

My name is Joana Monteiro, I'm a PhD student currently in my 2nd year and I'm a social entrepreneur.

Tell us about your research.

my research is about using pattern cutting and garment making for social change. So I work with vulnerable women such as Afghan refugees, ex-prisoners and women who live in deprived areas and I organise workshops with them to pass on skills of fashion design, pattern cutting and garment making.

What are the objectives of your PhD?

So the main objective for the PhD is to have a positive impact on the lives of the participants. I'm hoping it will impact at 3 levels. During the workshops I'm hoping they will acquire new skills in fashion design, in sewing, in pattern cutting. I'm also hoping that they will enjoy engaging with other people, and also they will see it as an opportunity for them to develop their creativity and their creative voice.

What is Knit Up?

Knit up is a social enterprise that I launched in January (2022). We make wool accessories for children as part of their uniform. The wool comes from [a] British sheep breed because the idea is to support biodiversity and support farmers in the UK and I work with a company called Eden Cottage in West Yorkshire and it's a lovely team of 4 women. That wool is knitted on a domestic circular machine by makers and those makers are vulnerable women In London who need work, so I train them on the machines, I train them different techniques to make the accessories and they are paid London Living Wage.

Are you looking forward to the workshops?

I can't wait actually! It's so enjoyable to be and to make with people. it's always very relaxed after the beginning of not knowing people. But making brings people together and they share a lot. So i'm looking forward to it, especially after 2 years of Covid when we haven't seen anyone, shared with anyone when we've been scared of getting close to each other.