

“We need to have a collective approach to tackling issues and it’s in that way that we create impact.”

LAURA McDERMOTT

Colectivo



Laura McDermott, from Dunboyne in Co Meath, was living in Dublin, where she worked in FinTech for Bank of Ireland, when she decided she wanted a change. So, in 2015, she seized an opportunity to go to Spain to implement project-based learning of English in schools there.

Laura’s plan was to return after about a year, but she loved Spain and Spanish culture so much that she stayed on and did a Master’s in Customer Experience and Innovation at IE Business School, which is part of IE University in Madrid.

After qualifying, Laura took a job with the university, and she still teaches there for three months of the year, although she returned to Ireland and set up her company, Colectivo, in 2022.

In the interim, she had held roles including Director of Academic Experience and Innovation at IE Business School, Adjunct Professor of Innovation, Sustainability and Design at IE University and Design Lead in the IE Centre for Social Innovation and Sustainability.

Laura came back to Ireland for a combination of personal and professional reasons. She had met her partner, Ciarán, in 2019, after he had moved back to

Dublin from London. “I also identified a great opportunity because I got a lot of experience designing large scale projects related to sustainability in Spain where they have had strict sustainability reporting laws since 2018. A similar directive (CSRD) and standards (ESRS) are coming into effect in Ireland and across the EU from 2024. So, I’ve had five years of experience in a market that’s more advanced,” Laura says.

Colectivo is a collective of sustainability professionals who support businesses in understanding and addressing their situation in relation to sustainability. “The idea is that we need to have a collective approach to tackling issues and it’s in that way that we create impact,” she says.

“We start off by helping them to understand where they are now, then we help them to realise where they should be if they want to be best in class, and then we help them to design and implement the roadmap of how to get there.”

As founder and CEO of Colectivo Laura leads a team of 18 freelance consultants who are experts in fields relating to sustainability.

She founded the company in September 2022, and it has been trading since January

this year. “We spent the first few months talking as a team and designing a structure that suited everybody who would be involved,” she says.

Colectivo is principally based in Dublin and Madrid, but it also has consultants in other locations across Europe, and its projects have a global scope.

Laura found that moving back to Ireland was quite a culture shock because she has a very strong affinity to Spanish culture. “It was also a bit of an adjustment because the cost of living in Madrid is very low by comparison. I soon realised I couldn’t have all my coffees in cafés because coffees aren’t €1.50 here,” she says.

Laura found that the accountability, mentoring and structure of the Back for Business programme was a great help to her in setting up Colectivo. “I think it’s a great programme. I’m going to be recommending it to anybody who I know will be in a similar position to me,” she says.

Whereas 2023 has been about getting the company established and validating the business model, Laura’s plans for next year are to scale the business and the team with key hires including a head of research and an internal business unit.

COLECTIVO

POSITION

Founder and CEO

WHAT WE DO

Colectivo helps businesses to take social and climate action in a very practical way, and we believe that collective actions create a sustainable impact.

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