

Lil & Izzy founder gets busy to create sustainable clothes for kids

We talk women forging innovative businesses in rural Ireland. Today, we talk to [Lil & Izzy](#) founder Katie Brandon Byrne who was inspired to become an entrepreneur after the birth of her second child.

Katie Brandon Byrne, from Bray, Co Wicklow, stepped away from her career as a global buyer for Primark to launch Lil & Izzy, a sustainable, organic clothing brand for children and babies, in August 2019.

Katie was inspired to become an entrepreneur after the birth of her second daughter, Isabelle, who suffers from eczema. She found it difficult to get baby clothes that didn't irritate Isabelle's skin. More suitable clothing, sent by her brother in Australia, was too light for the Irish climate.

So, the Wicklow native decided to design the clothes herself and started Lil & Izzy, named after her daughters, Lily and Isabelle.

Ethical values

From the outset, Katie wanted to ensure that her clothing range would be ethically made and aesthetically pleasing. As well as using organic cotton, Lil & Izzy only uses water-based and eco-friendly dyes and prints.

All of the illustrations on the clothing are inspired by her children's imaginations and their daily lives. For example, a recently launched collection, featuring mermaids and swans, was inspired by living beside Bray harbour and feeding the swans there each day during Covid-19 lockdown.

Katie found that participating in ACORNS helped her to stay focused and practical and encouraged her not to put off the more difficult tasks involved in running a business.

ACORNS is a Government-supported programme designed to support [early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland](#) through a peer learning approach.

Women in rural Ireland with new businesses or at least with well-developed ideas are being invited to join [ACORNS 7](#). The ACORNS programme is designed to support early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland through a peer learning approach. Thanks to the support of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the voluntary contribution of time by Lead Entrepreneurs, there is no charge for those selected to participate.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my ACORNS experience. Meeting like-minded, driven and inspirational women on a monthly basis was such a joy,” says Katie.

“Being part of ACORNS gave me further confidence in my abilities, a sounding board to explore ideas and a confidential space to navigate my fears. I’d highly recommend it.”

Lil & Izzy was a silver winner in the prestigious Junior Design Awards 2020 in the UK in the Best Eco Baby Collection category. The brand has also got a cult following of celebrity mums – including Vogue Williams and Rosanna Davison – who have freely endorsed it.

Far sooner than she anticipated, Katie has moved out of her attic office, where it all started and has taken a commercial unit in Bray. She is planning to employ three staff this year.

Anyone interested in receiving an application form ahead of the September 10, 2021 deadline for ACORNS 7 should [register their interest here](#)

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