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**SWOVA's "Peace Kids" Social and Emotional Learning Program
Assessment of Pilot Project in Classrooms, 2013-14**

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Introduction and Background

SWOVA is a community-based organization located in the Gulf Islands of British Columbia (BC School District 64) with a 15-year history of developing and delivering violence prevention programs for youth in public schools both locally and provincially.

SWOVA's programs in past years have focused on youth aged 13 to 18. The organization's very successful four-year "Respectful Relationships" skill-building program has been delivered to all students in the Gulf Islands School District of BC (SD64) in grades 7 through 10 for over a decade. In addition, each year SWOVA's staff train a "youth team" of older students to assist the adult facilitators in delivering the R+R program to the younger students, to deepen their understanding of violence prevention in the context of systemic violence in Canadian society, and to practice healthy relationship skills in their group.

In response to requests from school and community partners, and also as a result of their own recognition of the importance of engaging pre-teens in social skill development as part of comprehensive education for violence prevention and preparation for the Respectful Relationships program to come in grades 7 to 10, SWOVA sought and received funding in 2013-14 from the Vancouver Foundation, the Victoria Foundation and the Salt Spring Foundation to develop and test a pilot program aimed at children in grades 4, 5 and 6.

Called "Peace Kids", the development of this new program encompassed five steps:

- Needs assessment
- Curriculum development
- Pilot testing in 10 classes, reaching approximately 200 students
- Curriculum revision
- Teachers' resource manual.

Funding included a small allocation for independent evaluation of the classroom pilot testing phase, which is the subject of this report.¹

Peace Kids Program design

The Peace Kids program begins the attitude and skill development which is taken up in greater length and depth by the Respectful Relationships program in later grades. Its goal is to introduce the positive, peaceful relationship traits of respect for difference and diversity by fostering skills such as reflective listening, self-awareness and empathy, the ability to identify and work with strong feelings, cooperation and conflict resolution in the early grades.

¹ Reports on other aspects of program development are available from info@SWOVA.org.

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The starting point for the pilot program was the development of a curriculum of four interactive workshop sessions tailored for each of grades 4, 5 and 6. The sessions covered a range of topics, with an array of age-appropriate exploratory activities outlined for each one:

Grade 4

- Session 1: Let Peace Begin with Me—Planting the seeds of peace
- Session 2: Building Emotional Intelligence
- Session 3: Cultivating the Attitude of Gratitude
- Session 4: Peace in Times of Trouble—How to address bullying

Grade 5

- Session 1: Becoming a Peace Keeper—Getting to know the leader within
- Session 2: Peace Begins with Truly Authentically Listening Deeply
- Session 3: Hearing Different Perspectives
- Session 4: Inclusion and Belonging

Grade 6

- Session 1: Growing our Understanding of Peace
- Session 2: Peace in the Family
- Session 3: Cooperation vs. Competition
- Session 4: Collective Social Action for Peace

Evaluation design

Given the technical challenges involved in collecting valid or useful data on program outcomes from young children, especially in a context of limited funds and significant time constraints, the evaluation design focused on the assessments and judgments of intermediate assessors, namely the teachers whose students participated in the pilot program and the facilitators who delivered the program.

Teachers were asked to complete both a pre-program and a post-program assessment survey, and in a few cases were interviewed when written assessments proved difficult to obtain. Complete or partial results were received from 12 teachers and educational assistants.² Three teachers did not participate in the evaluation process.

The two authors and facilitators of the Peace Kids program were interviewed separately for about two hours each, using a written interview guide to stimulate their assessment.

² It is noted that teachers as a profession are under increasing time pressure to meet the considerable demands of their work. In this school district, the full provincially-mandated curriculum is delivered in a 4-day week, adding to those pressures.

Program implementation review

Possibly because Peace Kids was a pilot project in the early stages of its development, i.e. not yet a proven program, school district administrators required SWOVA's staff to contact the teachers of targeted grades directly to ask for and make arrangements for their voluntary participation, rather than playing a more active role in recommending the program or facilitating participation through official communication channels. This requirement was time-consuming and increased the administrative burden for SWOVA's contract facilitators, but it also offered some advantages.

The direct interaction between participating teachers and SWOVA's program facilitators in working out the details of program delivery (i.e., number of sessions, length of each session, best days of the week and times of day, etc) was advantageous in two ways: (i) it allowed teachers' preferences and insights about what would work best for their particular students to be a major determining factor in the schedule; (ii) it helped build the working relationships between teachers and SWOVA's facilitators.

One of SWOVA's primary goals for the pilot was to test the new curriculum with approximately 200 students. SWOVA's flagship program for older students, Respectful Relationships, is well regarded in the district. As a result, the majority of teachers who were approached about Peace Kids saw the invitation to participate in the Peace Kids pilot as a good opportunity for their students, and believed that students would benefit from SWOVA's expertise in relation to socio-emotional learning goals for their students. In their words:

I have had experience with SWOVA's workshops (R+R) when I taught older students. I believe they are very valuable.... I was excited to hear that SWOVA was offering a new program to younger students. (T1)

The SWOVA programs have always been an excellent and valuable part of our [school programs], helping kids to build healthier relationships. (T7)

Great opportunity to have some experts work with students on social-emotional development. (T2)

I wanted it [because it would] make students more aware of how their behaviour affects others, positively and negatively. (T12)

I believe creating community in our schools, founded on respect and positive open communication, is the key to successful learning. SWOVA knows how to do this. (T5)

Facilitators were able to conduct 10 deliveries in six different schools. Although class sizes varied, if we assume an average of about 20 students in each Peace Kids group, SWOVA's implementation target was successfully reached.³

One of the implementation challenges for the program resulted from the number of "split grade" or "combined" classes in the school district, meaning that, in some cases, a particular classroom group consists of students who are technically in two (or more) grades.⁴

³ No teachers at Fernwood Elementary or Mayne Island School chose to participate. If the Peace Kids program is funded for future delivery in SD64, it would be useful to engage in further outreach to those schools.

⁴ This practice is widespread but somewhat contentious, and outside the scope of this evaluation to analyze.

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The reasons cited by educators for its use are typified by the following quotation from the website of the Vancouver School Board:

When school staff look to (...) place students in classes with teachers, they have to balance the educational needs of the students with [their staffing resources].... In many instances, combined classes result.

...School staff (...) use such criteria as age, range of ability, special learning needs, gender, social groupings and support staff's recommendations (...) in their efforts to ensure that all students are placed in appropriately balanced classrooms.... [They also] work with the classroom teachers to best match the learning styles and needs of the student [with the teaching styles and skills of the teachers].⁵

In split classes, teachers are obliged to find ways of teaching both grade levels of the BC curriculum, disadvantaging neither of the two grade-groups. SWOVA's facilitators have long been faced with a challenge in this regard. Their curricula are designed on a grade-by-grade basis, and it is not possible for them to deliver their workshop-style programs to two different grade-groups at once. Typically they have requested that schools rearrange split classes so that they can deliver to single grade groupings, which is what they asked for re Peace Kids.

To accomplish this, same-grade students from two different classrooms were brought together for some Peace Kids deliveries. This is challenging for the schools to arrange, and it also creates an unfamiliar social environment for students, which is hard for some of those at the elementary and middle levels to adapt to. As well, some teachers voiced regret that their normal classroom groups were not able to work on the Peace Kids curriculum together, since many of the issues explored in the program are experienced in the dynamic context of their normal classroom groups and could be followed up there. In their words:

Whole classes should go through the program, regardless of content, as it is a good opportunity to work together and practice respectful discussion which can then be brought up later in our class.

I was not able to incorporate anything we did [in the workshops] into my teaching. It is too difficult to do this when only half the class was there, and it seemed like an 'inside story' then, not shared.

Some of the kids who those participating in the program most needed to have hear them (or needed to hear from) weren't there.

I would like to have had my split grade class kept together so my entire class could have participated and learned together.... It went well as a trial but kids struggle to open up when paired with kids from another class they don't know as well.

A significant question in relation to implementation was how well the program, as designed, would engage students in grades 4 to 6. It was almost universally agreed that it did so very well, that in most of the classes students looked forward to the sessions, welcomed the facilitators (including hugs), participated surprisingly well in the unfamiliar "circle" format and activities of the program, and were in many cases more open and less resistant to some new ideas (such as discussions of gender dynamics) than the older students who start Respectful Relationships in grade 7. There were of course exceptions,⁶ but teachers and facilitators

⁵ <http://www.vsb.bc.ca/combined-split-classes>

⁶ Generally the exceptions referred either to program sophistication or to classes with behavioural issues.

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largely agreed that, with more time, most of the challenges could have been met or at least improved on. (See recommendations in later sections of this report.)

Turning to curriculum implementation, the experience of SWOVA's facilitators was that the session content and activities they had developed were richer and would have needed more time for full exploration than was available in their four planned sessions per grade. They estimated that they had enough material for at least three times that many sessions, i.e., 12 at each grade level. This was an advantage in the pilot test; it allowed facilitators to select sections and activities from the curriculum that seemed to fit the needs of each specific group of students, based on what came up in the opening circle or on something that had come up in their previous session, or on other group dynamics of which they were aware. Thus, the curriculum was adaptable and allowed facilitators to be responsive to circumstances.

The depth and richness of the curriculum is also one of its strengths, pointing to the future potential of the program. The pilot experience showed that the existing curriculum provides the basis for a longer and more extensive workshop series, as has been recommended by some teachers and by the facilitators themselves. Teachers said:

Four sessions didn't seem like enough. On the 4th session, it seemed like they were just getting into it. (T2)

I would have liked the program to come back into my class, to keep going, but the funds did not allow for that. (T4)

There should be more sessions, the more the better. (T8)

New skills and behaviours require practice and long term development. I regret that this program is not longer, to make a bigger difference. (T5)

One challenge in relation to the curriculum in this test period was that, although SWOVA supplied a copy to the teachers in advance, almost without exception they did not read it, or scanned it only briefly. As indicated above, they made their decisions to invite Peace Kids to be piloted with their students almost entirely on (i) their prior positive experience with SWOVA and the Respectful Relationships program, or their reputation, and (ii) their belief in the importance of the objectives of the Peace Kids program as described in conversations with the facilitators, not on an assessment of specific content.

Although it is difficult to imagine where the time could have come from for this, it would nevertheless have been beneficial for teachers and facilitators to have had more discussion about the teachers' sense of their students' needs in terms of social and emotional learning (SEL), and the specific options for social and emotional learning built into the Peace Kids curriculum, leading to a better match between them.⁷

Finally, in terms of implementation, it was apparently not made clear to the teachers that program assessment would be required of them, leading to some difficulty for the evaluator in collecting the required evaluation data.⁸ Some teachers required several reminders, some omitted several or many of the survey questions (roughly 12 questions in each of two surveys), and some were not present for the program delivery without making arrangements

⁷ Failing that, the pre-program assessment survey conducted by the evaluator might be revised and used as a tool to canvas teachers' priorities for their students well enough in advance to feed the workshop delivery process.

⁸ In fact, the evaluator reduced the amount of observational data requested.

for completion of the assessment surveys by another adult in attendance. The evaluator interpreted this difficulty as a measure of how pressured teachers' time is, and also as a signal of the need to clarify this requirement and set up procedures for meeting it in future.

Program outcomes assessment

The outcomes that teachers said, in their post-program survey responses or interviews, that they were hoping for from the Peace Kids pilot program varied from the general to the specific. Some examples:

Building positive relationships in the group. (T3)

A tighter class who feel more comfortable talking about their needs and working with each other. Less bullying. (T7)

Learning more positive language use to describe selves and others (including the development of vocabulary); skills to support cooperation, respectful communication and acceptance of others. (T5)

Learning to listen is the most important skill and expectation of one another to be learned. It is a huge challenge at this age. (T4)

I would like students to have a specific outline of strategies to help them resolve conflicts. Also specific strategies for "what to do when I'm teased or bullied?" (T6)

They were also asked to identify the items in a list of six key skills⁹ featured in the three-grade curriculum (though not necessarily in the curriculum for their grade) that they saw as needing development in their students, checking as many as they thought were important. The top choice was "empathy for others" which was checked by every teacher who responded to the question. Almost all also checked "ability to calm down in a conflict" and "respect for personal differences". In fact, all six items were checked by the majority, with the sole exception of "self-confidence" which was checked by just under 50% of them.

When teachers were asked "how satisfied were you" that the program helped to address the needs or goals for their students that they had identified, using a scale of 1 to 5, the average score was 3.6 out of 5, or what might be interpreted as a 72% approval rating for the pilot program overall.¹⁰ Their explanatory comments suggest that in some cases, the specific objectives teachers had in mind either were not a part of the Peace Kids curriculum at their grade level (though perhaps designed for a future session or a later grade), or that their hopes for behaviour change were perhaps set too high for so short an introduction to so complex a social learning program (the limits of a pilot test).

Their critical comments included:

Students discussed and shared emotions but did not learn/discuss strategies to help them communicate or deal with conflict. (T6)

⁹ Ability to listen; empathy for others; ability to calm down in a conflict; self-confidence; respect for personal differences; use of respectful language.

¹⁰ Because of the small number of teachers involved, the numerical values cited in the report should be treated as suggestive only.

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The program is progressive but it is fighting against community-wide issues and the culture of violence in our world. If it were up to me, I would unplug much of the school system as it is today to focus on these kinds of skills and values. (T8)

For this age group, more active activities would be good, to engage them more, keep their interest. (...) They may absorb more if the learning is active. (T2)

Teachers were also asked to rate five aspects or characteristics of the program on a scale of 1 to 5. The items were selected for this inquiry because of their probable impact on program effectiveness. All five received an average score at or very close to 4.0 out of 5. The five characteristics with their average scores, in descending order, were as follows:

- the general engagement of the girls (4.0);
- the skills of the female facilitator (3.93);
- the skills of the male facilitator (3.93);¹¹
- the general engagement of the boys (3.86); and
- the general effectiveness of the curriculum and activities (3.5).

A separate question using the same scoring format asked the teachers to indicate how well they thought the students responded to what is one of the key elements in SWOVA's overall education strategy: the opening circle and check-in, during which students sit in a formation that eliminates hierarchy and facilitates eye contact, and take turns saying a little bit about how they are feeling at the outset of the workshop. In this case the average score topped the previous five, at 4.43 out of a possible 5.0. Teachers added the following comments:

Check-in was great – a chance to really share. I heard some kids who are normally very guarded express real feelings/emotions. (T2)

They listened and participated very well. (T6)

The class responded well to the circle starting discussion. [If I were one of the facilitators] I would introduce the talking stick to help with management and reinforce the protocol for listening, talking, and taking turns. (T8)

The students were totally absorbed by this. (T12)

In answer to several of the questions in the surveys, teachers offered unsolicited comments on the outcomes and effectiveness of the Peace Kids program. They made positive comments about the following elements:

- students' levels of engagement and willingness to participate;
- the skills of both the facilitators and their the ability to create a safe space where students felt comfortable to talk about real and sometimes difficult feelings;
- students' responsiveness to the male facilitator's presence and role-modeling;
- the relevance of the curriculum;
- the value of particular activities and concepts;
- the unexpected and valuable insights teachers gained into their students.

¹¹ The two facilitators were rated equally by each teacher, and praised for their skills by several. The team facilitation model, with a male and female facilitator, was identified as especially beneficial for students.

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As a wrap-up question, teachers were asked to indicate how strongly they would like the Peace Kids program to be available to students at their grade level in the future, using the 'scale of 1—5' format. The average score was again high, at 4.5 out of a possible 5.0. The one teacher who circled a number lower than 4 also had the most highly defined objectives and anticipated outcomes for the program at the outset, which he expressed most strongly in terms of conflict resolution, which was not covered in the portion of the curriculum delivered in his class, though it would have been covered in later sessions.

Two teachers offered recommendations about Peace Kids for other teachers:

“Like other SWOVA programs, this is a well-facilitated opportunity for kids to talk about their problems and learn how to think about other people.” (T7)

“Peace Kids is a wonderful springboard to emotional learning and an excellent way to build relationships with students and among students.” (T9)

Lessons learned and recommendations for the future

Major recommendations based on the findings of this assessment are as follows:

1. *Need for district level program adoption.* If the Peace Kids program moves forward from this preliminary pilot stage, it would be useful as a signal of official support and encouragement to individual schools to facilitate implementation, for the school district to adopt the program as a recommended part of the school curriculum in grades 4, 5 and 6. It seems highly likely that its routine delivery in these grades would also increase both the readiness of grade 7 and 8 students for the Respectful Relationships program, and their ability to go more deeply into its curriculum.
2. *Need for additional funding.* In the current climate of fiscal constraint and cutbacks on spending for social programs, schools as well as community-based agencies such as SWOVA are all struggling to continue doing what they are doing now, let alone to do more. Peace Kids was funded as a pilot program, with no clear avenues for support to go forward, even with a demonstration of its value. In fact, what the results of this evaluation indicate is that a longer program—commensurate with the value ascribed to the Peace Kids curriculum and a realistic understanding of the “face time” it takes for school programs to increase social and emotional learning (SEL)—would be better able to meet both SWOVA’s program goals and the goals of teachers for their students than the 4-session program was. The curriculum is already in place for a longer program, so the funds needed for an expanded program would be those needed to cover operating costs.

If such an expansion is not possible, evaluation results indicate that the 4-session version of the Peace Kids program is valuable for students, and that future iterations could build on what has been learned in the pilot delivery to be more effective in the future.

3. *Value of facilitators and teachers working together more closely to individuate the program.* The Peace Kids pilot project experience showed that teachers highly value the expertise of the SWOVA facilitators and welcome their programs, but at the same time have valuable expertise of their own to contribute. Teachers have the benefit of a close-up view of the healthy/unhealthy dynamics that are prevalent in their class, and an informed perspective on the specific issues that their students are struggling with at the

time. Best results from the melding of the two kinds of expertise would require that (i) time be allocated for facilitators and teachers could discuss curriculum priorities for their class; (ii) facilitators recognize that most teachers do not realistically have time to read and assess the whole 3-year Peace Kids curriculum, yet they do need to understand its progression in order to understand what will and what won't be covered in their class¹²; (iii) the evaluator play an expanded role by undertaking a brief needs assessment with each teacher, to be shared with facilitators in advance of the program's start date.

4. Identifying and prioritizing core concepts. As discussed previously, the curriculum as written contains a great deal of rich and challenging material, enough for perhaps twice or three times as many sessions as were delivered in the pilot, and the evaluation supports a goal of delivering a longer program if/when time and resources permit that. However, if it is not possible at least in the immediate future to extend the program, it is recommended that SWOVA staff consider shaping the shorter program more tightly around a smaller number of key concepts and skills such as, for example, empathy, listening, respect for diversity and difference, conflict resolution, and bullying defence.

This is suggested for several reasons: (i) there is considerable agreement on the importance of these concepts and corresponding skills, though the precise list is certainly debatable; (ii) these concepts/skills are not easy to grasp and apply in everyday life *at any age*, and exposure to them is only the first step in learning them, as SWOVA's staff know well; (iii) children learn in different ways and all practical learning benefits from practice, which suggests that it would be beneficial for the Peace Kids program to approach the key concepts in various ways from different angles, providing ample opportunity for practice/application, followed by reflection on that practice with students, and then revised strategies for further application based on experience and reflection.¹³

5. Keep split classes together as normally constituted. The points made by teachers about the value of whole-class delivery are persuasive, especially in relation to children in the younger grades for whom Peace Kids has been designed. In every school year, the students in each class have a kind of temporary intimacy that gives rise to a wide range of relationships and relational dynamics, both positive and negative. This presents rich opportunities for the Peace Kids program to engage with real situations and challenges in students' lives, as it is designed to do, in the context of an on-going group. It is also an advantage for the teachers who continue to work with split classes to be able to build on the Peace Kids experience with their full classroom groups when the program is over.¹⁴
6. Explore the possibility of adding a "professional development" component to the Peace Kids program. Previous research in this district and others has shown that the teachers of elementary and middle school children are generally dedicated to, or at least accepting of, the school system's responsibility for social and emotional learning by their students. (Some who teach secondary students are too, but a significant proportion of them see

¹² For example, the facilitators might prepare a one-page summary of the three-year curriculum so that teachers can see how their year's segment fits into the whole. This should not preclude flexibility in responding to the particular dynamics of a class or the strong priorities of a teacher.

¹³ It is also noted that the Peace Kids curriculum introduced some concepts that are relatively new to SWOVA's programs and were not assessed in the current program evaluation. They include such aspects of SEL as gratitude and belonging, the impact of which should be examined in the future

¹⁴ Whether the same argument holds for R+R in the middle school, re grade 6/7 splits which cross SWOVA's program lines, is a matter for further consideration by SWOVA staff and researchers.

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themselves primarily as subject specialists.) SWOVA's facilitators are specialists in SEL, and teachers have consistently indicated that they recognize and appreciate their expertise. However, some teachers, particularly at the lower grade levels, have indicated to the evaluator that they have an interest in adding to their competence in SEL. The Peace Kids program has in fact anticipated this by including the development of a follow-up resource booklet as part of the pilot project. However, it seems highly likely that the impact and effectiveness of these printed materials would be greatly enhanced by their introduction through hands-on workshops with teachers as part of the school district's normal professional development agenda.

7. Curriculum review (external). Although the Peace Kids facilitators have said that they are, for the most part, satisfied with the curriculum as developed, and the teachers gave high marks to those elements they were asked to rate; yet SWOVA has benefited from external curriculum review of its new programs in the past, and could likely do so again. This recommendation implies no criticism of the curriculum as it stands—the evaluation data is too limited to provide a detailed, overall assessment; rather, it represents the proposition that consideration of the curriculum by others with relevant expertise would almost certainly lead to improvements.
8. Evaluation of central program goals. The goals and objectives of the Peace Kids program, as a mature part of SWOVA's overall commitment to early learning for life-long violence prevention in the context of personal relationships in the future (as hoped), have been stated in somewhat different ways in different documents. Those future goals include such elements as (i) 'reducing the incidence of bullying' and (ii) 'increasing children's ability to resolve conflicts and manage frustration' that could not be reasonably evaluated at this stage. In keeping with the exploratory nature of a pilot project, this first classroom test had to be evaluated in a looser, more exploratory way. In the longer term, it is important to plan for a more extensive outcomes-oriented evaluation.

The eight recommendations above are those with the broadest implications. However, teachers were also asked in the surveys to make suggestions for program improvement. These suggestions tended to be much more specific, although in some cases they intersect with and support those discussed above. They are quoted below, in full and without interpretation, for consideration by the facilitators in their curriculum review. They are grouped thematically to the extent possible.

- *I think the facilitators are very used to dealing with older students and are now developing their skills with younger ones. Sometimes phrasing and questions were too sophisticated. Also some more humour and light-heartedness would go a long way with this age group.*
- *Would suggest breaking them into smaller groups some of the time since many find it hard to open up to the whole class.*
- *At this age, it is important to make ideas concrete and relevant -- e.g., discussion of violence should connect to their experience.*
- *Focus on clear strategies/activities to deal with conflicts—non-violent ways to deal with problems.*
- *Students in grade 4/5 need more practical examples and ways of learning strategies. They need to be more active in personal, one-to-one activities, plus there was too much time sitting in the circle.*

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- *More active problem-solving, less talk.*
- *Students need a chance to move around. A few breaks would be helpful. Be ready when they get restless. Maybe some more stretching or standing/active activities?*
- *More time and more sessions.*
- *Not enough time, was rushed, needed longer sessions.*
- *Getting the group into a circle took up a lot of the time.*
- *Four sessions didn't seem like enough – on the 4th one it seemed like they were just getting into it.*
- *Regret that program is not longer, to make a bigger difference.*
- *Have more sessions, the more the better!*
- *Would like to see the program give the kids more room to define the conversation.”*
- *Would like to have parents involved, they are part of the problem.*

Conclusions

The evidence from this assessment is that the pilot test of the first edition of the Peace Kids programs and curriculum in ten classrooms of children in grades 4 to 6 was highly successful, with strong support coming from teachers directly and from indirect reports of students' responses to the program. Areas for improvement were also identified. Some of these will be addressed immediately by revisions to the curriculum that were planned as the final step in the pilot test phase; others can be addressed in future deliveries of the program, if there is funding available for that as SD64 teachers are hoping.

Of particular significance is the widespread agreement among those who participated in the evaluation that this kind of education for social and emotional development is very much *needed* by grade 4 to 6 students, and even though some teachers are engaged in activities along these lines themselves, many are not. Either way, teachers are generally very keen to see this kind of education brought to their classrooms by facilitators with the experience and expertise of SWOVA's.

They support SWOVA's fundamental approach with a strong male role model as part of the facilitation team working in a cooperative way with the equally skilled female facilitator, as well as other basic program components such as the discussion circle.

Results of the pilot test support the extension of SWOVA's violence prevention program to younger children both as an end in itself but also, in the facilitators' view, as preparation for the subsequent program that is delivered to all students in the district in grades 7 to 10. It is expected that the relationships that the younger children make with the facilitators, and the familiarity they gain with the general approach of the program, will help increase their receptivity to the later program, which comes at a time when they are both more vulnerable to some kinds of relationship violence and pro-violent behaviours, and also sometimes more resistant to adult intervention on these issues.

All in all, this pilot test provides strong support for what SWOVA would ideally like to see in this school district (and all others): comprehensive programming for social and emotional learning from grades K through 12.