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Profile: I am a sociologist and writer committed to tackle gender inequalities in the context of health and migration. I have a 10-year experience of advocacy and research in this space, working with women, adolescents, and LGBTQ+ communities, and have produced a range of outputs, including but not limited to decolonial knowledge production and digital storytelling outputs, ranging from podcast, animated videos, to online audio drama.

Last update: 10 April 2026

Work experience:

- **Non-Residential Fellowship**, Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2026
 - o Disseminate research on LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees to Asia Pacific stakeholders
- **Senior Research Fellow**, Bradford Institute for Health Research, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation, & **Honorary Senior Research Fellow**, Bristol Medical School, Bristol University, UK – 2024 to 2025
 - o Qualitative research lead for community-based children and adolescent physical activity research
- **Research assistant**, Melbourne Sexual Health Clinic, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Monash University – 2022 to 2023
 - o Co-develop an online audio drama as an HIV educational tool for Asian-born gay men
- **Research assistant**, School of Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology – 2022 – 2023
 - o Lead a team of 4 peer researchers from diverse ethnicities
 - o Lead the participatory development of 5 animated videos as an HIV educational tool for migrants
- **Team leader and project officer**, HIV education program, Queensland Positive People, 2016 – 2020
 - o Lead a geographically disperse team of 15 Peer Navigators (community health workers)
 - o Monitoring and evaluation (mixed method) and organisational policy development
 - o Lead the development of 12 educational modules
 - o Develop & deliver HIV training for health and social care workers

Education:

- PhD (Public Health), University of Queensland, Australia, 2024
- Master of Health Management (with Distinction), Queensland University of Technology, Australia, 2017
- ~~Doctor of Medicine, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Indonesia, 2016~~

Advocacy, research, and dissemination highlights:

Co-founded [Third Queer Culture](#), a social and creative advocacy group for LGBTQ+ forcibly displaced people in Brisbane.

Fundraising initiatives for LGBTQ+ forcibly displaced people: [A video promotion](#) on the impact of Pride Foundation's financial support for Third Queer Culture; [A documentary film screening](#) to fund Third Queer Culture (supported by Asia Pacific Network of Refugees)

[Have Fun Butt Play Safe](#), an audiovisual animated videos to promote sexual health and HIV literacy among diverse migrant communities in Queensland.

[Health Without Borders](#), a public health teaching podcast on the topic of refugees and mental health

Key research publications:

Istiko, et al. (2026). Intersectional problems, intersectional solutions: A whole-of-community approach to local park-based physical activity interventions for ethnically diverse adolescent girls in the United Kingdom. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 100373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2026.100373>

Istiko, S.N. (2025). Race-conscious conversations: A decolonial interviewing style. *Qualitative Research*, (pre print). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941251359085>

Istiko, et al. (2024). Understanding key priority areas of mental health among queer asylum seekers and refugees in Australia through the lens of structural violence: a modified Delphi method study. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 37(3): 750-767. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feae067>

Istiko, et al. (2023). Developing critical HIV health literacy: insights from interviews with priority migrant communities in Queensland, Australia. *Cultural, Health, & Sexuality*, 10:1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2023.2265960>

Istiko, et al. (2022). (Not that) essential: a scoping review of migrant workers' access to health services and social protection during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(5), 2981. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052981>

Grant capture: Since 2020, I have generated a total of **USD 165,911 / £ 123,403 / € 141,671 / AU\$ 234,622** in research and community development funding from agencies in Asia Pacific (e.g., Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, Queensland Health) & the UK (e.g., Bristol Biomedical Research Centre).

Strategic and leadership roles:

Trustee, Race Equality Network, United Kingdom – 2024 to 2025

Members, Coalition for LGBTQIA+ Asylum and Migration Justice, Forcibly Displaced Network, Australia – 2024

Board member, Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council, Australia – 2023 to 2024

Member, Review Panel for Pride Foundation's Sidney Myer Fund (theme: LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees), Australia – 2021 to 2022

Professional developments and achievements:

2025 - Significant Contribution Award, Bradford Centre for Qualitative Research, Bradford Institute for Health Research

2024 – Mentee, University of New South Wales Kaldor Centre Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program

2023 – Refugee Studies Centre' Pathways course (with Excellence in Community Engagement), University of Oxford

2023 – Jean Monnet Summer School in Migration and Refugee Studies, Oxford Brookes University

2023 - First Prize, Let's Get PrEPared Designathon! Interventions to increase awareness and uptake of PrEP among Asian-born Men who Have Sex with Men in Australia, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

2021 - Best Presentation Prize, Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre Next Generation Network Symposium

Conference, speaking, and training highlights:

Conference – Chair, *Being queer (migrants), doing queer migration research*, International Migration, Integration, and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) Annual Conference 2024

Seminar – Speaker, *What are the key priority areas for refugee services to improve the mental health of queer asylum seekers and refugees in Australia?* Refugee-led Research Hub, University of Oxford, 2024.

Training – Trainer, *Sexual health literacy in HIV, migration and public health*, HIV Education Queensland, 2023