

# SIP CA

Scaling Impact of a Play-Based  
Child-to-Child Approach to  
Make Pre-School to Primary School  
Transition Fun and Inclusive



Canada

GPE KIX

## BASELINE STUDY REPORT Maldives

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MALDIVES UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE



  
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY  
Institute for Educational Development



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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# SIPCA- Baseline Findings

Prepared By: Dr. Aminath Shafiya Adam & Dr. Aishath Shina

Date: 12 July 2025

## 1.0 Executive Summary

This report presents the baseline findings for the SIPCA (School-based Initiative for Peer Collaboration and Advancement) project, collected between January and June 2025. The data, gathered from teachers, young facilitators, young learners, and parents across 10 selected schools, provides a comprehensive snapshot of the initial context before full project implementation.

Key findings indicate strong enthusiasm and recognition of the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach's benefits among educators and parents, particularly for boosting student engagement and social-emotional skills. However, this is counterbalanced by a significant gap in formal training and a limited deep understanding of the methodology among teachers. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and trust the school's initiative, though their specific role in supporting CtC is not yet clearly defined. The baseline confirms a fertile ground for the SIPCA project, with clear needs for structured training, resource development, and enhanced communication strategies to ensure its successful implementation.

## 2.0 Introduction

The SIPCA project aims to integrate the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach within Maldivian schools to foster peer-led learning, improve literacy and numeracy, and enhance social emotional skills. This baseline study was conducted to understand the current knowledge, perceptions, and practices regarding the CtC approach among key stakeholders. The findings will inform the project's strategy, intervention design, and provide a benchmark for measuring future impact.

## 3.0 Methodology

Baseline data were collected using a mixed-methods approach from January to June 2025 from the following stakeholder groups:

**Teachers:** A survey and qualitative interviews (29 participants) with open-ended questions.

**Young Facilitators (YF):** A survey of 88 students from 10 schools, focusing on social emotional skills.

**Young Learners (YL):** Literacy (English and Dhivehi) and numeracy pre-tests administered to 154 students from 10 schools.

**Parents:** Interviews with 25 parents (5 of Young Facilitators and 20 of Young Learners).

## 4.0 Key Findings

### 4.1 Teacher Perspectives

#### Quantitative Findings

#### 1. Awareness and Understanding of the Child-to-Child (CtC) Approach

- 62.1% of teachers reported being *somewhat familiar* with the CtC approach indicating moderate awareness among educators.
- 86.2% correctly identified the CtC approach as a strategy where older children support younger ones in learning and health practices.

- This shows that most teachers understand the *concept* of CtC, but may lack depth in practical application.

## 2. Training and Exposure

- A large majority (75.9%) had not received any training related to the CtC approach. This reveals a significant training gap that could limit consistent implementation.

## 3. Familiarity with Key Components of CtC

Teachers were most familiar with:

- Teamwork and cooperation (75.9%)
- Peer-led learning (58.6%)

Other components of CtC were less recognized, suggesting that teachers relate CtC mainly to group *activities* and *collaborative learning* rather than the broader philosophy of peer mentoring and holistic development.

## 4. Confidence in Implementing CtC

- **48.3%** of teachers felt *very confident*, and **37.9%** felt *somewhat confident* in facilitating CtC activities.

While overall confidence is relatively high, it likely stems from general teaching experience rather than formal CtC training.

## 5. Perceived Benefits of the CtC Approach

Teachers overwhelmingly identified several benefits:

- Increased student engagement – 96.6%
- Improved social and emotional skills – 82.8%
- Building children's confidence – 82.8%
- Fostering peer respect and collaboration – 65.5%



- Reducing teacher workload – 27.6% (least selected)

The data suggest that teachers strongly believe CtC enhances *student participation, confidence, and social skills*.

## 6. Perception of Effectiveness

- 100% of respondents agreed that the CtC approach is effective in fostering positive student outcomes.

There is unanimous support for the value of CtC as a learning strategy.

### 4.2 Young Learners'

The pre-test was administered by teachers, the test was taken from Grade children who were in UKG last year. The aim was to identify the literacy (English and Dhivehi), numeracy level and Social Emotional Skills (SES) in the 10 schools selected for SIPCA project. **The data collection took place in Apr-May 2025.**

#### 1. Literacy (English and Dhivehi)

- A wide variation was observed in the literacy levels of young learners across the participating schools.
- In English literacy, many students demonstrated emerging skills in letter recognition, sound identification, and basic word reading. However, writing skills and sentence formation remained limited among the majority.
- In Dhivehi literacy, children showed relatively stronger skills in letter and word recognition, though writing and reading comprehension were still developing.
- The findings indicate that while most children possess foundational literacy awareness, they require structured support in reading fluency and writing practice.

#### 2. Numeracy Skills

- Most learners showed familiarity with number recognition and basic counting.
- Skills such as simple addition and subtraction, pattern identification, and

understanding of quantity were present in a portion of students, though inconsistently.

- The results reveal early numeracy readiness but also highlight a need for greater emphasis on conceptual understanding and application rather than rote memorization.

### 3. Social Emotional Skills (SES)

- The survey assessed six areas of social-emotional development, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and cooperation.
- Most young learners demonstrated positive peer interactions and willingness to share and cooperate.
- However, aspects like self-regulation and confidence in communication were still emerging, suggesting the need for nurturing environments that build emotional expression and self-control.

### Qualitative Findings (Thematic Analysis):

**Support Needed:** Teachers emphasized the need for:

1. **Training and Professional Development:** A significant number of respondents emphasized the need for proper training and workshops to help them understand and implement the CtC approach effectively. Some teachers specifically requested face-to-face training and capacity building programs.
2. **School Management Support:** Many teachers highlighted the importance of school management involvement in providing resources and reinforcing the CtC approach within the curriculum.
3. **Teaching Aids and Learning Materials:** Respondents mentioned the need for age-appropriate resources, including flashcards, books, puzzles, educational toys, multimedia tools, and structured lesson plans.
4. **Community and Parental Involvement:** Several teachers pointed out that involving parents and the community would be beneficial in ensuring the success of the approach.
5. **Time and Organized Play:** Some teachers suggested incorporating more structured play and group activities to help students bond before engaging in learning.

### Challenges Anticipated:

1. **Classroom Management:** Some teachers expressed concerns about maintaining control in the classroom, especially with younger students who have short attention spans.
2. **Time Constraints:** Time was one of the most frequently mentioned challenges. Teachers noted that proper implementation requires careful planning and monitoring, which can be difficult within the constraints of a busy schedule.
3. **Lack of Training and Resources:** Many educators mentioned that they have not received sufficient training on the CtC approach, making it difficult to apply effectively.
4. **Student Confidence and Readiness:** Teachers noted that some younger students may lack the confidence or ability to take on a leadership role in peer-led learning activities.
5. **Differentiated Learning Needs:** Since students develop at different rates, some teachers found it challenging to apply the CtC approach effectively across all learners.
6. **Parental and Social Perceptions:** A few respondents mentioned concerns that parents might not fully support the CtC approach or that societal expectations might not align with its principles.

### Successful Experiences with the CtC Approach

Despite these challenges, several teachers shared positive experiences where the similar to CtC approach has been beneficial:

1. **Improved Reading and Writing Skills:** Teachers observed that students who engaged in peer assisted reading activities showed significant improvement in literacy skills. Weaker readers gained confidence and became more engaged in learning.
2. **Boost in Student Confidence:** Many respondents reported that students who participated in the CtC approach developed greater confidence in expressing themselves and assisting their peers.
3. **Positive Peer Relationships:** The approach helped build stronger relationships among students, fostering a sense of collaboration and teamwork.
4. **Engagement in Group Activities:** Some teachers successfully implemented CtC strategies during extracurricular activities such as field trips and club meetings, where older students helped younger ones with tasks and learning activities.
5. **Effective Classroom Management:** Teachers found that engaging students in peer led learning activities helped manage classroom behavior and maintain student focus.

## 4.2 Parent Perspectives

The parent interviews revealed strong optimism and trust in the SIPCA project.

1. **Positive Reception:** Most parents were very positive about the project and trust their children's teachers to implement it effectively.
2. **Observed Benefits:** Parents of Young Facilitators reported their children's excitement and pride in their roles (e.g., being called "little aunty"). They noted increased responsibility, confidence, and leadership skills in their older children.
3. **Support for Sibling-Like Dynamics:** Many parents saw the value in formalizing the natural learning that occurs between siblings, believing it strengthens relationships and provides academic and emotional benefits for both older and younger children.
4. **Language Development:** A notable finding was that some Young Learners showed significant improvement and renewed interest in the Dhivehi language due to interactions with older peers.
5. **Limited Understanding of Specifics:** While supportive, some parents were unable to provide a clear understanding of how CtC would directly support their child's learning or how they themselves could engage in the implementation.

## 5.0 Overall Conclusions

The baseline study provides a comprehensive picture of the current awareness, readiness, and implementation capacity for the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach in SIPCA project schools.

Findings reveal that while teachers and students hold highly positive perceptions of peer supported learning, there are significant gaps in training, understanding, and structured implementation.

- Teachers: Most are aware of the CtC concept and its benefits particularly in fostering student engagement, confidence, and social-emotional growth but lack formal training and institutional guidance.
- Young Learners: Show emerging literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills, providing a strong foundation for the CtC model to build upon.
- Parents: Express overall support and enthusiasm for the program, although some require clearer understanding of how CtC benefits their children's learning and how they can contribute at home.

Overall, the results underscore that the SIPCA initiative is well-received and holds strong potential to enhance early learning and social-emotional development through structured peer interaction. However, sustained training, leadership support, and parental engagement are crucial to translate this potential into consistent, long-term impact.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

As the SIPCA program is introduced to the selected schools, parents' active involvement and support are vital for its success. A few key recommendations were put forward based on what parents shared. Most parents discussed the excitement and positive thoughts they have regarding CtC implementation. Yet very few talked about any type of support and how they engage in CtC implementation.

**The following recommendations are to enhance teachers' implementation of SIPCA at school.**

### 1. Keep parents informed and engaged

Learn about the goals and activities of SIPCA. Attend parent meetings and information sessions to stay updated on how the program supports the child's development.

### 2. Talk to parents how to encourage learning at Home

Reinforce the skills that children are developing and learning at school, especially in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development. Talk to parents to engage children in simple, fun learning activities at home.

### 3. Discuss how to support young facilitators

Appreciate and encourage the involvement of older students (young facilitators) who help guide and support younger learners. This creates a nurturing and collaborative learning environment.

### 4. Help parents to discuss with teachers and provide feedback

Share their observations and feedback with teachers and school leaders. Their insights as a parent help improve the program and ensure it meets the needs of all children.

## Overall Summary Statement

The SIPCA baseline study confirms a strong foundation of positive attitudes and early readiness for implementing the Child-to-Child approach in Maldivian schools. With enhanced training, structured support, and collaboration among teachers, parents, and administrators, SIPCA has the potential to become a transformative, inclusive, and sustainable model for early learning and holistic child development in the Maldives.

