**Advantage Africa Partners’ Workshop
Handout 9.1: Dos and Don’ts in Donor Reports**

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| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| ✓ Make yourself aware of the donors reporting requirements and ensure that the monitoring and evaluation planned for your project will meet them ✓ Keep a monthly diary of project activities and a project file with copies of all the relevant information that will be required to write a good quality report✓ Advise donors of any significant changes to the project as they occur✓ Take note of the deadline and plan, in order to submit the report on time✓ Start with a copy of the donor’s reporting format ✓ Read through the original proposal submitted to the donor ✓ Structure the report using headings, bullet points, tables, diagrams and photographs✓ Be clear and concise ✓ Be honest about any problems encountered✓ Explain how problems were and are being addressed and any changes made to the project✓ Show how the project has had an impact on poverty and the beneficiaries’ quality of life ✓Include case studies and ‘human-interest’ stories✓ Describe the impact of the project on different social groups, especially the most disadvantaged in the community, men and women✓ Describe progress against activities, outputs and the project purpose in the logframe ✓ Produce a financial report in the same format and with the same headings as the budget in the original proposal✓ Explain any significant over or under spends for every budget line where they occur✓ Ask colleagues to read through the report and give their comments ✓ Explain new knowledge/lessons learnt from the project and how these will be disseminated at various levels✓ Be positive and upbeat | × Ignore the information about reporting in the contract× Forget to keep detailed project records× Upset donors by explaining significant changes in a report without obtaining their prior agreement× Leave it to the last minute or underestimate the time required and end up stressed × Ignore donor formats and guidelines × Forget what the donor agreed to fund× Use small fonts and margins× Use too many words or unnecessary jargon × Be economical with the truth or try to gloss over any problems× Talk about problems without also talking about solutions× Describe the activities without communicating their impact on people living in poverty× Make unsubstantiated statements about the impact of the project on the beneficiaries× Make out that the beneficiaries are one homogenous group if they aren’t × Ignore the project plan (or logframe), targets and indicators contained in the original proposal × Use different budget headings or internal reports, unless you know they are acceptable to the donor× Ignore deviations from the budget or send conflicting messages in the narrative and financial sections of the report× Submit the report without proof reading and correcting at least twice× Report on the project in isolation× Be too dry or dull |