

Report on the Impact of ESDEG's  
Services on SEND Children from  
ethnic minority backgrounds & low-  
income households  
during April 2022 to March 2023

ESDEG and 4in10 Collaboration



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# Executive Summary

ESDEG has collaborated with 4in10 to conduct a study on the impact of ESDEG's services on SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Children from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households during April 2022 to March 2023.

**Timeline of the study:** 1st February to 31st March 2023

**Scope of the study:** Children with SEND needs from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households in the London borough of Ealing.

**Purpose of the Study:** In this study we will be looking at the impact of ESDEG's services on SEND Children from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households

The following five services have been selected

1. Supplementary Schooling
2. Youth Mentoring
3. Mental Health Counselling
4. Family and Schools Partnership
5. Sports and Leisure Activities

**Research Methodology:** In-depth interviews will be conducted with the ESDEG staff who provide the above services to the children with SEND needs. From these interviews we aim to identify the gaps that exist in the system, compare these with the rest of England, plan how ESDEG and 4in10 could campaign to fill up those gaps and strategize on how to align with the already existing national campaigns on SEND issues.

**Accounts:** ESDEG would like to thank 4in10 for providing the budget of £2000 which enabled us to conduct this evaluation study. ESDEG has used 70% of the budget on staff time, 15% on overhead costs and 5% on refreshments.

# Introduction to ESDEG

ESDEG is committed to improving the lives of disadvantaged families from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households through education, training, skills development and social integration. We are based in Ealing but also work in the neighbouring boroughs of West London. Since ESDEG's establishment in 2005 we have supported children and families from refugee, asylum seeker, ethnic minority and other deprived and low-income backgrounds to overcome barriers to educational achievement. In response to the needs of our service users ESDEG's work has expanded to focus on the specific needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those at risk of school exclusion and in danger of being left behind academically. We recognise that the wellbeing of families is crucial to a child's development and education and that early intervention is effective in preventing long term problems, so we have adopted a whole family approach in supporting children.

The services provided by ESDEG are

- Supplementary Schooling
- Youth Mentoring
- Family & Schools Partnership
- SEND Project
- Sports & Leisure Activities
- Mental Health Counselling
- Youth Employability Support
- Women's Empowerment
- Refugee Elderly Lunch Club
- ESOL Classes for Adults
- Advice & Guidance

ESDEG's Target Group – ESDEG works with refugees, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities and other deprived communities from low-income households mostly from BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) backgrounds, in particular Somali, Pakistani, Afghan, Indian and Black Caribbean communities.

# What is SEND?

According to the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's (0 to 25 years) ability to learn in the following ways:

- behaviour or ability to socialise, for example children struggle to make friends, or cause disruption in class without meaning to
- reading and writing, for example because children have Dyslexia
- ability to understand things and follow instructions
- concentration levels, for example because children have ADHD
- physical ability because of disability

Support a child with SEND needs are eligible for

- SEN support - support given in mainstream schools, like speech therapy
- an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) - a plan of care for children and young people aged up to 25 who have more complex needs. This is a legally binding document which ensures that the Local Authority and the school has made provisions for the additional/complex needs of the child.

**The Children and Families Act 2014** has provisions for children, young people and their families who have SEND needs and ensures legal protection is in place for them.

## ESDEG's SEND Project

ESDEG's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) project supports children in West London boroughs with special educational needs and disabilities. Our aim is to bridge the gap between families, schools and the Local Authority by working with the parents and their children to ensure that the child is receiving the right support s/he needs for developmental and educational success. Our specialised staff and trained volunteers focus on identifying the reasonable adjustments a child with SEND may need to reduce the disadvantages s/he face as well as providing extra encouragement in his/her learning and support with physical and personal care difficulties. We nurture the confidence and self-esteem of the children with whom we work.

The SEND project offers:

- Extra Educational support for SEND children
- Coffee mornings to support parents of children with SEND needs
- Workshops, events, focus groups to disseminate information about SEND and the process
- Support for families via our telephone, email, 1:1 meetings, school and college meetings and annual reviews.
- Information and guidance on how to apply for statutory assessment – including relevant documents and evidence to be submitted.
- Review EHC plans with parents to ensure that objectives and outcomes of the special education provision meet the child/young person's needs.

In 2022 through our SEND project ESDEG has helped more than 38 ethnic minority families from deprived backgrounds and low-income households whose children have SEND needs and go to school in the London borough of Ealing.

# Why the London borough of Ealing?

We are often asked why we chose to deliver our services in Ealing which is considered by many to be a prosperous London borough.

## Poverty in Ealing

Ealing in West London is the third most populous London borough with a population of 367,100 inhabitants (Census 2021). Traditionally considered a well-to-do borough, the Trust for London Poverty Rate (2020) map shows Ealing to be at the mid level, but the heavy dependence on food banks by its inhabitants tells another story. Ealing Food Bank has reported that for the year April 2021 to March 2022 it was the busiest Trussell Trust foodbank in the Greater London area. In 2019 Ealing ranked 94 by the IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivations), being a relatively deprived area in England, but 4 areas in the Ealing borough were categorised by IMD as the 10% most deprived areas in England, while 29 areas in the borough were included in the 20% most deprived areas in England (Ealing Data, 2019).

Being an inner city borough of London, Ealing is witness to great wealth and huge inequality in wealth distribution. Families in London face far higher living costs than families living elsewhere in England. Poverty is higher in London than the other parts of the UK at 27%. Nearly 40% of Londoners have an income below the amount needed to achieve a basic decent standard of living. Ealing borough is no exception, according to Ealing Council data published in 2018 – one in eight workers live in poverty, around 3.7 million people. At the present time when the country is in the grips of the worst cost of living crisis in the last forty years, poverty is evenly split among in-work and workless households.



## Ethnicity in Ealing

According to the 'Equality in Ealing Summary Needs Assessment Report, August 2020' Ealing has the third most ethnically diverse local population in the UK, both in terms of the number of people from different ethnic backgrounds and how evenly they are distributed across the borough.

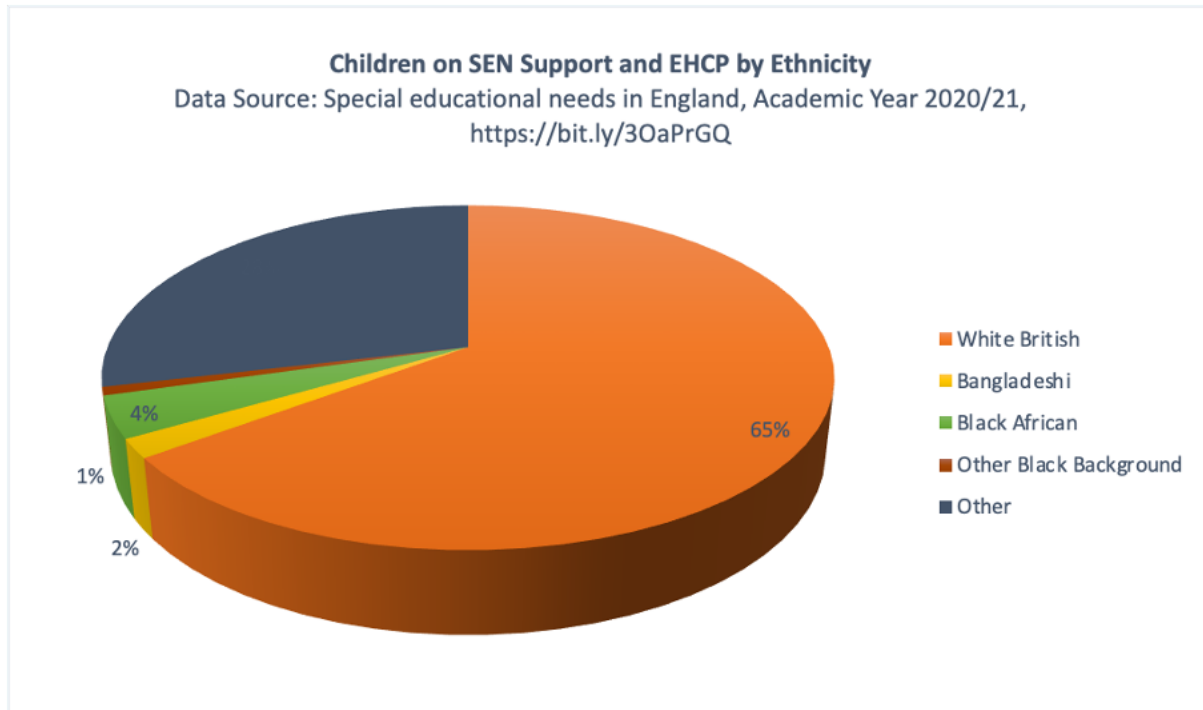
Black and minority ethnic communities (including, mixed / multiple ethnic groups) make up around 54% of Ealing's total population. The borough has residents from over 170 different countries. In 2018 the proportion of the non-UK born population in Ealing was 41.7% (down from 44.0% in 2009 and peaking at 50.0% in 2016). Only 58.3% of Ealing residents were born in the UK, compared with 63.6% for London and 84.6% for England overall.

The most common non-UK countries of birth for usual residents of Ealing in 2011 were India, Poland and Ireland. The Ealing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population varies between wards, with areas like Southall Broadway, Lady Margaret, Dormers Wells, Southall Green and Norwood Green having much higher concentrations of ethnic minorities than Southfield, Northfield and Ealing Common. (Page 8)

'Equality in Ealing Report' goes on to state in its executive summary that the ethnic minorities in Ealing generally tend to experience higher levels of relative deprivation, lower levels of employment, lower paid jobs and more manual or unskilled occupations, and also have poorer health outcomes for certain conditions.

The key ethnic groups experiencing poorer educational outcomes and other socioeconomic disadvantages tend to be from Black Caribbean, Somali, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani backgrounds. (Page1)

# Children on SEN Support & EHCP by Ethnicity in England



The above graph shows that Bangladeshi children form 2% of the total pie while Somali children are a fraction of the 5% of Black African and other Black Background children compared to White British children, who represent 65% of total children on SEN Support and EHCP.

The National Census in England does not collect data on Somali ethnicity. They are clubbed under the Black African and/or Black Other Groups on the Census questionnaire. Without exact numbers, it is difficult to document the exact needs of the community which in turn leads to the local governments being unable to allocate resources to provide essential support.

# Ealing's School Population

According to a report titled 'Equality in Ealing 2020' in Ealing schools 70% of the pupil population is from Asian, Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds. 69.4% of primary school pupils and 72.9% of high school pupils are from an ethnic minority.

## Ethnic Disproportionality

According to 'Ethnic disproportionality in the identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN): Ealing Local Authority Feedback Pack' – Disproportionality exists when pupils from an ethnic minority group are more (or less) likely to be identified with SEN than pupils in the majority group (in England, White British pupils). We say an ethnic minority group is over-represented when pupils in that group are more likely to be identified, and we say an ethnic minority group is under-represented when pupils from that group are less likely to be identified, than those in the majority ethnic group.

## Ethnic Disproportionality in Ealing

According to 'Ethnic disproportionality in the identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN): Ealing Local Authority Feedback Pack'-- There is substantial ethnic disproportionality in Ealing for the following groups:

Black Caribbean and Mixed White & Black Caribbean pupils are over-represented for **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)**

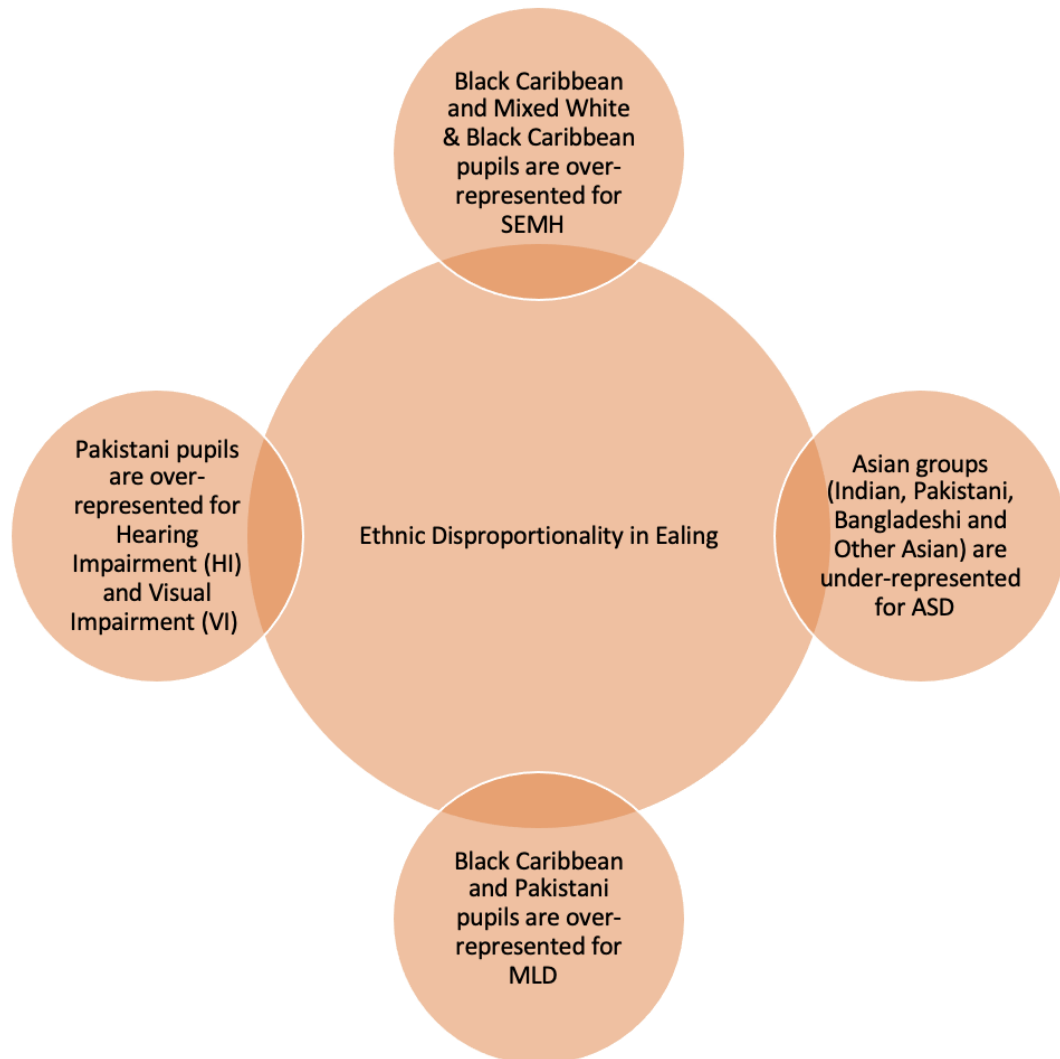
Asian groups (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other Asian) are under-represented for **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism

Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils are over-represented for **Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)**

Pakistani pupils are over-represented for **Hearing Impairment (HI)** and **Visual Impairment (VI)**

The over-representation for MLD is accounted for by pupil background factors including age, socioeconomic deprivation and gender, but the other ethnic

disproportionalities remain apparent even after accounting for pupil background characteristics.



# Evaluating the Services provided by ESDEG

**Introduction:** For the purpose of this study, we have selected five of the following ESDEG services

- Supplementary Schooling
- Youth Mentoring
- Family & Schools Partnership
- Sports & Leisure Activities
- Mental Health Counselling

These services were not specifically designed for children with SEND needs in mind, rather they include any child from an ethnic minority background and low-income household in Ealing and the neighbouring boroughs of West London. Over the years our staff and volunteers have included children with SEND needs in their activities and it is through the feedback that we received from their parents that encouraged ESDEG to start a parallel project dedicated to the requirements of children with SEND needs and their parents. ESDEG's SEND project started in January 2022, but some of the above services like the Supplementary Schooling have been going on since 2006.

We conducted in-depth one-to-one interviews with the five coordinators who are running these services.

# SEND Success Stories

We are sharing three of the success stories as reported by our service providers. These will give an idea of the kind of services and interventions we provide and outcomes we get.

## Case 1

A is a Year 6 student with SEND needs including speech and processing difficulties. She was a premature baby and comes from a deprived BAMER single mother household. Her parents had arrived in the UK as refugees; they split up a few years later. A lacked a male role model in her life due to the absence of her father. When A was referred to ESDEG's Mentoring Programme she had no self-confidence, had behavioural issues and was struggling academically, far behind her classmates. In view of her complex inter-sectional challenges, our Mentor decided to provide her with one-to-one support. During the initial sessions our mentor played fun, educational games with her, and helped A with her schoolwork. The mentor also worked on her social skills and monitored her progress. After some sessions the mentor worked with her to draw up a short term and a long-term plan on her future goals. Since she had actively participated in deciding the goals, she felt ownership and pride in them. A's progress accelerated and within 6 months she reported considerable improvements in different areas of her life – made lots of new friends, was happy at school and home, enjoyed lessons at school and pursued creative projects. She also worked on her leadership skills and the school reported an overall improvement in A's attainment, resilience, self-confidence, STEM, behaviour, staying away from trouble, crime and gangs. A now believes that her life is great despite all the significant adverse circumstances that she faces every day. We are proud to have contributed to A's journey towards a brighter future.

## Case 2

G, a Year 8 student was at trouble in his school where he was at the risk of exclusion on behavioural grounds. The school referred G to our Family & Schools Liaison Officer. While assessing his needs, our Officer realised that G may have ADHD and Dyslexia. On enquiry our officer found out that G had never been assessed, neither

his parents, nor his school had ever flagged his behaviour due to special needs. Our officer spoke to G's parents to convince them to get an assessment done for G. With the parents' permission our officer approached the school who agreed to collect evidence on G's needs. G's teachers are in the process of assessing G for Dyslexia and ADHD. They also conducted a Round Robin Test. School is now responding to his needs, rather than reacting to his behaviour, this has helped G calm down since he feels like the school is sympathetic to his needs. Our officer is confident that with the help of the evidence collected by the school, G will have a strong case when his parents apply for his formal assessment. This will help G to receive the right support that he needs for his overall development and education.

### Case 3

S was a 4-year-old girl who used to come to our After School Homework Class (Supplementary Schooling) with her mother to drop off her older sibling. Our staff noticed that S was a very shy child who had speech issues. On inquiry the mother shared that S was getting speech therapy from her school, but the mother was struggling to look after S on top of all her responsibilities. Though in the After School Homework Class ESDEG takes in children aged 5 or above, our coordinator made an exception and decided to take in S. In the initial classes S would sit in one corner with a pen and paper and not participate in the class at all. Our tutors had to be really patient with her, they decided to let her learn at her own pace and gave her some extra one-to-one time after class. The extra time with an adult worked wonders, S opened up, she learned to communicate with our tutors and understand and follow instructions. S is five years old now and going to reception. She can now recognise and follow alphabets and numbers, follow questions in class and respond in a language that teachers and tutors can understand. Our After School Homework team is very proud of S's achievements and hoping to help her with her education and overall development.

# Gaps in the System

During the interviews we asked all five ESDEG staff about the roadblocks that they face in service delivery and four broad themes emerged from their feedback. There is scope to do more work in these four areas and connect with national campaigns which are seeking to bring about changes in the said areas.

1. **Parents** – ESDEG’s staff talked about the day to day struggles of the migrant ethnic minority families from deprived backgrounds and low-income households. These families are the classic example of intersectionality<sup>1</sup> where race, class, gender, language, special needs and disability, and mental health intersect with one another and overlap. Multiple odds are stacked against these parents which in turn are passed down to their children. As a result, these parents often do not have the time, energy, resources and even the awareness to prioritise the mental and emotional well-being of their children, nor can they dedicate much time like the White or Asian<sup>2</sup> parents in supervising their children’s education and time in school. Various examples of these came up during the interviews. Like our Supplementary Schooling Coordinator talked about how Somali parents during the birth of a sibling do not bring the elder child to after school homework classes. When the child re-joins after missing three to four weeks, s/he is much behind not only their school cohort but also the homework club children.
2. **Schools** – Due to diminishing budgets mainstream schools are severely restricted in terms of resources, space, staff – this has a direct impact on the

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'intersectionality' has its roots in Black feminist activism, and was originally coined by American legal race scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw defined Intersectionality as a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking. Source <https://bit.ly/3FD6NKR>

<sup>2</sup> “Our new research also shows that the story around ethnic origin and education has become much more complex. Previously, children from all non-white backgrounds did less well. Now, children from some ethnic groups, including Chinese and Indian children, do better than the average, while others – including black Caribbean and poor white children – do worse.” Imran Mian, Director of Social Market Foundation (SMF) Commission on Inequality in Education Report 2016.



children and negatively affects their development. Sometimes even the SEND children with EHC Plans do not get the additional support that they require. According to the feedback from our staff, mainstream schools are doing their best but unless their budgets match the rising demand, real change is not possible. In this scenario often the weakest children slip through the nets and often get overlooked. Various examples of how children are suffering in school were provided. Our Youth Mentoring Officer talked about how children with SEND needs and their parents often complain that primary schools take much better care of their children than the secondary schools. Also, the primary schools engage with and involve the parents more. Many children with SEND needs have trouble adjusting to new environments, they feel lost and often get bullied in secondary schools which are much larger and more formal. Unless the secondary schools help these children handle the transition, children are at a risk of being left out, missing out on education, being bullied which lead to behavioural issues that in turn results in exclusion. But for secondary schooling to be able to do the required hand holding they need to be allocated more funding.

3. **Stigma** – Stigma, shaming and discrimination around mental health and SEND issues are widely prevalent in ethnic minority communities and often results in restricting those needing support from seeking it according to ESDEG's Integrative Therapist.

### **Community Perception**

Ethnic minority communities attitude to SEND and mental health makes it difficult to diagnose the child's needs:

- For example there is no word for autism in the Somali language, so it is particularly difficult for parents to comprehend their child's diagnosis;
- Views on the diagnosis by the community & family often conflict with the advice provided by the professionals, which confuses and often misleads the parents;
- Fear of stigma and social exclusion sometimes make parents hide their children's disability, challenging behaviour and mental health issues from the community and neighbours.

Fearing shame parents often hide mental health or SEND issues which delays in getting help for their children.

### **Suggested Solutions to Improve Under-Diagnosis**

- Encourage families not to delay seeking help for their children
  - Raise awareness of SEND and mental health issues at the community level
  - Involve community members as stakeholders in increasing awareness and understanding of SEND. This will result in culturally sensitive explanations which would be easily accessible by the larger community.
  - Better explanation and more information on SEND. Even parents who are fluent in English have problems understanding all the terminology.
  - Provide support to parents to understand, access, and engage with health, education, and social care services, particularly those providing support for mental health or development disorders.
  - Set up systems for early diagnosis and intervention which will help in reducing stigma, improve development trajectory and outcomes.
  - Foster effective partnership through good communication between parents and educational staff, other key workers, and organisations working on the issue.
  - Issue-specific sensitisation drive for health, education, and social care workers.
4. **Lack of resources** – All five staff talked about the cost-of-living crisis and how the charity sector along with education, health, and housing are facing resource crunch. ESDEG's Project Coordinator talked about the diminishing number of community spaces and the spiralling cost of hiring the remaining spaces. Charities and grassroots organisations are reeling under budget cuts yet the demand from the communities for their services are rising. ESDEG's coffee mornings are a popular meeting place for mothers with SEND children, similarly the exercise classes and the healthy cooking classes. For these ladies getting a gym membership is often out of budget, so ESDEG's free services are like a much-appreciated treat. But for us to be able to deliver more such activities we would have to raise more funds which is getting restricted, not to mention time, energy and resource consuming.

# Conclusion

## SEND Inclusion Policy

Though ESDEG does not have a formal SEND Inclusion Policy in place, in practice we have been operating SEND Inclusivity since our inception in 2006. Through this evaluation we realised that ESDEG is ready to draw up an Inclusion Policy which would not only help us in our day-to-day operations but also be a model for other charities working in the sector. Of course, drawing up a policy is a long-drawn process and ESDEG does not have the resources or the bandwidth needed to achieve all the inclusivity goals like for example a designated SEND friendly room in our After School Homework Class or SEND trained staff equipped to deal with varying complex needs of the children. But we are dedicated to adopting a graduated approach to inclusion and eager to take the first steps to see where this process takes our charity in terms of service delivery.