

## **Mirroring Gender Discourses. Migrants as Development Broker and Gender Equity**

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This paper investigates the hiatus between gender narratives and practices that new broker perform within the development arena through the exploration of a co-development project (*Ghanacoop*) involving Ghanaian migrants to Italy.

*Ghanacoop* is a cooperative company trading in fruits and “ethnic products” between Ghana and Italy and is managed by Ghanaian transmigrants. The company is also involved in two health and education development projects in Ghana and has become an important broker of development between Italy and Ghana. *Ghanacoop* was born within a local Ghanaian migrant association and has been supported by a range of international and local institutions, such as the International Organization of Migration (IOM), local state institutions, an NGO, and some economic actors as well as the Ghanaian umbrella association in Italy (COGNAI). Due to its entrepreneurial features and idiom, *Ghanacoop* has succeeded in opening a new space of political negotiation with Italian and Ghanaian State institutions, being driven by some sets of principles and rules informed by good governance and gender equity. However, a closer look indicates that the reality is far more complex. Based on an ethnographic research, this paper employs a dual analytical strategy, exploring how *Ghanacoop* mirrors and translates the diaspora discourse concerning gender equity and women empowerment. On the one hand, it examines the narratives and principles that *Ghanacoop* presents; on the other, it analyzes how the effects and practices are acted and represented in the company. The paper thus displays the discrepancies and the coding and decoding processes revealing a contradictory space of negotiation and agency for women. Gazing into practices of performing gender equity and good governance, the paper demonstrates how practices and discourses stretch in opposite directions. Finally, it argues that co-development is not, *per se* a process of dismantling power asymmetries between genders, generations or ethnic groups.