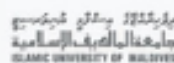




SCALING IMPACT OF A PLAY-BASED CHILD-TO-CHILD APPROACH TO MAKE PRE-SCHOOL TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TRANSITION FUN AND INCLUSIVE





MoE Meeting Report

Research Communication with MoE Officials

Tuesday, 17 February 2025

Islamic University of Maldives

SIPCA Team, Maldives



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Canada



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

MoE Meeting Report Research Communication with MoE Officials

Date: 17th February 2026

Location: Ministry of Education

Organized by: SIPCA Research Team, Islamic University of Maldives

1. Introduction

Scaling Impact of a Play-Based Child-to-Child Approach to make Pre-school to Primary School Transition Fun and Inclusive (SIPCA) is a research project led by the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) and funded by IDRC and supported by GPE KIX. Following the successful completion of a 25-week intervention across 10 pilot schools in 2025, the research team convened with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to present findings and secure strategic support for national scaling

General Objective of the SIPCA project

- To ensure improved school readiness and smooth transition from preschool to primary school in Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

Specific Objectives of the SIPCA project

- To generate contextually relevant knowledge on the early learning models to improve school readiness and smooth transition to primary education.
- To strengthen capacity of ECCE teachers to enhance school readiness and smooth transition through the implementation of an early learning model such as play-based child-to-child model that focuses on children's acquisition of foundational skills and social-emotional competencies.
- Mobilize policy uptake of child-to-child approaches for improved school transition from pre-primary to primary education for children with diverse backgrounds.

Participants:

The meeting was held at the Ministry of Education, with participation from the SIPCA Maldives research team and officials from the Ministry of Education. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of State for Education, Ahmed Mohamed. A detailed list of participants is provided in the Appendix.

2. Agenda:

- Welcome and introduction of meeting objectives
- Presentation of project objectives
- Overview of curriculum analysis and tool development processes
- Presentation of intervention findings (quantitative and qualitative)
- Discussion on strategic scaling and sustainability
- Feedback and recommendations from the Ministry of Education

3. Discussion

• Opening and Objectives

The meeting was convened to present the execution, findings, and outcomes of the **SIPCA Project**. The central focus of the meeting was to disseminate the findings from the SIPCA Child-to-Child (CtC) implementation, a 25-week initiative piloted across 10 selected schools and to secure strategic support and formalize a framework for the contextual scaling of the project within the national education system.

Implementation Overview

The project utilized a structured multi-phase methodology to ensure alignment with national standards.

- **Curriculum Analysis:** A collaborative workshop involving officials from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the National Institute of Education (NIE), alongside curriculum developers, teachers, and lecturers. The goal was to identify misalignments between the early primary and pre-school curricula and assess how these gaps impact students' social, emotional, and academic growth. Specific gaps were identified in:
 - English & Dhivehi Literacy: Reading, viewing, writing, and listening.
 - Numeracy: Number concepts, algebra, and operations.
 - Social-Emotional Skills (SES): Self-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Tool Development:** Assessment tools were designed based on the CtC concept and subsequently validated by curriculum experts.
- **Capacity Development:** Execution of Child-to-Child Online training sessions were conducted for teachers and other stakeholders in the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. These sessions were facilitated by UK-based Child-to-Child experts.
- **Exposure Visit:** Participants attended a field trip to Islamabad, Pakistan, to observe firsthand the implementation of the Child-to-Child model in local schools.
- **Material Development:** Following the exposure trip, the team developed two booklets tailored to the National Curriculum of Maldives: A Guide for Young Facilitators (YFs) and a Material Pack for Young Learners (YLS). The prepared materials aligns with the National Curriculum of Maldives.

- **Execution:** The 25 sessions of intervention at the selected 10 selected schools ran from April to November 2025. During the intervention process the continuous monitoring from the SIPCA research team from IUM, Maldives continued throughout the project, virtually and physically.

- **Implementation models from different schools**

Schools adopted flexible delivery methods based on their specific session structures:

- **During the formal Session time:** In single session schools YFs were temporarily pulled from class, with compensatory measures to ensure academic continuity.
- **Between Sessions:** In the double session schools, YFs conducted sessions after their own school sessions.
- **Out of Sessions:** In single session schools, both YFs and YLs attended additional sessions.
- **As a Uniform body Activity:** The Child-to-Child sessions were integrated into school-wide activity programs.

- **Findings and Observations**

The **Quantitative Outcomes** of the intervention show a significant improvement across three core domains:

- **Literacy:** Enhanced understanding of communicative purposes, language structures, and features in both Dhivehi and English.
- **Numeracy:** Marked progress in number concepts, spatial direction, basic operations, and mathematical process skills.
- **Social-Emotional Skills:** Measurable improvements in social awareness, self-management, and relationship building.

The **Qualitative Findings** derived from interviews and classroom observations. The feedback highlights the holistic impact of the model:

- **Teachers:** Observed increased student motivation and the formation of "sibling-like" bonds between YFs and YLs. Literacy and numeracy improvements were noted as being mutually reinforcing.
- **Parents:** Reported that emotional attachments between students extended into the home, with children displaying more caring and supportive behaviors.
- **Young Facilitators (YFs):** Reported gains in self-confidence, responsibility, and communication skills.
- **Inclusivity:** The model proved effective for all students, including those with Special Education Needs (SEN).

4. Key Highlights:

The SIPCA intervention achieved a transformative impact, evidenced by a synergistic improvement across both academic and developmental spheres. Students demonstrated significant measurable gains in literacy and numeracy, while also developing vital social-emotional competencies. Beyond these core objectives, the project catalysed a "leadership bloom" among Young Facilitators (YFs), who exhibited unexpected and substantial growth in empathy, self-confidence, and responsibility. This progress was mirrored in heightened Dhivehi language proficiency for both facilitators and learners. Furthermore, the model's inclusive design ensured a profound positive impact on students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), fostering an environment where all children could thrive. Recognizing these outcomes, school principals have expressed high satisfaction and a definitive commitment to sustaining and scaling the initiative to additional grade levels within the current academic year.

5. Feedback from Ministry of Education and Strategic Outlook

The Ministry of Education acknowledged the positive results while focusing on long-term academic sustainability:

- **Literacy Accountability:** The MoE inquired if the program guarantees student fluency in reading and writing by the end of UKG to ensure a seamless Grade 1 entry.
- **Institutional Adoption:** While the MoE stated they cannot mandate the program nationwide immediately, they expressed openness to allowing schools to adopt the methodology based on individual institutional preference.
- **Principal Endorsement:** Research findings indicated that school principals are ready to continue and even scale the model to additional grades immediately.

6. Conclusion:

The SIPCA team expressed sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Education for their continued support throughout the project.

The findings indicate that the play-based Child-to-Child model is an effective and adaptable approach for improving school readiness and facilitating smoother transitions to primary education.

To ensure sustainability and broader impact, the team seeks continued collaboration with the Ministry in developing a structured scale-up strategy and embedding the model within the national education system.

7. Appendices

1. Participants List

#	Name	Designation	Affiliation
1	Dr Mariyam Shareefa	Principal Investigator	Islamic University Maldives
2	Dr Visal Moosa	Project Manager	Islamic University Maldives
3	Dr Aminath Shafiya Adam	Technical consultant	Islamic University Maldives
4	Dr Aishath Shina	Technical consultant	Islamic University Maldives
5	Shafeenaz Nasir	Research Assistant	Islamic University Maldives
6	Dr. Ahmed Mohamed	Minister of State for Education	Ministry of Education
7	Dr. Abdul Latheef Mohamed	Minister of State for Education	Ministry of Education
8	Dr. Aishath Wadheefa	Minister of State for Education	DoIE, Ministry of Education
9	Dr. Fathimath Nishan	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Education
10	Shuhudha Rizwan	Senior Curriculum Development Analyst	Ministry of Education
11	Shiyama AbooBakuru	Senior Curriculum Development Analyst	National Institute of Education
12	Mariyam Nasha Hashim	Senior Administrative Officer	Ministry of Education

2. Photographs



