

# Summary

**Westberg, Hanna (ed)** *Growth Agreements – a question of breaking old patterns? Participation of Women and Men in the work with the Growth Agreements.*

More and more attention is being paid today to the fact that it is the conditions offered by the local society – trust, confidence and social networks – that determine whether people take the risk of, for example, starting their own business and driving through the processes of development.

The government of Sweden has requested all counties to work for growth agreements together with all municipalities. The growth agreements aim to achieve active participation from people in different regions in order to create a dynamic and developing industry, increase employment for both men and women and raise the level of competence and education.

Gender Mainstreaming can be defined as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men in all areas of decision-making in the public and private sectors. It aims at realising the full potential of all members of society to contribute to social cohesion, competitiveness and growth.

In this study we focus on how the partnership in the Growth Agreement is taking into consideration that humanity consists to 50% of both sexes. We stress the importance of Gender Mainstreaming and equal Opportunities on the micro-level. We try to shed light on the different conditions for women and men in the local and regional society. We also illustrate that participation of both sexes is needed to achieve strong and sustainable economies and growth.

One empirical part of the study included interviews made on ‘equal opportunity workers’ (Equal Opportunity Experts and women representing Regional Resource Centres). These interviews pointed out that to affect and create growth the growth agreements must consider more social factors and not only concentrate on technical and economical factors. The growth agreements have to be formed by the relations, context, state of trust, contacts which encompass the people and the enterprises.

Social capital in the way of generalized trust is a moral resource which need to be in constant use. To get growth sustainable you need people with responsible rationality not people enslaved by the crude market forces.