Prompt for NGO report

Assignment

You are to prepare a report as if presenting to, or as an investigating member of, a Non-Government Organization (NGO) on an issue that concerns youth. This report could be worded in such a way that it is intended for the NGO to inform the wider public and/or submit this report to the UN, a government, or some other institution in hopes of affecting/influencing policies. So imagine that the “executive board” of the NGO, or the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) or other such UN committee, or the US secretary of state or president (or some other country’s president) is the primary audience, with the wider public the secondary audience.

As any NGO report, this kind of report should be informative (with data/stats) as well as advocacy. That is, it is not enough to say X amount of children in country Y don’t have enough to eat based on Z studies (NGO/government statistics). Is there some kind of historical, cultural, economic, environmental issues that we should connect? What kinds of activities/solutions have various organizations, government studies, community members, activists, and scholars suggested would be helpful in improving the situation? What has been previously tried (and failed?) by other orgs in country Y and/or have been tried in some other country and failed/succeeded there and could possibly be applied in country Y?

So your group will pick one particular concern/issue involving youth in one (or perhaps more) country of concern and prepare the report as appropriate.

Teachers will be organized into groups of six (6) for this assignment. They should share/distribute responsibilities.

Each group will present (orally with PowerPoint) their project on July 28. For this project, assume that we, the Kevorkian-CLACS summer institute administration, are the “president” or executive committee of an NGO, and your fellow teachers are the “wider public.” So you will include a roleplaying element of presenting a report and advocating in front of an important audience, not unlike a “model UN” kind of activity.

Parameters

You will create a report that is 7-10 pages in length. This report should be subdivided into sections (in a manner similar to NGO reports—for examples see below) which will include a statement/overview of the topic/situation and a brief statement on proposed solution(s). Then a section that gives background on the country and issue (for example, poor infrastructure, a war, a cholera outbreak) that has impacted children, with charts, graphs, and images, as appropriate, to inform your readers/audience. Including any studies/scholarship by NGOs, governments, and scholars will be an important element in this section. Then the last section will outline what might be possible options/changes to implement, again, probably derived from suggestions or similar activities conducted by NGOs or governments (or scholars) in other countries. Part of the page length is due to the assumed inclusion of at least two or three maps, graphs, charts or images.
As an introduction, or for information purposes, you should insert a map of the country/region in question. If appropriate/possible, perhaps there will be inclusion of a picture of the issue being analyzed (say, education facilities of children in X region).

Depending on the team, you should share responsibilities (such as all writing the text), but perhaps you will distribute duties more or less along the lines of: Who will cull and synthesize statistics into a new chart? Who will research and cite studies on this issue from other countries? Who will write section Q of the report, who will write section G?

We don’t expect you to “reinvent the wheel,” and want this project to be interesting, informative, bring attention to the issue, and hopefully “fun” to some degree. So you should certainly feel free to take an already-known issue/problem (you don’t need to “discover” a new issue somewhere in the world), and you can model, or copy, the format you see in other NGO reports. To help inspire you, see some of the suggestions below.

(Please note: Any/all of the sites suggested below are not necessarily a promotion/acceptance of any of them. It is entirely valid to critique NGOs (and governments!) for problematic statements, stats, or policies. And it is certainly possible to frame many of these NGOs as working within a “Developed World Saving the Developing World” paradigm.)

For example, Human Rights Watch has a page entitled “Children’s Rights”—see https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights. Perusing this page might give you ideas/inspiration.

As mentioned, the UNCHR (also referred to as OHCHR) has a page on which you can start—see https://www.un.org/en/our-work/protect-human-rights. If you are going to frame your issue as one of human rights, then knowing and citing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights) is important.


Reports and issues of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are found on https://www.unicef.org/.

Other NGOS and/or activists have plenty of websites and resources, and these may be global or country-specific. But as a few examples, you can see:

UN Youth Advocacy Group: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/gefi/about/youth-advocacy-group/

Save the Children: https://www.savethechildren.org/

Advocates for Youth: https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/issue/young-people-in-the-global-south/

Youth Policy: https://www.youthpolicy.org

As a starting point for the country you may select, you might find that the government has an office or ministry (in the US we would call this the “Department of…” [and please be careful in your Google searches, because sometimes a phrase like “ministry of youth in X country” will bring up Christian missionary {“ministry”} websites]).
So, for example,


The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the Ministry of Culture and Youth: [https://www.mckd.gov.ae/en/](https://www.mckd.gov.ae/en/)

Some [scholarly associations](https://www.mckd.gov.ae/en/) study, issue statements, and have resources, on youth in particular regions, or have sections focusing on topics that are children-specific. For example, for our purposes the most important are:

Association of Middle East Children and Youth Studies (AMECYS): [https://amecys.wordpress.com/](https://amecys.wordpress.com/)

Latin American Studies Association’s page on education: [https://sections.lasaweb.org/sections/educacion-politicaseducativas/](https://sections.lasaweb.org/sections/educacion-politicaseducativas/)

Finally, as [models for what NGO reports](https://www.mckd.gov.ae/en/) may look like (in much larger form, of course!) see examples such as:


**Food for Thought!**

Finally, you have a great deal of info, sources, and inspiration at your fingertips…as given by all of our presenters this summer! You should try using some of the information, theories, and/or methods outlined by the summer institute presenters and/or the readings they provided.

As some of these presenters have cautioned—true in any field—we should not always take a government’s or NGO’s statements about an issue at face value. Government ministry websites may be promoting a particular narrative, or have questionable statistics, and an NGO may want to celebrate “successes” while downplaying “failures,” and they may also have a fundraising goal in mind, so they may present info in a way to evoke support (and self-justification). Information from advocacy groups and/or political parties is, by their inherent nature, overtly political, but any NGO is affected by global politics, so this really is just a truism. The best way to guard against “buying” too completely into an NGO’s narrative is to crosscheck/compare/contrast stats/data/reports when possible. News investigations (newspapers, tv networks) or activists may also provide on-the-ground coverage that complicates claims made by an NGO or government (take as an easy example: Myanmar).
It is actually fine (and beneficial) for your report to state that complete confidence in particular stats is impossible or, perhaps even better, to highlight how one NGO’s stats differ from another NGO’s stats or government report, and so forth.

If you are promoting the reliability of a particular NGO (or government) then you should explain how/why your group feels this NGO is a good source on this issue. Perhaps other NGOs cite this NGO, or perhaps other scholars (scholarship) have established that this NGO is a positive force within this particular field of action.