

Abstract

One may be forgiven to assume that there are no women's movements in Kenya today. This is due to the trajectory that women's organizations have taken in the recent past. Apparently, women's movements presently appear to concentrate on the fight for/against issues which may be seen as less urgent such as women representation in leadership and politics; equal access to education and jobs; visibility in the media and literature; two thirds gender rule; etcetera. Seemingly, the expectation of the public is women's organizations that have a direct and tangible effect on the women concerned. Perhaps this is a carryover from the pioneer women's organizations such as the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), whose basic aim was to directly impact and lift the socio-economic status of women without having to inject in feministic, or competitive energies. The period 1978-2002 is considered the Golden Era of the organization, which, on realizing that it would be difficult to change the lives of women without economic independence, embarked on introducing income generating projects across the country. "How can women's organizations help foster women's economic empowerment?" The paper attempts to answer this question by exploring the role MYWO played in the economic empowerment of Abakhayo women in Busia County.