

# Nonprofit and NGO English

Instructor guide for advanced ESL learners working in nonprofit and ngo

**Audience: nonprofit program managers, NGO staff, grant writers, development officers, monitoring and evaluation teams, field coordinators, volunteer managers, and nonprofit executives**

Focus: A nonprofit and NGO English curriculum for donor communication, grants, program evaluation, field operations, safeguarding, community partnerships, volunteer management, and mission-versus-budget tradeoffs.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who already use professional English and need industry-specific terminology, realistic meetings, role-play pressure, careful pushback, and polished workplace outputs.

Teaching stance: this is language and workplace-communication training, not legal, medical, financial, safety, or regulatory advice. Instructors should connect every scenario to the learner's current company policies, local rules, and approved procedures.

## Purpose and Course Logic

A nonprofit and NGO English curriculum for donor communication, grants, program evaluation, field operations, safeguarding, community partnerships, volunteer management, and mission-versus-budget tradeoffs.

### Core language challenge

Advanced learners do not only need vocabulary. They need the ability to ask which standard applies, who owns the decision, what evidence is sufficient, what risk is being accepted, and how to disagree without sounding vague, defensive, or reckless.

Each module trains a realistic workplace pressure point with role-specific terms, decision language, pushback practice, and a written output learners can adapt to their own work.

### Course objectives

- Use nonprofit and ngo terminology accurately in meetings, written updates, handoffs, escalations, reviews, and client or stakeholder conversations.
- Turn vague requests into specific questions about evidence, owner, deadline, constraint, risk, and decision rights.
- Push back on unsafe, unsupported, noncompliant, unrealistic, or poorly scoped proposals while preserving professional trust.
- Handle realistic dialogues from the field, including conflict, uncertainty, documentation gaps, customer or stakeholder pressure, and cross-functional disagreement.
- Produce concise workplace outputs: briefing notes, escalation updates, meeting scripts, risk memos, decision records, and follow-up messages.

## Instructor Module Plans

### Module 1. Mission, Theory of Change, and Program Design (90 minutes)

Connect mission language to measurable program logic.

#### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: mission, theory of change, output, outcome.
- Explain the workplace tension: Inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and evidence need alignment.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Use inspirational stories only.
- Draft a usable theory-of-change explanation with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

#### Customized scenario

##### Workplace pressure

A donor asks how activities create outcomes.

Use inspirational stories only.

Inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and evidence need alignment.

#### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.

4. Output lab: draft and revise a theory-of-change explanation.

## Module 2. Grant Proposals and Donor Restrictions (90 minutes)

Write compelling proposals while respecting restrictions.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: restricted funding, deliverable, grant proposal, mission fit.
- Explain the workplace tension: Mission fit, restricted funds, capacity, and reporting obligations need review.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Accept it because funding is scarce.
- Draft a usable grant-fit recommendation with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

A funder offers money for work outside the mission.

Accept it because funding is scarce.

Mission fit, restricted funds, capacity, and reporting obligations need review.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a grant-fit recommendation.

## Module 3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (90 minutes)

Discuss impact evidence without overclaiming.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: indicator, baseline, attribution, learning agenda.
- Explain the workplace tension: Indicators, baseline, attribution, qualitative evidence, and limitations matter.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Call the program successful.
- Draft a usable evaluation caveat paragraph with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

A report shows improved participation but unclear outcomes.

Call the program successful.

Indicators, baseline, attribution, qualitative evidence, and limitations matter.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.

4. Output lab: draft and revise a evaluation caveat paragraph.

## Module 4. Field Operations and Partner Coordination (90 minutes)

Communicate operational risk in community settings.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: implementing partner, field visit, contingency, community trust.
- Explain the workplace tension: Local constraints, safety, community trust, budget, and contingency planning matter.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Pressure the partner publicly.
- Draft a usable partner recovery plan with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

A local partner cannot deliver services on the agreed timeline.

Pressure the partner publicly.

Local constraints, safety, community trust, budget, and contingency planning matter.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a partner recovery plan.

## Module 5. Safeguarding and Incident Reporting (90 minutes)

Escalate sensitive concerns with care.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: safeguarding, confidentiality, survivor-centered, incident report.
- Explain the workplace tension: Safeguarding policy, confidentiality, survivor-centered response, and investigation process apply.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Ask the staff member informally.
- Draft a usable safeguarding intake note with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

A volunteer reports possible misconduct by a staff member.

Ask the staff member informally.

Safeguarding policy, confidentiality, survivor-centered response, and investigation process apply.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.

3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a safeguarding intake note.

## Module 6. Volunteer Management and Training (90 minutes)

Set expectations for volunteers without discouraging them.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: volunteer role, training, supervision, duty of care.
- Explain the workplace tension: Role scope, training, supervision, risk, and client dignity matter.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Let them help wherever needed.
- Draft a usable volunteer boundary script with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

Volunteers want to perform tasks beyond their training.

Let them help wherever needed.

Role scope, training, supervision, risk, and client dignity matter.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a volunteer boundary script.

## Module 7. Advocacy, Public Messaging, and Neutrality (90 minutes)

Communicate advocacy positions responsibly.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: advocacy, campaign, dignity, source.
- Explain the workplace tension: Source, context, dignity, legal status, and organizational position need review.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Use it because it gets attention.
- Draft a usable advocacy message review with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

A campaign team wants to use a dramatic statistic.

Use it because it gets attention.

Source, context, dignity, legal status, and organizational position need review.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.

3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a advocacy message review.

## Module 8. Board Reporting and Sustainability (90 minutes)

Present program and financial reality without panic.

### Learners should be able to

- Use these terms accurately: board governance, cash runway, reserve, scenario.
- Explain the workplace tension: Scenario planning, reserves, restricted funds, staffing, and mission impact need clarity.
- Respond professionally when a stakeholder says: Ask the board for emergency funds without options.
- Draft a usable board sustainability update with facts, caveats, owner, and next step.

### Customized scenario

#### Workplace pressure

Cash runway is tightening while demand rises.

Ask the board for emergency funds without options.

Scenario planning, reserves, restricted funds, staffing, and mission impact need clarity.

### Classroom sequence

1. Terminology drill: define each term, then use it in one sentence from the learner's own role.
2. Risk map: identify the stakeholder, the decision, the evidence gap, the operating constraint, and the cost of being wrong.
3. Pushback ladder: move from clarifying question to evidence-based objection to consequence to decision request.
4. Output lab: draft and revise a board sustainability update.

## Nomenclature and Jargon

These are classroom working definitions. Learners should adapt wording to their organization's policies, systems, and local regulatory environment.

### Mission, Theory of Change, and Program Design

Term	Working meaning
mission	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in mission, theory of change, and program design; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
theory of change	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in mission, theory of change, and program design; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
output	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in mission, theory of change, and program design; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
outcome	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in mission, theory of change, and program design; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

### Grant Proposals and Donor Restrictions

Term	Working meaning
restricted funding	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in grant proposals and donor restrictions; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Term	Working meaning
deliverable	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in grant proposals and donor restrictions; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
grant proposal	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in grant proposals and donor restrictions; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
mission fit	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in grant proposals and donor restrictions; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Term	Working meaning
indicator	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in monitoring, evaluation, and learning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
baseline	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in monitoring, evaluation, and learning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
attribution	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in monitoring, evaluation, and learning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
learning agenda	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in monitoring, evaluation, and learning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Field Operations and Partner Coordination

Term	Working meaning
implementing partner	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in field operations and partner coordination; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
field visit	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in field operations and partner coordination; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
contingency	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in field operations and partner coordination; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
community trust	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in field operations and partner coordination; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Safeguarding and Incident Reporting

Term	Working meaning
safeguarding	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in safeguarding and incident reporting; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
confidentiality	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in safeguarding and incident reporting; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
survivor-centered	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in safeguarding and incident reporting; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
incident report	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in safeguarding and incident reporting; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Volunteer Management and Training

Term	Working meaning
volunteer role	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in volunteer management and training; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
training	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in volunteer management and training; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
supervision	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in volunteer management and training; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
duty of care	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in volunteer management and training; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Advocacy, Public Messaging, and Neutrality

Term	Working meaning
advocacy	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in advocacy, public messaging, and neutrality; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
campaign	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in advocacy, public messaging, and neutrality; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
dignity	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in advocacy, public messaging, and neutrality; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
source	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in advocacy, public messaging, and neutrality; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Board Reporting and Sustainability

Term	Working meaning
board governance	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in board reporting and sustainability; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
cash runway	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in board reporting and sustainability; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
reserve	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in board reporting and sustainability; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
scenario	Working nonprofit and ngo term used in board reporting and sustainability; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

## Industry-Specific Meeting Moves

Situation	Useful language
Mission, Theory of Change, and Program Design	Before we commit, I want to confirm mission, theory of change, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and evidence need alignment., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Grant Proposals and Donor Restrictions	Before we commit, I want to confirm restricted funding, deliverable, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If mission fit, restricted funds, capacity, and reporting obligations need review., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	Before we commit, I want to confirm indicator, baseline, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If indicators, baseline, attribution, qualitative evidence, and limitations matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.

Situation	Useful language
Field Operations and Partner Coordination	Before we commit, I want to confirm implementing partner, field visit, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If local constraints, safety, community trust, budget, and contingency planning matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Safeguarding and Incident Reporting	Before we commit, I want to confirm safeguarding, confidentiality, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If safeguarding policy, confidentiality, survivor-centered response, and investigation process apply., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Volunteer Management and Training	Before we commit, I want to confirm volunteer role, training, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If role scope, training, supervision, risk, and client dignity matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Advocacy, Public Messaging, and Neutrality	Before we commit, I want to confirm advocacy, campaign, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If source, context, dignity, legal status, and organizational position need review., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Board Reporting and Sustainability	Before we commit, I want to confirm board governance, cash runway, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If scenario planning, reserves, restricted funds, staffing, and mission impact need clarity., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.

### High-pressure pushback frames

- I understand the urgency. The risk is that we move faster than the evidence or process supports.
- I am not blocking the goal. I am naming the condition we need before the decision is safe and credible.
- If we accept this risk, we should name the owner, document the assumption, and define the trigger for escalation.
- That may be possible, but not under the current scope, timeline, or approval path.
- Let's separate what we know, what we assume, and what still needs confirmation.

## Assessment and Coaching

### Performance rubric

Skill	Developing	Proficient	Strong
Terminology	Recognizes terms but uses them loosely.	Uses field terms accurately in context.	Defines terms, connects them to evidence, and explains decision impact.
Pushback	Disagrees vaguely or avoids disagreement.	Names concern with evidence and next step.	Balances urgency, relationship, risk, owner, and decision rights.
Scenario judgment	Focuses on one stakeholder's preference.	Identifies constraint, risk, and process.	Guides the group toward a documented, realistic decision.
Written output	Writes general summaries.	Produces clear notes with facts and owner.	Creates concise, decision-ready workplace communication.

### Source orientation

- Donor agreements and grant restrictions.
- Safeguarding and incident-reporting policies.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning standards.
- The learner's own company policies, SOPs, contracts, systems, templates, and approved communication standards.