety, and implemented by people other than uniformed police as part of a total package.

Conclusion

Generally, it was felt that *Kia Kaha* was good in its Maori/bicultural focus, its New Zealand setting and its logical organisation and attractive presentation. The combination of booklet and video and the kit as a whole were seen as useful and practical. Their applicability throughout the curriculum was also appreciated.

Although by no means exhaustive, the bullying scenarios in the video present some of the stereotypical types of bullying that occur, e.g., the bullying of a smaller, weaker person by a bully who is supported by a friend, the intimidation of a smaller, weaker boy and the theft of his lunch money, girls' exclusion of other girls from their group, and the tendency for individuals to support bullying because they do not think of how hurtful it is for the victim, or because they want to avoid being victimised themselves. These could be useful as prompts, and as a focus for discussion and finding ways of solving bullying.

While most participants agreed that the scenarios covered a reasonable range of bullying behaviour, they also thought the solutions needed revision, with the removal of the emphasis on the victims having to find the solutions.

It was felt that a programme similar to the one the police have established with *Kia Kaha* be developed, with a similarly useful multi-media pack, and marketed throughout schools for a complete implementation programme.

Recommendations

1. *Kia Kaha* was an appropriate response to a challenge in 1992. Before re-designing *Kia Kaha*, it would be desirable to investigate the many new responses to this problem which have been developed internationally. Many of these schemes have been fine-tuned as people have wrestled with the issues, and therefore a full understanding of the scholarship is necessary before *Kia Kaha* can be revised.
2. The idea of being assertive, of standing up for oneself, as suggested in the *Kia Kaha* programme, is theoretically laudable. However, to

do this in a situation of crisis such as in the boy-bullying scenarios in the video is inappropriate, as in real life this could result in an escalation of the bullying or serious injury. An important part of any bullying scheme would be to provide the opportunity for victims of bullying to take “defensive-driving” lessons.

On the other hand, in the instance of girl bullying as described in the *Kia Kaha* video, the assertiveness of the girl in a physically non-threatening situation is an effective way of handling a situation that was not likely to escalate physically.

Thus, it is suggested that a revised *Kia Kaha* change its emphasis from placing the onus on the victim, to giving at least equal responsibility to the bully and cohorts.

3. If a new video is developed, the bicultural and New Zealand-based focus should be retained. Children should be used rather than adult actors.
4. The scenarios presented could be re-used as the basis for group discussion and as a way of raising awareness and finding solutions. However, the solutions presented are not always useful or practical and should be replaced.
5. If a programme is developed, it should be offered completely or not at all, so that whole school implementation is possible.
6. Bullying is not humorous or trivial, and should not appear to be made so in any of the kit materials.
7. Within the kit there should be some materials to aid in teacher training in dealing with bullying and supporting the implementation of the programme. A useful suggestion is to make positive contact with parents and community members from New Zealand’s various ethnic groups, by sending letters about the kit home in appropriate languages.
8. The new *Kia Kaha* should develop a better understanding of the range of anti-bullying techniques with a wider range of solutions, involving a whole school approach. The programme should be based on a series of strategies which are adaptable to any given situation so that a toolbox approach is developed: if the 16mm spanner is too small, use the 18mm spanner.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the following people and institutions: Victoria University of Wellington for supporting my sabbatical leave in 1995-96; the President and Fellows of Wolfson College, Oxford, for electing me to the Charter Fellowship in Human Rights, which enabled me to examine British anti-bullying scholarship and initiatives; the Director, Professor Richard Pring, and members of the Department of Educational Studies of the University of Oxford where I was a visiting scholar, in particular Dr David Phillips who shared his tutorial group with me; and the University of South Australia in Adelaide which provided me with a visiting fellowship for May 1996. Specifically, in terms of their contributions to this small piece of research, I would like to thank the PGCE students whom I tutored in Oxford; in Adelaide, Adjunct Associate Professor Ken Rigby and Ms Barbara Leckie (University of South Australia), Dr Phillip Slee and Larry Owens (Flinders University), Mr Rob Loiolo (South Australia Department of Education) and Mr Bill Bates (Adelaide Police Department); and students in the 1996 Educ 308 Classroom Studies course at Victoria University of Wellington. I would like to thank Gill Palmer, Owen Sanders and Maurice Cheer of the New Zealand Police for inviting me to evaluate *Kia Kaha*. This article represents an initial formative evaluation of *Kia Kaha*, and a final version will be published later in 1998.
2. The findings are based on a sample of 249 Form 1 and 2 students. These results should be treated with caution as the survey involved participants “opting in” with a resultant low rate of return. The authors state that although they wrote to all parents of potential subjects, only 23% agreed to their children’s participation, 4% did not and 73% did not reply. The authors rightly concluded that their results are not therefore representative, and cannot be taken to indicate incidence and prevalence in schools, although they can suggest patterns.
3. For an overview of these three programmes, see Sullivan (1998b, in press). For an evaluation of *Eliminating Violence*, see Moore et al. (1997). For an assessment of *Cool Schools*, see the Radford Group (1996). See also Duncan and Stanners (1996) and *Cool Schools: Towards Non-Violent Conflict Resolution (Broadsheet, 1994)*. For further useful information, see also *Taskforce on Solutions to Violence in Schools* (1993).
4. Three interesting postgraduate studies (see Cleary [1993], Phelps [1995] and Bell [1997]) have been done on *Kia Kaha*. Bell’s very useful study was only discovered at the end of this evaluation process, and comparisons between the studies have not been made. Although Bell’s foci are

somewhat different, her conclusions are very similar to those of the present investigation.

5. Focus-group research allows the exploration of an area of interest or concern whereby a group of people work cooperatively to develop in an action-based fashion some possible answers to research questions of concern. This approach can be used to examine a programme, like *Kia Kaha*, that has been used for a number of years (in this case, six), that is fairly well known, and in which there may be flaws that need to be addressed. There may also be a need to attempt to improve the programme, because of the passage of time, but insufficient funding may be available to run a full-scale evaluation. (It would be useful, for instance, to develop a process of introducing the programme in a variety of school settings, utilising control group/experimental group comparisons and carrying out pre- and post-test analyses.) A focus-group approach does not produce either the hard data or measures of significance that can generate assurances of validity and reliability for funding bodies; however, it can produce insightful answers in terms of themes, content, relevance and issues of contemporary scholarship that a more formal evaluation may not be able to provide.
6. Besides focusing on *Kia Kaha*, the students were also introduced to the No Blame approach which was developed in the United Kingdom by Barbara Maines and George Robinson. This inevitably informed their comments on *Kia Kaha*.

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