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From NGO Initiative to Strategic Partnership with the State

The Story of Launching the KiVa Program and Scaling its Implementation
in Estonia Over the Past 13 Years

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BULLYING-FREE SCHOOL FOUNDATION, ESTONIA

2026-04-08

VILNIUS



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CONTEXT

- Very good academic results (e.g. PISA: world top)
- Teachers are highly qualified
(Master's degree)
- Autonomy - the national core curriculum leaves room for local variation and teacher-based decisions
 - incl. the principles of a good learning environment...

PISA, 2022:

	Science score 2022	
Above the OECD average	Singapore	561
	Japan	547
	<i>Macao (China)</i>	543
	<i>Chinese Taipei</i>	537
	Korea	528
	Estonia	526
	<i>Hong Kong (China)*</i>	520
	Canada*	515
	Finland	511
	Australia*	507
	New Zealand*	504
	Ireland*	504



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CONTEXT

The other side of the coin:

also high in mental health problems and youth suicides...

Estonia has remarkably high levels of school bullying and victimization (HBSC, 1992-2022; PISA 2022 etc.) – **every 5th to 3rd student has experienced victimization recently!**



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BULLYING

HARM

INTENTIONAL

REPEATED



POWER
IMBALANCE

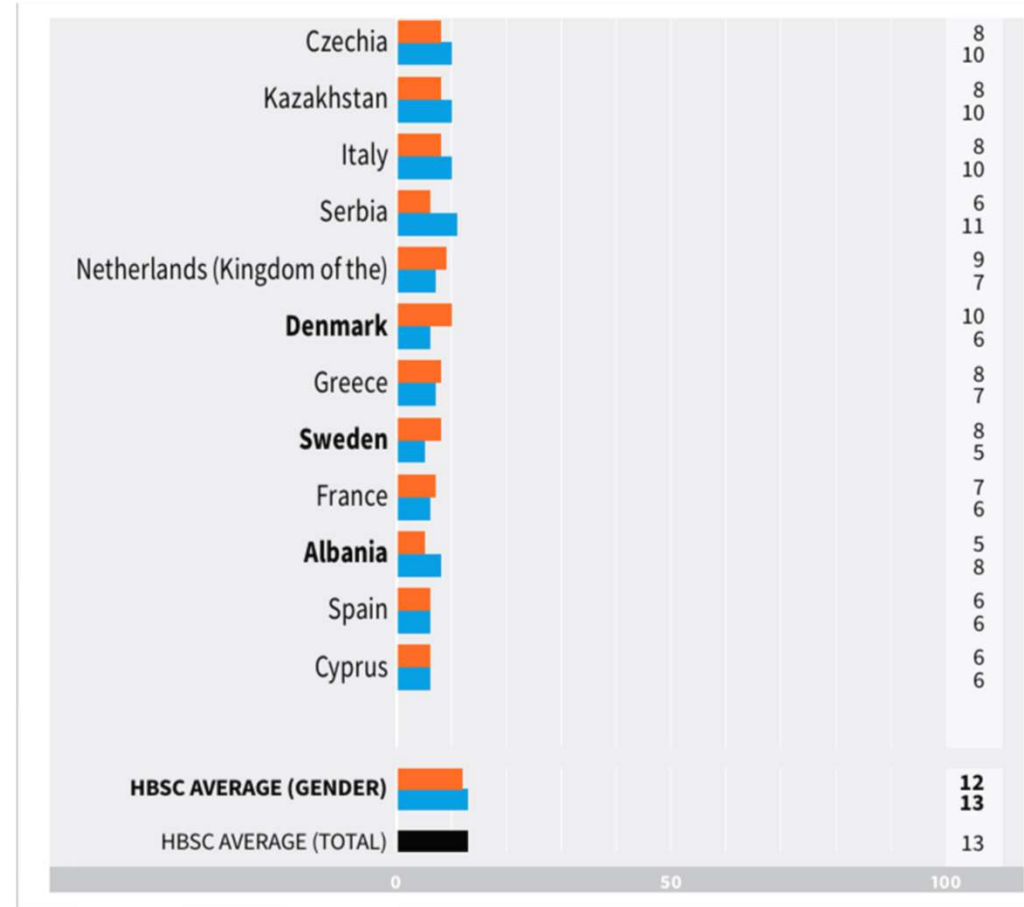
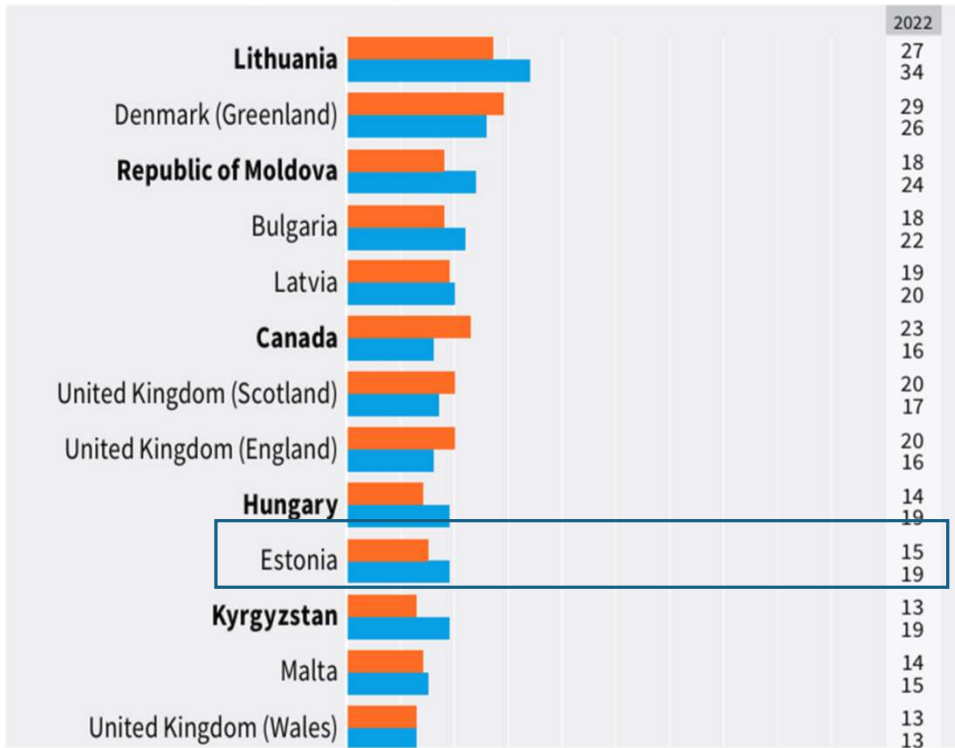
VICTIMIZATION

Olweus, 2013

Bullying: being bullied

11-year-olds who have been bullied at school at least 2-3 times a month in the past couple of months

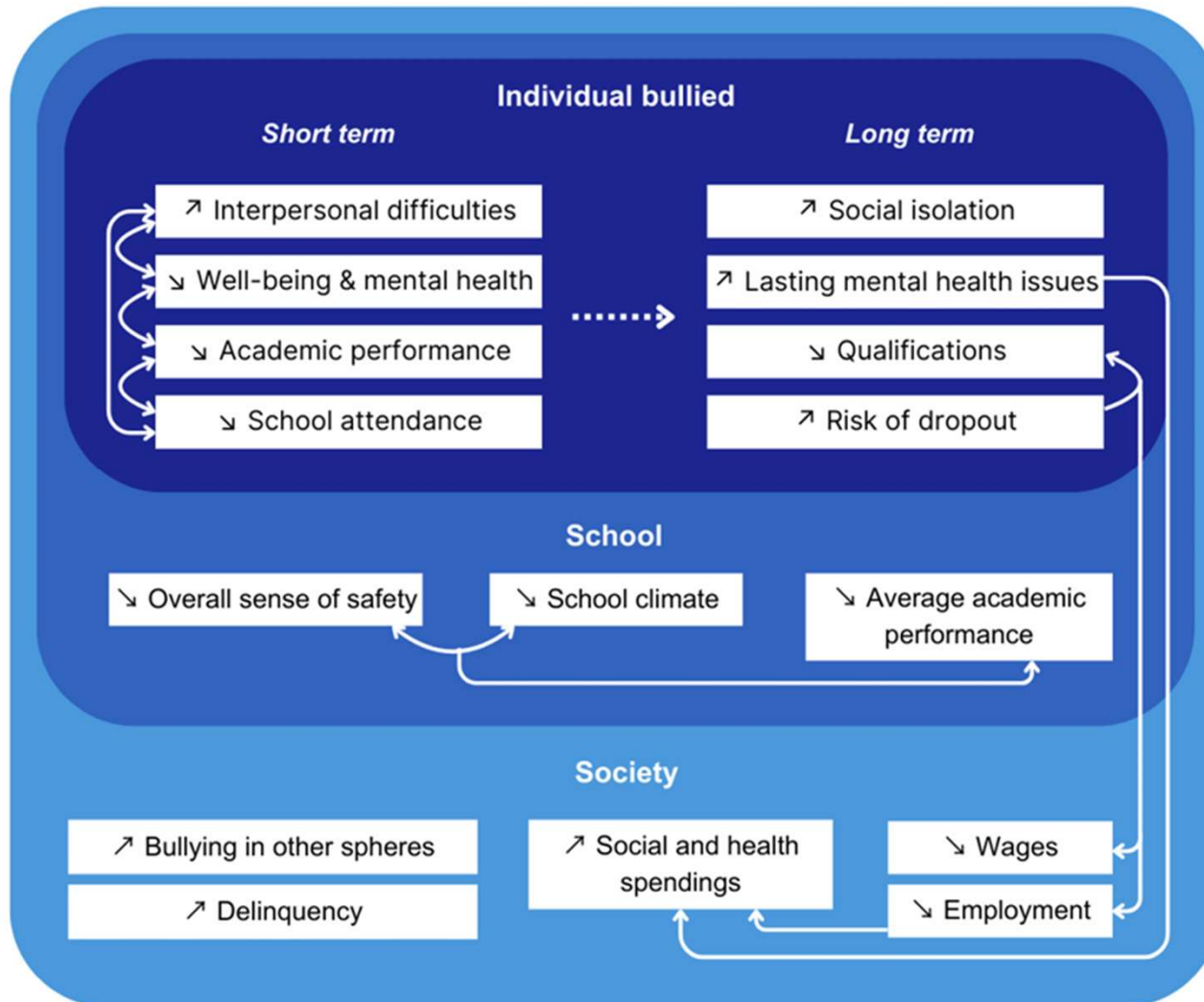
GIRLS (%) 
BOYS (%) 



HBSC 2021/2022 Survey

Figure 3.1. From individual harm to societal costs: mapping the potential impacts of bullying

SERIOUS
HARM IN
INDIVIDUAL,
SCHOOL,
SOCIETAL
LEVEL





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BULLYING-FREE SCHOOL FOUNDATION est. 2012

MISSION:
to create a safe and caring
educational journey for
Estonian children by
preventing and stopping
bullying together.

1. Using an evidence base
KiVa Program



Start: 2013

20 

4200 

Now: 2026

125 

50 000 

Future: 2035

200 

75 000 



2. Pushing for a public
awareness, political priority
and consensus on this topic.

Cooperation:
4 ministries + Anti-
Bullying Coalition

In strategic
documents:
mental health
promotion and
violence
prevention

Media
campaigns

Resources



Coordinated activities
Annual communication



PREVENTION

KiVa curriculum:

- teacher manuals, lesson plans
- printed and virtual resources
- e-learning games



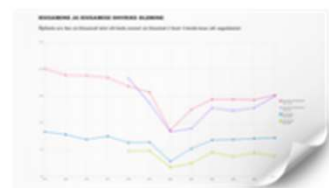
MONITORING



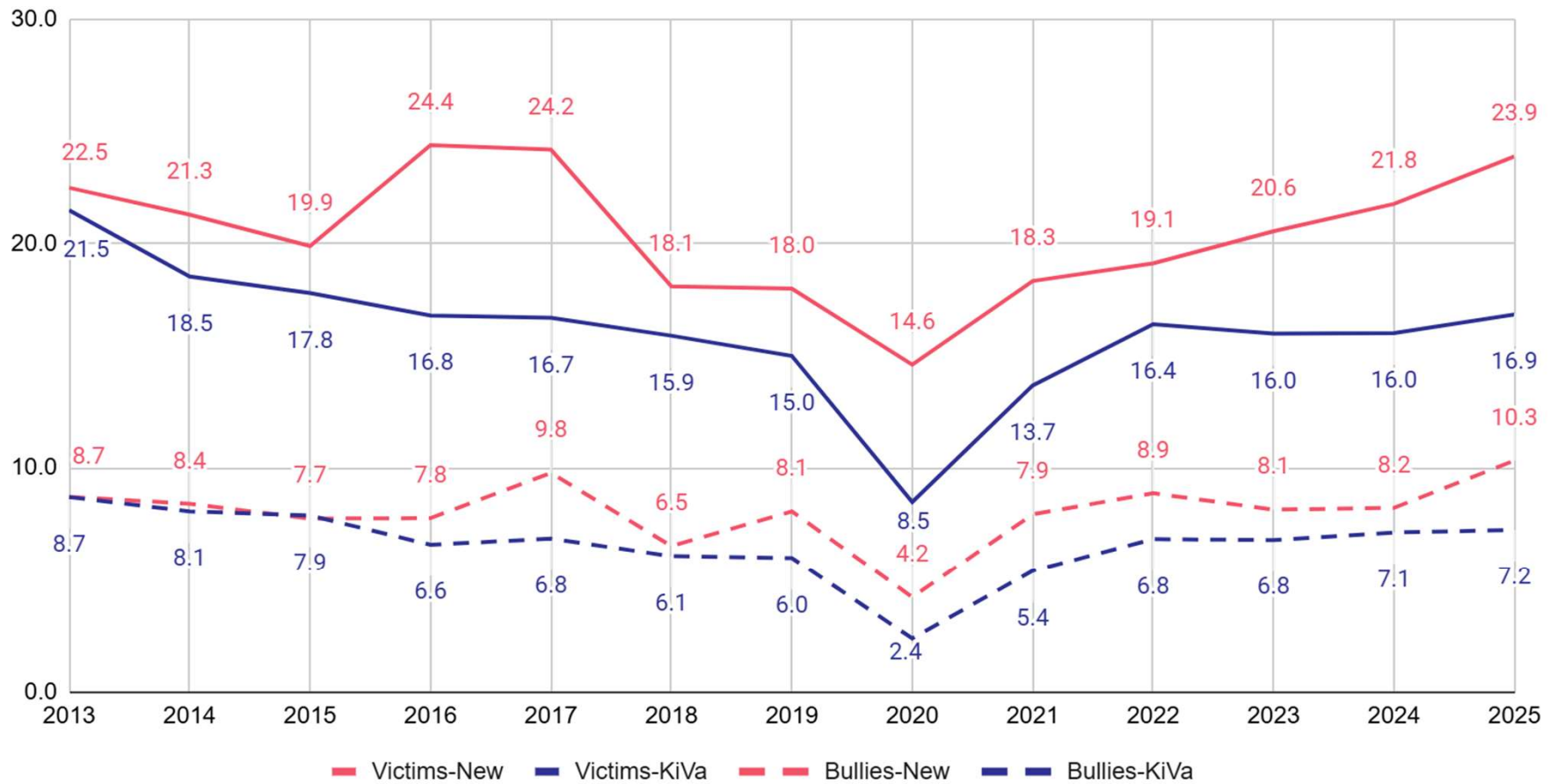
INTERVENTION



KiVa-team
Intervention procedures



Prevalence of victims and bullies in KiVa- and New schools, Grades 1-6





LOCAL ADAPTATIONS:

TRANSLATED & ADAPTED MATERIALS

PREIMPLEMENTATION TRAINING: CYCLE OF 4 DAYS

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT: MENTORING, WEB TRAINING RESOURCES

COMMUNITY AND COMPETENCE BUILDING: SUMMER AND WINTER SCHOOLS,
REGULAR COVISION MEETINGS

IMPLEMENTATION QUALITY – ASSESSMENT, CERTIFICATION, AWARDS



NOT A STRAIGHT ROAD...

- SCAFFOLDS: POLICIES, REGULATIONS
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, RESPONSIBILITY
- UNDERSTANDING OF EVIDENCE BASED PREVENTION
- KNOW-HOW: WHAT WORKS
- AVAILABLE RESOURCES
- FUNDRAISING



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
SINCE 2019

EXPERT
ORGANIZATION





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THANK YOU!

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Bullying-Free School Foundation

www.kiusamisvaba.ee