

# Developing an indicator of graduate outcomes for refugee and asylum seeker students supported by the humanitarian scholarship program

This research project investigates the economic and social status of graduates who were in the UTS Humanitarian Scholarship Program, particularly what impact the HSP have on students following their graduation. Furthermore, the project aimed to assess the key benefits and challenges of the program to make recommendations on how the HSP and UTS, more broadly, may support refugee students in the program.

## Why the study:

- The graduate outcomes of the students who were in the Humanitarian Scholarship Program (HSP) have not been included in the UTS Social Impact Dashboards (SID).
- The effects of the UTS HSP support program on undergraduate students from refugee or asylum seeker (RAS) backgrounds are unknown.

## What we did:

- A literature review to gain a deeper understanding of existing research on graduate outcomes for refugee students worldwide. This helped us identify gaps in the literature, which informed the development of more relevant and nuanced survey and interview questions.
- Based on our findings, we designed a survey using Qualtrics to collect demographic data on HSP graduates and measure their outcomes since graduation.
- We then conducted semi-structured interviews with HSP graduates to explore their individual experiences in greater depth. These interviews provided valuable insights into the intangible aspects of the program that could not be captured through quantitative methods alone.

## What we found:

- Higher education access provided a sense of hope, security, and economic stability and restored a sense of agency and purpose for people here in Australia.
- Participants were very satisfied with the educational experience and support received from UTS and the Humanitarian Scholarship Program.
- Most participants have full-time employment in the government, business, engineering, healthcare and hospitality industries and have taken less than 6 months to find their jobs. What they studied at UTS is directly related to their employment.
- Most participants feel welcome in their professional field and have a sense of belonging in their current workplace. They also feel safe and free to discuss culture at work.
- Most participants feel safe, accepted and included in their local community

## What this means:

- The student-mentor relationship played a critical role in students' overall satisfaction.
- There is a need for more tailored mental health support that is sensitive to the refugee experience and diverse cultural backgrounds
- The university experience increased people's confidence to engage in the 'Australian culture', which increased their sense of belonging.
- The students will benefit from social network functions, acting as an accelerator for building students' professional networks and providing them with opportunities to access job opportunities.
- Training programs on dealing with discrimination situations and time management are required.