

## Sweden – a country with a high dependent population

Sweden is a prosperous, highly industrialised country in which many well educated women have worthwhile careers and good incomes and the nation's life expectancy is one of the highest in the world. This leads many adults to postpone both marriage and child rearing and Sweden's population had actually started to decrease by 1985. Since 2000, however, it has shown a significant increase – mainly due to the migration of refugees from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia and the tendency for the migrants to have much larger families after becoming settled in Sweden.

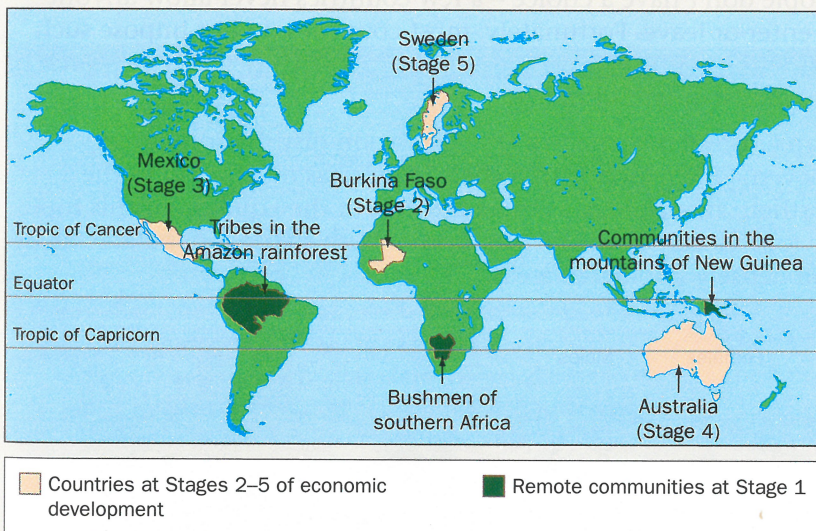
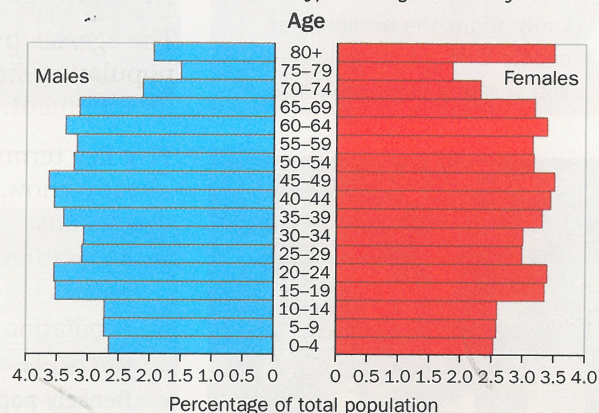
In Sweden there is a large percentage of elderly dependents who rely on the working population. Increasing life expectancy and a low birth rate has resulted in an ageing population. Consequences of this include:

- Greater demand for medical services and healthcare
- Increased costs of supporting older people through pensions
- A growing market for leisure industries to meet the demand of older people
- Increased awareness of the 'grey vote' in elections

Sweden is one example of a country that has progressed through the five stages of economic development. The shape of its age/sex pyramid today is typical of Stage 5 (diagram B).



**B** Age/sex pyramid for Sweden, a typical Stage 5 country



### Further research

Use the internet to find and print out an age/sex pyramid for your own (or a neighbouring) country. Describe the main features of the population structure of your chosen country.

### Topic link

What you have learned about population structure will help you when you study Topics 1.1 pages 2–17.

**C** Location of countries/places at different stages of economic development

## Now Investigate

- 1 How do governments in countries such as Sweden respond to the issues which arise from the increasing percentage of older people?
- 2 Identify a country with a large percentage of young dependents. What problems might this cause in the country?