



CASE 5: LANA SERENA, A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM
THAT PROTECTS SHEEP
.....

CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



INFODEF – Instituto para el fomento del desarrollo y la formación, Spain

<https://doi.org/10.29180/ISSUEII.21.5>

Authors

Jesús Boyano and Federico Campos, INFODEF, Valladolid, Spain

BACKGROUND

The organization:

The trademark **Lana Serena** is the result of a local revitalization project undertaken by the entrepreneur Anna Pujals. With her company of sustainable luxury, Anna Pujals, from Barcelona, strives to protect transhumance with the garments being hand-woven by five artisans in La Bañeza, León. All garments have a waiting list.

The original challenge of this project was to get a fair price for the Merino original wool which is still bred by many shepherds and shepherdesses.

From this starting point, Lana Serena brand was developed to support shepherds who protect this breed with the help of a generation of a collective of wool artisans. Lana Serena mission therefore focuses on preserving the ancestral shepherd knowledge and seeks to adapt that knowledge to contemporary society. To do so, Anna Pujals created Lana Serena collection, using a new design to refresh craft techniques and explore the potential of wool.

The Protagonists:

- **Anna Pujals.** Barcelona 1981. With a degree in Economics and Business Administration, Barcelona, she had begun her working life in auditing. When she realized that finances were not her thing, she changed her mind for the third time and tried her luck in fashion, at Inditex. In 2004 the time came when she began to find the eventuality of fashion disappointing, and the speed of the collections that followed each other led to a dizzying pace. This coincided with her motherhood. In July 2017, she decided to set up the origin of Lana Serena project.

- **Manuel Morán.** A transhumant shepherd who transports 1,200 merinos and 100 goats during the year along a 100 km journey, where he is assisted by 12 mastiffs and two donkeys. He handed Anna the knowledge of all there was to know about herds, pastures, small tables and women who have been knitting in the heat of the home for generations. In line with that story, Ana has woven into her head an exciting, sustainable and artisan project that respects history and traditions.

- **Weavers.** Five weavers make in their homes in La Bañeza (León) the woollen garments from transhumant merino sheep, which Anna sells online under her luxury knitting company Lana Serena. The prices of some exceed 1,000 euros and all have a waiting list.

CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



Opening Situation/Introduction:

The day Anna Pujals decided to dedicate herself to making woollen garments, she thought that it would be best to return to the origin of the matter: the sheep itself. She moved to the mountains of Babia, in León, where she met Manuel Morán, a transhumant shepherd who drives 1,200 merinos and 100 goats for 100 km, assisted by 12 mastiffs and two donkeys. He told her everything there was to know about herds, pastures, small tables and women who have been knitting in the heat of the home for generations. In line with that story, Anna was weaving in her head an exciting, sustainable and artisan project, respectful of history and traditions. Today, five weavers make in their homes in La Bañeza (León) the woollen garments from transhumant merino sheep that Anna sells online under her luxury brand.

The story began to unfold on the a day, when Anna (Barcelona, October 26, 1981) accidentally read a story in a newspaper. Catalan Quotes her: "An article fell into my hands that said Spanish shepherds were cursing or throwing away the wool of his sheep. "That devastated me, I couldn't believe it! And I began to investigate, a bit for a hobby and I still didn't consider it professionally." She describes leaving the field of finance behind: "I used to analyse the sales while talking to stores, to figure out what the client wanted. Then I moved everything to the design department. I learned a lot, it was very interesting. Until it stopped being ..."

Moving to the fashion world and becoming a mother made her think, as quoted in Catalan: "That coincided with my motherhood, which made me rethink what kind of world or values I wanted for my children. I am in love with fashion, but I wanted to dedicate myself to it in a different, more conscious way, more from the origin to the end."

That was when the aforementioned article, the origin of her research, fell into her hands: "I talked with many people, I was getting clues, I studied history ... I discovered that the merino sheep is a breed that originated in Spain in the thirteenth century. In the middle ages, the wool trade was one

of the most important sources of wealth to the extent that King Alfonso X established the Honoured Council of the Mesta to protect the herds and to ensure the quality of their wool by feeding sheep with fresh grass. The merino sheep were transported from the summer to the winter pastures through an extensive network of drovers' routes, the so-called Cañada Reales, and some shepherds continue this practice till this day" Even before gaining this knowledge, Anna had already decided that she would create a clothing company to protect transhumance (and related trades such as shearing), cultural and natural heritage. It was July 2017 when she headed to the mountains of Babia where she met Manuel.

The first batch of garments was on sale at the end of 2018. Today, the thread of hollow warp and extreme fluff is handwoven by five artisans from rural areas around La Bañeza. Anna notes: "They decide how many hours they are going to dedicate and what they want to charge for their work. Each one is working from home although sometimes they meet when they are developing new parts."

Lana Serena, with clients in Dubai, Miami or Peru, is made up of a team of people united in values and objectives: "It was the only way," says Pujals. "We are not a fashion brand that would design a collection and then look for raw materials. No. On the contrary. We have been inspired by the material itself, in its beauty, in its value, in what it means and represents, and from that perspective we have reflected on what is the best that we can do with it?' That is why we have devised an eclectic, perennial, timeless collection that starts from wool, from nature, and is transformed by handcrafting. And the result is ideal pieces, dream pieces. "

They spend between four and six hours for the collar, up to almost 20 hours for the coat. They work on demand the requests are received online, in private sales and in person. The production time is two to three weeks. "Each craftswoman signs a label that she weaves into the finished fabric indicating her name and when she has woven it. That way the client knows who has made the garment for her. Much like the grandmothers used to do.

CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



THE CHALLENGES

The main challenge of the trademark **Lana Serena** was to get a fair price for merino woollen garments, to protect shepherds who still breed merino sheep and to support weavers and their traditional wool craftsmanship.

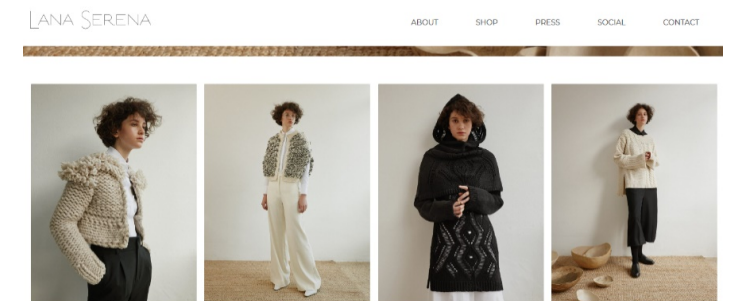
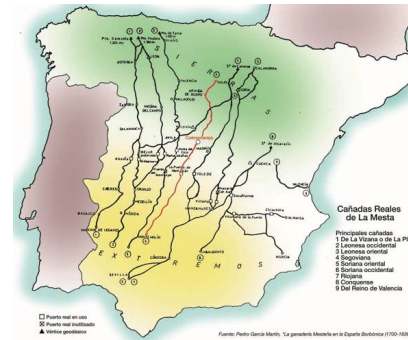
By creating Lana Serena collection, they used a new design to refresh craft techniques and explore the potential of wool. The project seeks to ensure a generational change in livestock farms by involving young people in the activity, sustainable management of farms and revitalizing the sector, so that it is economically viable.

Additional challenges

- Dignify shepherd profession and provide tools for its organization and cooperation;
- Contribute to train young farmers in new craft techniques;
- Offer advice to the sector to modernize the business structure through cooperation, orientation towards ecological production and the transformation and commercialization of the product;
- Contribute to the valorisation of merino race wool for the recovery of this endemic species.
- Sensitize young people to join the agricultural activity.

REFERENCES

- <http://www.lanaserena.com>
- <https://vimeo.com/125128543>
- <http://www.redr.es/es/cargarAplicacionNoticia.do?identificador=26938>



CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



TEACHING NOTE 5: Lana Serena, a luxury knitting firm that protects sheep

Teaching Objectives

This case study sets out the story of a local revitalization project based on a sustainable business that values local resources, cultural and natural heritage, skills and knowledge and generates employment opportunities in both traditional and new jobs.

Based on information about a real case student will learn about the key challenges of setting up a sustainable entrepreneurial project that values local resources and heritage. The case is intended to encourage students to consider options for small business based on sustainable projects.

The case provides an insight into the process from the identification of a project idea to its implementation throughout the entire entrepreneurship process. Additionally, the case provides the opportunity to explore other issues such as the engagement of different actors and stakeholders in an entrepreneurship process, which is of special importance in sustainable local projects.

The case provides different opportunities to encourage the learning process, including individual activities and group work. Learners will also improve their skills in areas like communication, presentations, critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making.

The case will support a wide range of learning objectives, focusing on gaining understanding of the following:

1. Identify growth options for a small business combining sustainability and cultural and natural heritage.
2. Understand small business dynamics and setting up planning.
3. Identify and connect the different elements of the production and commercialization process.
4. Business culture and the link to sustainability.



CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



Target Audience

The case study has been designed to be used for training purpose in areas of Business and Management. It can be used with students in HEI, like Bachelor and Master Programs, Business Schools or Entrepreneurship Programs.

Group size can be different, but the group activities are better carried in smaller groups. A study group of 15-20 students could be split into 3 to 4 groups. Each group could then be asked to answer the questions posed at the end of the case and to prepare a presentation or report on their conclusions. It will provide students with the opportunity to structure their own thoughts on what they have learned in relation to the above learning objectives.

Recommended time schedule

To get a balance between the time needed to take the full advantage of all the teaching possibilities of the case and to maintain the interest of the students, it is advisable to set a time in frame of three hours. This schedule can be divided in different parts, including a presentation of the case, explanation of instructions, individual and group activities. It is recommended that you also set a time for a short break during the session. The teacher / instructor may also allocate additional time if requested by the students and is in accordance with the schedule of the lecture.

Summary Comment

In order to carry out the teaching case, instructors may take the following steps:

- **Preparation:** Teachers or instructors shall study in detail the case and familiarize themselves with its topics and put special focus on the sustainability aspects. Additional reading can be recommended if necessary. They also prepare a venue suitable for the activities of the working group and the learning resources they will need.
- **Introduction:** Presentation of the case and the activities to be carried out. It is important to note the connection between the case and sustainability, as this is an element of differentiation from other teaching cases.
- **Working activities:** Teachers/instructors may carry out some of the following actions:
 - Defining the issue(s).
 - Analysing the case data.
 - Generating alternatives.
 - Selecting decision criteria.
 - Analysing and evaluating alternatives.
 - Selecting the preferred alternative.
 - Developing an action/implementation plan.

CASE 5: A LUXURY KNITTING FIRM THAT PROTECTS SHEEP



SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE ACTIVITIES WITH THE STUDENTS

1. How do you think the previous expertise of Anna Pujals influenced her to take the decision of setting up Lana Serena project?
2. How do you interpret the relation between different persons involved in the business, in especially between the shepherds, dressmakers, designers and the business manager?
3. Make an assessment of the critical success factors, such as profit margins, revenue growth, customer satisfaction, quality, service development, brand image, managerial skills and organisational effectiveness. What role do you think sustainability plays?
4. If you were a business advisor, what could you recommend as possible options for business growth? How do you think the business will develop in the future?
5. Would Lana Serena be equally successful without a focus on sustainability?

- **Finalization:** Complete the activity by jointly reflecting on the lessons learned, the case study itself (to gather feedback and improve the teaching notes) and to promote sustainability in relation to business management and entrepreneurship.

