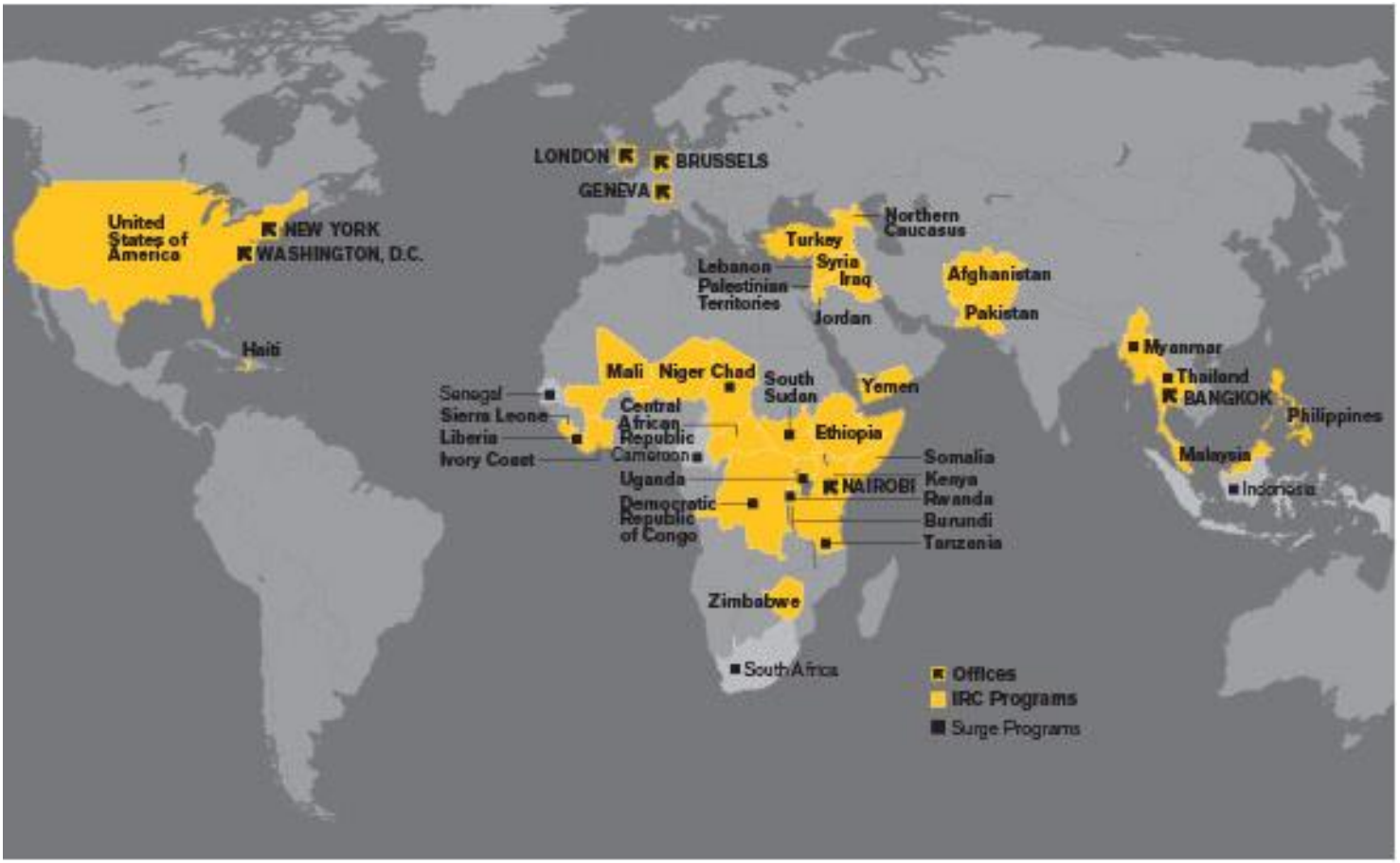
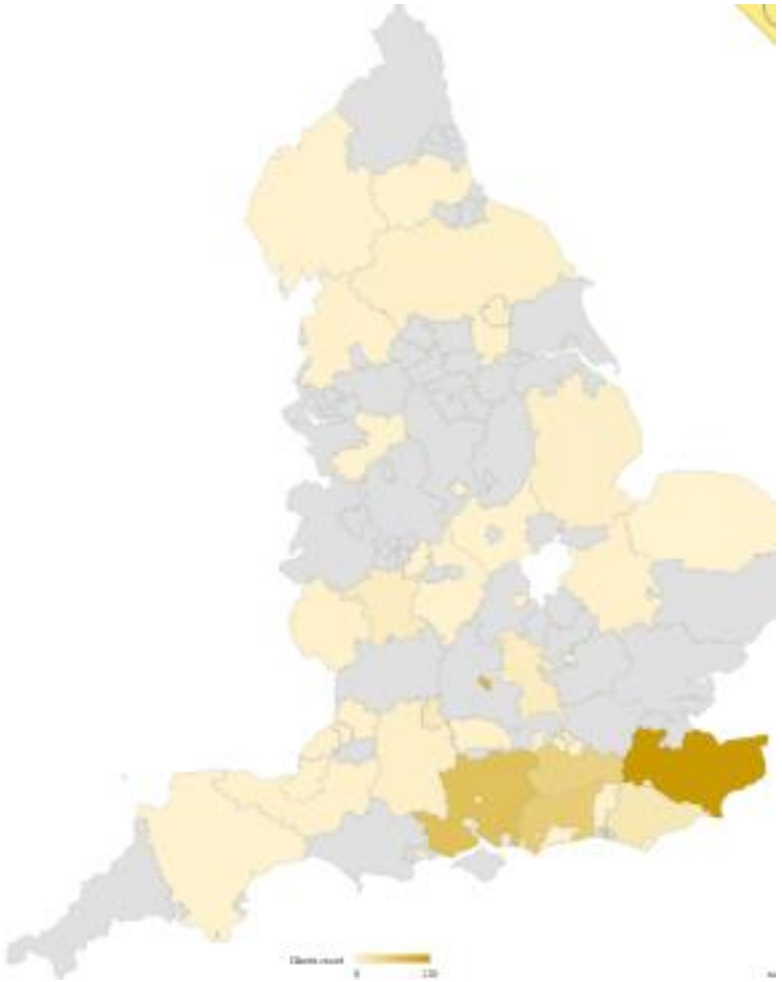
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

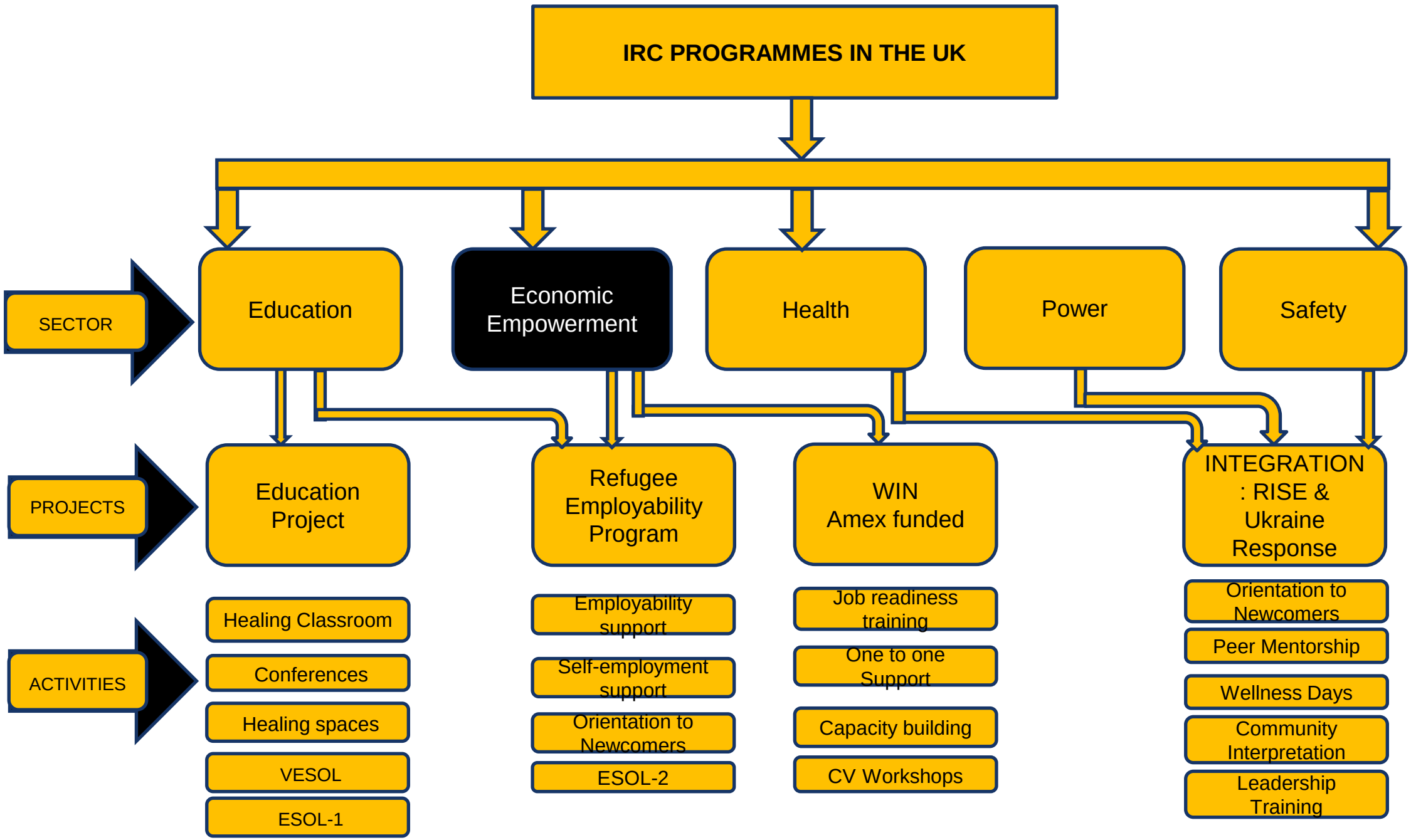
Allowing Asylum Seekers to work is good for UK Economie.

What is the IRC





Founded by **Albert Einstein** and present in more than 40 countries including 28 USA states, The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises, including the **conflict in Ukraine** and the **crisis in Afghanistan. We** help to restore **health**, **safety**, **education**, **economic wellbeing** and **power** to people devastated by conflict and disaster. And we are proud to fight for a world where **women and girls** have an equal chance to succeed.



Policy & Advocacy

Why Allowing Asylum Seekers to work is Good for UK Economy?

- **Argument against the Pull Factor Concept**
- **A case for Policy Change**
- **Choosing between formal and informal Economy**
- **The numbers**
- **What happens elsewhere?**

Argument against the Pull Factor Concept

Pull Factor Arguments

- The government argues that allowing Asylum Seekers to work would attract people to apply for asylum in the UK rather than elsewhere.
- Some argue that such policy would encourage ‘economic migrants’ to apply for asylum to be able to work

Counter-arguments

- Government own commissioned study indicates that there is little to no evidence of a link between economic rights and entitlements and the destination choices of those seeking asylum.
- A study done by Warwick University find out that for people who arrive in the UK without a visa and with the intention of working, it is easier to remain hidden than to apply for asylum and become visible to the authorities.

A case for Policy Change

Individual Welfare

For individuals who often face lengthy wait times in the asylum system, being unable to work exacerbates other challenges. For instance, many asylum seekers experience poverty – the state allowance is only £5.84 per day, while an extended period of uncertainty, worry and boredom can contribute to mental health issues

benefits to the community

- limits opportunities for integration since having a job enables new arrivals to practice language skills and build social and professional networks
- We also know from IRC's wider experience that supporting asylum seekers and refugees with integration services from arrival,
- including job readiness training, supports integration in the long run
- individuals to maintain their professional skills and confidence throughout the asylum process

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Allowing Asylum seekers to work is good for the UK economy

- 68 percent of UK business decision makers are in favour of allowing asylum seekers to work after they have waited six months or more for their asylum claims to be processed. Currently, they can only do so after twelve months. Most business decision makers (64 percent) believe that this would have a positive impact on the UK economy.

- The current asylum system costs the UK around £3 billion a year and rising and around £6 million a day on hotel bills. Additionally, there is a cost to the local authorities where asylum seekers live.

- Many organisations have also pointed to the economic case for reform. The Lift the Ban coalition estimates that preventing people seeking asylum from working costs the taxpayer more than £300 million a year.

- According to the National Institute of Social And Economic Research, allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would increase tax revenue by £1.3 billion, reduce Government expenditure by £6.7 billion, increase GDP by £1.6 billion, and improve the wellbeing of those individuals.

What can government and businesses do?

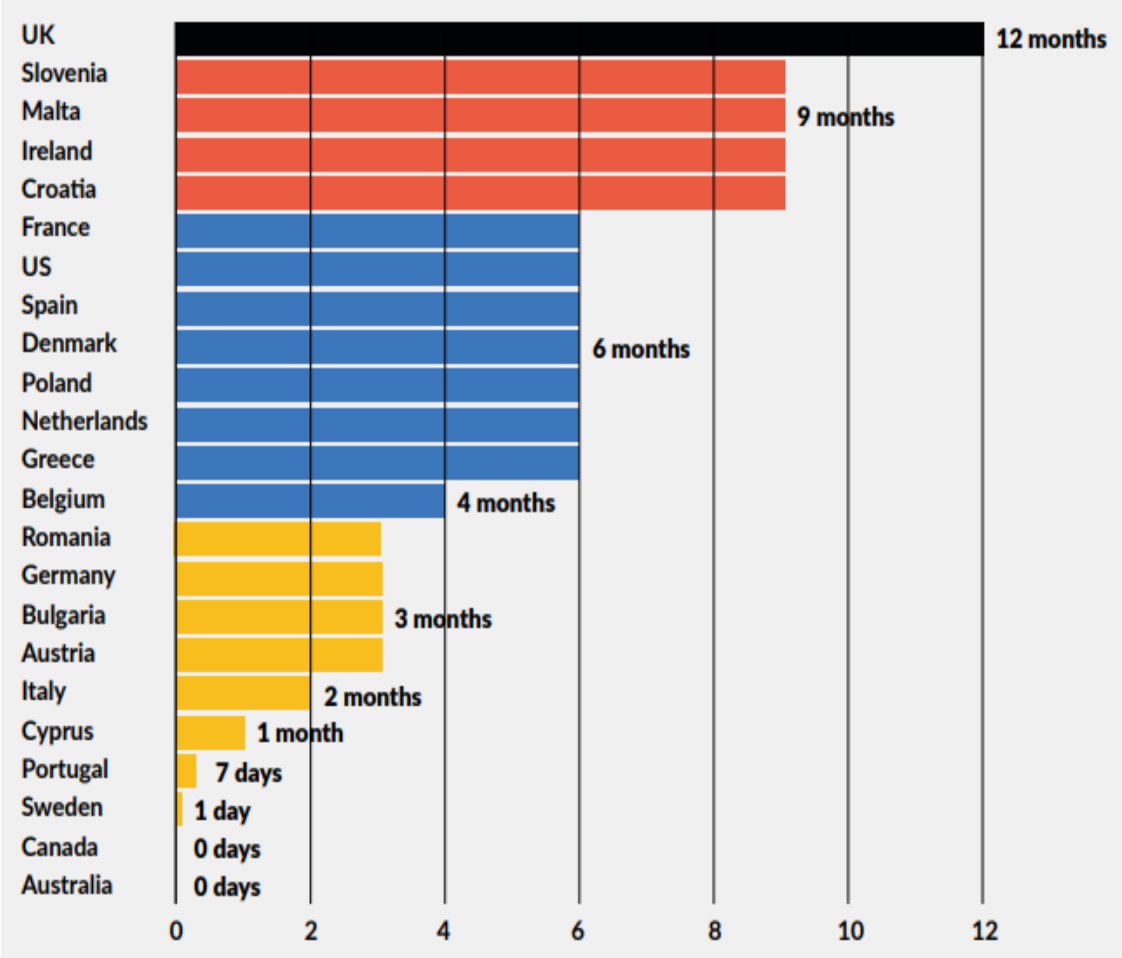
Allowing asylum seekers to work is a vital part of building a more inclusive and resilient economy. Doing so can support the UK in withstanding socio-economic challenges such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis. Here's what we think government and business can do:

- **What can business do?**
- Join the Lift the Ban coalition. Over 260 organisations – businesses, trade unions, think tanks, faith groups and charities – have come together to win the right to work for people seeking asylum. The International Rescue Committee is a proud member of this coalition.
- Stand up in support of refugees and asylum-seekers by emphasizing the benefits of diverse and inclusive workforces in the
- private sector.
- Offer volunteering placements to asylum-seekers to support professional development throughout the asylum process.

- **What can the government do?**
- Change the immigration rules so that people seeking asylum can work from six months after they have submitted their claim.
- Permission to work should extend to sectors beyond the shortage occupation list and allow for self-employment too.
- Deliver integration services from arrival, with a particular focus on increased English language support and job readiness training.
- Include refugees' and asylum seekers' perspectives in the design of the integration policy and programming committed to in the New Plan for Immigration.

What happens elsewhere?

- Lift the Ban campaign led by Refugee action has compared the Length of time (in months) before people seeking asylum are given the right to work in different countries
- Compared to other major economies in the west, people wait longer in the UK than in the compared countries. This suggests that the Pull Factor concept is short of evidences.



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Thank you.