

# Nonprofit and NGO English Jargon Quick Reference

Field-specific terms, contrast pairs, and high-pressure sentence frames

**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.

## 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.
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.

Term	Working meaning
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.

Term	Working meaning
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.
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.

### Contrast Pairs

Do not confuse	Useful distinction
mission vs outcome	In mission, theory of change, and program design, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
restricted funding vs mission fit	In grant proposals and donor restrictions, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
indicator vs learning agenda	In monitoring, evaluation, and learning, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
implementing partner vs community trust	In field operations and partner coordination, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
safeguarding vs incident report	In safeguarding and incident reporting, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
volunteer role vs duty of care	In volunteer management and training, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
advocacy vs source	In advocacy, public messaging, and neutrality, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
board governance vs scenario	In board reporting and sustainability, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.