GlobalDev Style guide

GlobalDev is a platform for researchers based in low- and middle-income countries, particularly younger scholars, and their colleagues in the Global North to discuss evidence on development policy. Our goal is for each column to **take an urgent policy challenge in the Global South and explore how it can be addressed by evidence from high-quality research.**

While some pieces will inevitably draw on the authors' own work, the most effective ones provide an overview of a broad swathe of studies, pointing to key findings, exploring where there is and isn't consensus, and drawing out key implications for policy-makers, practitioners, NGOs, students and the general public.

Here are the Dos and Don'ts of writing for GlobalDev:

Do:

– Use the following structure

Title – this should be a short and clear statement of the topic of no more than 75 characters including spaces.

Standfirst or 'teaser' paragraph – this should be written in the voice of the editors, setting up the topic/policy challenge, outlining the content to follow, and highlighting a key policy conclusion/takeaway. Drafting a maximum of three sentences in this way is often a useful way to think through what is the key research-based insight into policy that your piece is offering. The article itself should be written in the first person.

Main text – this should ideally be around 800 words. It should be written in a style that is accessible to a non-specialist audience – in language that a bright college student understands – and the student's parent, professor, neighborhood activist, banker, city council member... in fact, anyone who is interested in how the world works and how to change it. It should not read like a press release or non-technical summary of a single research paper; it should read like a research-based contribution to a broad policy debate.

– Carefully write the opening sentence/paragraph of the main text – this should grab the reader's attention with specific and provocative points, to draw them in before they click away. It should include some important numbers/facts relevant to the topic, but not contain any references.

–Use Charts, graphics, photos, maps: these are welcome if they add punch to your words.

– Organize your piece with titles, sub-headings, and sidebars that stand out: all of these matter and all suggestions are welcome.

– Fill in the author's submission form: and make sure all of your co-authors do as well. You will need a high-quality photo of yourself, and a short bio (not more than 70 words).

– Share your article widely! : We encourage our authors to have active social media accounts to share our content with their networks. We are promoting a democratic space where we can have debates and discussions. In case you need support, please let us know and we will help you.

🔴 Don't:

– Write an opinion piece or a summary of your research paper: We want authors to focus on a development policy challenge and tell us what they know about it from their research and the research of others

– Use footnotes or citations: we avoid this academic apparatus. When you refer to someone's work, please do so as part of your narrative, embedding a hyperlink to the research paper or report if appropriate (although preferably not more than one per paragraph). Links to full studies should ideally be ungated versions.

– Republish without crediting GlobalDev: we take the editorial process very seriously, and invest significant financial resources and time, mobilizing expertise in a number of domains for each piece that is submitted to the blog. Given this significant investment, we can only review original and unpublished content, and request that authors discuss with the editorial team any plan to repost, in part or full, blogs that went through the full editorial process and translation at GlobalDev.

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