

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

MID-TERM SCHOOL MONITORING REPORT Maldives

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"The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors."

SIPCA Mid-Term Monitoring Summary Report (July–September 2025)

Scaling Impact of a Play-Based Child-to-Child Approach (SIPCA)

led by Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education

1. Overview

The Scaling Impact of a Play-Based Child-to-Child Approach (SIPCA) project is a national initiative led by the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE). It seeks to transform early childhood learning and teaching practices through peer-led, play-based, and inclusive pedagogies grounded in the *Child-to-Child (CtC)* philosophy.

In SIPCA, older children are referred to as Young Facilitators (YFs), guide and support younger peers (Young Learners – YLs) in interactive, creative, and purposeful activities that promote empathy, communication, confidence, and readiness for school.

The project was launched in April 2025 as a 12-month pilot concluding in March 2026. Its overarching objectives are to:

1. Enhance school readiness, social-emotional growth, and academic engagement among young learners through peer interaction.
2. Develop leadership, communication, and mentoring skills among young facilitators.
3. Strengthen teachers' capacity to integrate play-based and child-led learning approaches into everyday practice.
4. Foster early interest in teaching as a career, nurturing a new generation of educators to address the future teacher shortage in the Maldives.
5. Strengthen school-home partnerships through parent engagement and community involvement in education.

Preparatory and Foundational Activities

To ensure the smooth rollout and sustainability of SIPCA across diverse school contexts, a series of strategic preparatory activities were conducted before and during implementation:

- Baseline Study (April 2025): A comprehensive baseline assessment was conducted across participating schools to capture the initial status of student readiness, teacher

preparedness, and school environments. This established benchmarks for monitoring progress and evaluating SIPCA's impact.

- **Curriculum Alignment Workshop:** Led by IUM and MoE specialists, this workshop reviewed SIPCA lesson content and aligned it with the National Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the Key Stage 1 Learning Standards to ensure coherence with national goals.
- **SIPCA Material Development Workshop:** Teachers and IUM researchers collaboratively designed age-appropriate, culturally contextualized learning materials, including visual aids, activity sheets, and play-based facilitation guides to support YFs and YLs in classroom implementation.
- **Teacher Training Workshops:** Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 teachers were trained in the Child-to-Child approach, inclusive pedagogy, behavior management, and facilitative leadership. Teachers gained the necessary confidence and skills to mentor YFs effectively.
- **Young Facilitator Orientation Sessions:** Orientation and practice sessions introduced YFs to their leadership roles, communication strategies, and facilitation responsibilities, fostering excitement, ownership, and accountability.
- **Parent Orientation Programs:** Parents were oriented to the SIPCA philosophy and activities, helping them understand their children's new roles and encouraging family-level reinforcement of learning.
- **International School Exposure Visits:** Selected SIPCA-trained teachers visited leading international schools in the Maldives to observe innovative, play-based teaching methods, classroom organization, and inclusive learning environments, bringing insights back to their SIPCA classrooms.
- **Reflection and Monitoring Meetings:** Throughout implementation, schools held structured reflection circles and progress meetings. The IUM research team conducted regular monitoring visits and review discussions to document challenges, share innovations, and ensure fidelity to the SIPCA model.

Mid-Term Monitoring

The mid-term monitoring, conducted between July and September 2025, covered ten schools representing different atolls and socio-cultural contexts. Data were gathered from school leadership, teachers, Young Facilitators, Young Learners, and parents through classroom observations, interviews, focus groups, and reflective discussions.

This review provides evidence of pedagogical transformation, leadership development, and community engagement emerging through SIPCA. It captures the progress, challenges, and innovations that are shaping the model's success and offers policy and practice implications for scaling, institutionalizing, and sustaining SIPCA within the national education system.

2. School Profile Summary

| No. | School Name | Location | School Type | Total Students | SIPCA Teachers | Classes in SIPCA | Young Facilitators (YFs) | Young Learners (YLs) | Start Date |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Muhyiddin School | K. Vilimalé | Single Session | 876 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 57 | 30 Apr 2025 |
| 2 | Ghaazee Bandarain School | HA. Utheemu | Single Session | 156 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 30 Apr 2025 |
| 3 | Mohamed Jamaaludheen School | Gn. Fuvahmulah | 2 Sessions | 788 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 40 | 30 th April 2025 |
| 4 | Hafiz Ahmed School | Gn. Fuvahmulah | 2 Sessions | 540 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 21 | 30 th April 2025 |
| 5 | Sharafuddin School | Addu City / Addu. Hithadhoo | 2 Sessions | 1080 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 35 | 30 th April 2025 |
| 6 | ADh Atoll School | ADh. Maamigili | 2 Sessions | 570 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 30 | 5 May 2025 |
| 7 | Nolhivaram School | H.Dh. Nolhivaram | 2 Sessions | 591 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 38 | 5 May 2025 |
| 8 | Afeefuddin School | H.Dh. Kulhudhuffushi City | 2 Sessions | 1045 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 62 | 3 May 2025 |
| 9 | Muraidhoo School | H.Dh. Muraidhoo | Single Session | 166 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 May 2025 |
| 10 | Fuvahmulaku School | GN. Fuvahmulah City | Single Session | 260 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 4 May 2025 |
| | 10 schools | Different regions | 4 Single and 6 2 sessions schools | 6072 | 28 | 21 | 88 | 309 | |

3. Collective Findings

1. Leadership and Institutional Support

SIPCA has become a recognized part of school strategic planning and SMT discussions. Leadership teams ensured smooth scheduling, resource allocation, and teacher

communication. Schools like Muhyiddin, Sharafuddin, and Fuvahmulaku School demonstrated exemplary leadership engagement.

2. Teacher Engagement and Pedagogical Shifts

Teachers displayed transformation toward child-centred, play-based learning. UKG and KS2 teachers collaborated closely to plan, mentor YFs, and assess outcomes.

3. Young Facilitators (YFs)

YFs across all schools demonstrated strong growth in confidence, communication, leadership, empathy, and time management. They began taking ownership, describing themselves as ‘mini-teachers’. The project clearly reports the growth of students’ interest in teaching and keenness to work with children.

4. Young Learners (Ys)

Ys showed improved cooperation, literacy, numeracy, and emotional regulation. The bond between YFs and Ys created joyful, peer-driven learning environments.

5. Parental & Community Perception

Parents were highly supportive of SIPCA, observing notable improvements in their children's confidence, empathy, and motivation to learn. Many parents advocated expanding SIPCA to higher grades.

4. Common Challenges & Mitigation

| Area | Challenge Identified | Response / Strategy |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Scheduling & Timetable | Pull-out sessions conflicted with core subjects in some schools. | Adjusted SIPCA to end-of-day or specific weekday slots. |
| Teacher Workload | Preparation of materials increased workload. | Shared resources and peer-support systems implemented. |
| Physical Space | Limited classrooms restricted SIPCA activities. | Used multi-purpose spaces and outdoor areas. |
| Language Barriers | Initial low confidence using Dhivehi for facilitation. | Practiced through guided support and peer feedback. |
| Sustainability | Uncertainty about continuation post-project. | Integrated SIPCA into school plans and MoE development frameworks in collaboration with schools. |

5. Key Achievements

- 1. Institutionalization:** SIPCA is embedded into school culture and weekly routines.
- 2. Capacity-building:** Over 80 YFs and 300 Ys actively participated with around 28 SIPCA

teachers

trained.

3. Pedagogical Change: Schools transitioned to peer-led, play-based teaching approaches.

4. Community Collaboration: Enhanced school-home engagement and recognition of YFs' achievements and their leadership skill development.

5. Scalability: Multiple schools expressed readiness to extend SIPCA to Key Stage 1.

6. Recommendations for the Next Phase

| Focus Area | Recommendations | Key Actors |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Leadership & Governance | Integrate SIPCA into annual plans, maintain SMT monitoring, and recognize YF achievements. | Principals & SIPCA Coordinators |
| Teacher Development | Offer refresher PDs and quick-reference guides on CtC pedagogy and SEN inclusion. | IUM & MoE Training Divisions |
| YF Capacity-Building | Conduct leadership workshops and peer-reflection circles to sustain motivation. | Teachers & SIPCA Focal Persons |
| Parental Engagement | Strengthen visibility via newsletters, open days, and community showcases. | School & PTA |
| Monitoring & Sustainability | Implement data-tracking tools and successful documentation for replication. | IUM Research Team & Schools |

7. Conclusion

The SIPCA mid-term review reveals transformative educational and social change across all ten participating schools. Young Facilitators (YFs) have emerged as empathetic, confident leaders who embody responsibility, patience, and creativity. Young Learners (Ys) have become joyful, curious participants who show readiness for school and an eagerness to learn. Teachers have transitioned into nurturing facilitators who promote peer learning, while parents have become strong advocates of inclusive, play-based education.

The results confirm SIPCA's potential for national scaling as a sustainable, a good fit relevant model of child leadership and early education innovation. The project also demonstrates not only a shift in pedagogy but also a powerful shift in aspiration, students now express genuine enthusiasm for teaching and a deep interest in working with young children. This emerging passion for teaching among YFs represents one of SIPCA's most profound and far-reaching outcomes. Beyond developing leadership, communication, and empathy, the program lights on an early calling for the teaching profession. As many YFs articulate pride and joy in helping others learn, SIPCA positions itself as a pipeline of future teachers who could help address the critical national teacher shortage anticipated in the coming years. If SIPCA continues and expands, it will not only strengthen early learning experiences but also inspire the next

generation of Maldivian teachers, transforming classrooms today while shaping the future of teaching tomorrow.

Implications for the Ministry of Education (MoE)

| Focus Area | Implications for MoE |
|---|---|
| Policy Integration & National Strategy | The findings validate SIPCA as a <i>scalable, evidence-based model</i> for early childhood and primary transition learning. MoE can incorporate SIPCA within the National Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Teacher Development Frameworks as an approach to strengthen play-based and peer-facilitated pedagogy. |
| Teacher Pipeline Development | The program reveals YFs' growing enthusiasm for teaching. This can inform MoE's teacher recruitment strategy by formalizing SIPCA as a <i>pre-teacher exposure program</i> in upper primary levels — fostering early interest in education careers and addressing the projected teacher shortage in the next decade. |
| Capacity Building & CPD | MoE could use SIPCA data to design continuous professional development modules emphasizing facilitation, peer mentoring, and inclusive education. The SIPCA approach offers practical insights for upgrading teacher training standards. |
| Research, Monitoring & Evaluation | SIPCA offers a national model for impact-based program evaluation. MoE can collaborate with IUM to establish a longitudinal tracking system for YFs and YLs to monitor cognitive, social, and leadership growth over time. |
| Scaling & Resource Allocation | Based on the mid-term success, MoE may allocate budget lines for phase-two expansion of SIPCA, prioritizing islands with limited access to qualified teachers or early learning resources. |
| Curriculum Reform Alignment | The CtC pedagogy complements MoE's move toward Competency-Based and 21st Century Learning. MoE can integrate SIPCA methods into the national curriculum guidelines to promote creativity, collaboration, and emotional intelligence. |

Implications for Schools

| Focus Area | Implications for Schools |
|--|---|
| School Leadership & Vision | Schools should integrate SIPCA into their school improvement and annual development plans, aligning it with core learning goals. SMTs can champion SIPCA as a signature program demonstrating innovation in learning culture. |
| Teacher Professional Practice | Teachers can use SIPCA as a peer-learning and mentoring framework, building bridges between Key Stage 2 and Foundation teachers. It fosters reflective practice, team teaching, and innovation in classroom management. |
| Student Leadership Development | Schools can institutionalize YF development through leadership clubs or ambassador programs, nurturing continuous learning, communication, and empathy from early grades. |
| Parental and Community Engagement | The strong parental satisfaction reported suggests that schools should expand parent-child co-learning sessions, school open days, and SIPCA showcases to strengthen school-community partnerships. |
| Sustainability & Local Adaptation | Schools should maintain internal documentation of SIPCA practices, develop a "SIPCA Resource Bank", and train new teachers annually to ensure continuity. |
| Equity & Inclusion | SIPCA's inclusive approach can help schools better integrate students with special educational needs (SEN) through peer support and differentiated play-based learning. |

Overall Implication

SIPCA's success demonstrates that education reform begins with nurturing relationships, child to child, teacher to learner, and school to community. Its continuation and expansion would not only sustain learning outcomes but also redefine the teaching profession's future in the Maldives, transforming SIPCA into a bridge between *early learning excellence and teacher workforce renewal*.

