

Kristen Palana

“... Helping organizations communicate persuasively to improve the lives of people globally.”

■ Personal Details

- Email: kristen (at) kpalana.com
- Skype: kpalana
- [LinkedIn Profile](#)
- [Website and Portfolio](#)
- Nationalities: American and Portuguese (residing in Lilongwe, Malawi)

■ Languages & cross-cultural skills

English (native), Italian (semi-fluent), German (strong working knowledge), Spanish, Portuguese (working knowledge), Burmese, Chichewa (basic)

■ Core Values

- Working with people
- Drive for results
- Upholding diversity
- Integrity

■ Key Competencies

- Leadership & Management
- Coaching, Mentoring & Training
- Formulating Strategies & Concepts
- Persuading, Influencing & Advocacy
- Sustainable Partnerships

■ Technical Competencies

- Cross cultural competence
- Strategic communication and digital platforms
- Social Media & Content Management
- Graphic Design & Illustration
- Web Design, Animation & Video
- Project Management
- Organization Branding & Campaigns
- Mural Painting and Community Building via Public Art Projects

■ Executive Summary

International Award-Winning Artist, Leader in Higher Education, Program Director

OFFERING extensive expertise in creating dynamic, high quality multimedia content for international organizations that persuades and educates audiences, communicates core values and key achievements, and inspires donors and stakeholders to take action.

- Over 20 years creating cutting edge web & social media content, graphic design, illustrations, video, and animation for international & humanitarian organizations including UNFPA Malawi, The World Food Programme, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, Children International, and Aid Myanmar.
- Various senior leadership positions as a tenured Associate Professor of Digital Media, Program Director, and International Consultant at universities and organizations in North America, Europe, Asia, & Africa
- Extensive field experience in Malawi, Tanzania, Liberia, Ethiopia, India, and Myanmar
- Strong cross-cultural and language skills

■ Experience

Artist, Designer, Consultant & Coach

Independent/Freelance (USA/Italy/Myanmar/Malawi & Online) 2000 – present
Digital Media and Animation Specialist for UNFPA Malawi 2019 – 2022
Creative Graphic Designer for UNICEF Malawi 2020 – 2022

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY LEAD, multiple countries and organizations in concept development, innovative multimedia content creation and management, project management, and educational training roles, including for UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, MYPOL (GIZ), UNDP, UPEACE, Addis Ababa University, Myanmar Metropolitan College, American University of Myanmar, The American University of Rome, and Thalun International School. My own animated films have screened in galleries and museums worldwide and in more than 75 international film festivals attracting numerous “Best Animated Short Film” awards. Key activities include:

■ **DEVELOPING & PRODUCING ENGAGING CONTENT** as designer and artist. Key achievements include creating the [Nthambi animated series and illustrated characters](#) for UNFPA Malawi, advising on the development of a [CSE digital app](#) for the Malawian Ministry of Education, [2019-2021 annual reports for UNFPA Malawi](#), [social media graphics and publications](#) for UNICEF(Malawi), a [School Feeding Liberia Documentary](#) for WFP, a [Walk The World Animation](#) for WFP, one of the [first personal crowdfunding websites](#) with over 90 successful fundraising projects completed for Children International, successful [online fundraising campaigns](#) for Aid Myanmar, and streaming video and web content for the multi-platinum American rock band, [The B-52's](#).

■ **COACHING, MENTORING & TRAINING** of secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate students as well as adult learners with no formal education as a mentor, career advisor, curriculum builder, and interdisciplinary collaborator known for promoting civic engagement and fostering a positive, inclusive learning environment. My students have gone on to become confident professionals employed in creative fields, have started their own businesses, and/or have been accepted to graduate school to continue their learning. In 2021, I created the pilot [Digital Media Accelerator](#) for UNFPA Malawi. I have also been teaching remotely to tens of thousands of students on online platforms since 2014. I led from 2015-2019, a bi-annual participant-centered course, [Designing Your Life](#) for the UN's UPEACE Centre For Executive Education's online program.

■ **TRANSLATING CUTTING EDGE APPROACHES FOR LOCAL CONTEXTS**-highly experienced in adapting approaches to the cultural context and to different capacity and other resource levels, while creating innovative curriculum & programs for international organizations including Mahua Hills Vocational Training Centre in Moshi (Tanzania), co-developing the pilot program for MYPOL (GIZ) to teach ethical online and social media practices to Myanmar police officers, developing curriculum and infrastructure for American University of Myanmar, intensive online marketing training for MBA students at Myanmar Metropolitan College, and designing the Digital Design ICT program for secondary students at Thalun International School (Myanmar).

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■ Education

- MFA Computer Graphics and Interactive Media
Pratt Institute. Brooklyn, NY. USA
(Graduation With Distinction)
- BFA Painting
Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Boston, MA. USA
(Graduation With Distinction)
- Diploma in Social Innovation
University For Peace Centre For Executive Education. Costa Rica.

■ Selected Awards

- UNFPA, East and Southern Africa Region. Team Award. **Certificate of excellence for high performance in communications.** *UNFPA Malawi* was chosen out of 23 UNFPA country offices in the SE Africa region. 2022
- Awesome Without Borders. Harnisch Foundation. NYC. NY. USA. *Beyond Lucky (Work-In-Progress).* **Grant Recipient.** 2018
- TAKT Berlin | Leipzig | Academy | Artist Residency. Berlin, Germany. **Artist in Residence.** 2018
- The International Film Festival for Environment, Health, and Culture. Jakarta, Indonesia. *This Too Shall Pass.* **Award: Special Recognition.** 2015
- Cannes Short Film Festival. Cannes, France. *This Too Shall Pass.* **Best Animated Short.** 2014
- International Family Film Festival. Hollywood, CA. *This Too Shall Pass* **Best Short Foreign Animation.** 2014
- See Full List: [Awards, Publications, & Exhibitions](#)

References and portfolio available on request

Associate Professor of Digital Media

American University of Myanmar

2016 - 2018

STRATEGIC CURRICULUM DESIGNER & EDUCATOR designed new curriculum and developed courses for multiple delivery platforms, combining digital media, multimedia, web design, graphic design, and intercultural communication.

Building strategic partnerships: together with AUM's Rector created infrastructure and developed national and international partnerships.

Community engagement and service: Led service learning activities with AUM students at Aung Zayer Min Monastery School.

Strategic intercultural communication and fund raising: Created a well-received online [Call For Support Video](#) for inspiring overseas investment and awareness in American University of Myanmar.

Program Director | Associate Professor of Digital Media

The American University of Rome

2006 - 2016

Program Director of Film and Digital Media

(2013-2016)

Acting Chair of the Department of Communication & English

(2013)

CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR of the Film and Digital Media Program, developed new courses, fostered local and international partnerships, planned special events, provided internship and career development, managed and evaluated faculty, maintained and developed the Battista Multimedia Lab, ensured sustainable funding, created new scholarships and student awards for artistic and academic achievement, and gathered/acted on student and faculty feedback.

Associate Professor of Digital Media

(2006-2016. Tenured in 2009)

Teaching BA and MA students in Web and Interactive Design, Video, Animation, Graphic Design, and Communication Studies.

Coordinating: Multimedia Lab Coordinator, assisted with Middle States accreditation, initiated student exhibition opportunities, served as an Academic and Capstone Advisor, and created AUR's University Job Board.

Embedding: social activism within coursework on digital platforms

Other Key Achievements include:

■ **Leading and supervising** students to:

- produce an award-winning [Fight Hunger Commercial](#) for the UN's World Food Programme.

- crowdfund a [successful online fundraising education campaign](#) for a Tanzanian Law Student's University studies in the course *Media, Art, and Social Activism*

Assistant Professor of Digital Media

William Paterson University, NJ, USA

2002-2006

Teaching and supervising BA, BFA, and MFA candidates in Art, Computer Graphics, Print, Interactive, and Multimedia courses.

- **Leading and managing People:** as Director of Recruitment for the Art Department and assisted students in finding internships and jobs,
- **Coordinating:**
- **Mentoring and supervising:** as Thesis Advisor and Academic Advisor;
- Web Designer for the College of Art and Communications,
- **Compliance and quality assurance:** including curriculum development and NASAD accreditation

Earlier Positions

2000-2005

Various academic and NGO positions in education, digital media, art and communication, working in a range of countries

- Teaching, curriculum development in digital media, art, and communication, and online fundraising via grassroots campaigns at [aurashouse.com](#)
- Countries included: Tanzania, India, and USA.