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Business

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## Imperial alumni launch jewellery line to empower women in developing countries

by [Laura Singleton](#)

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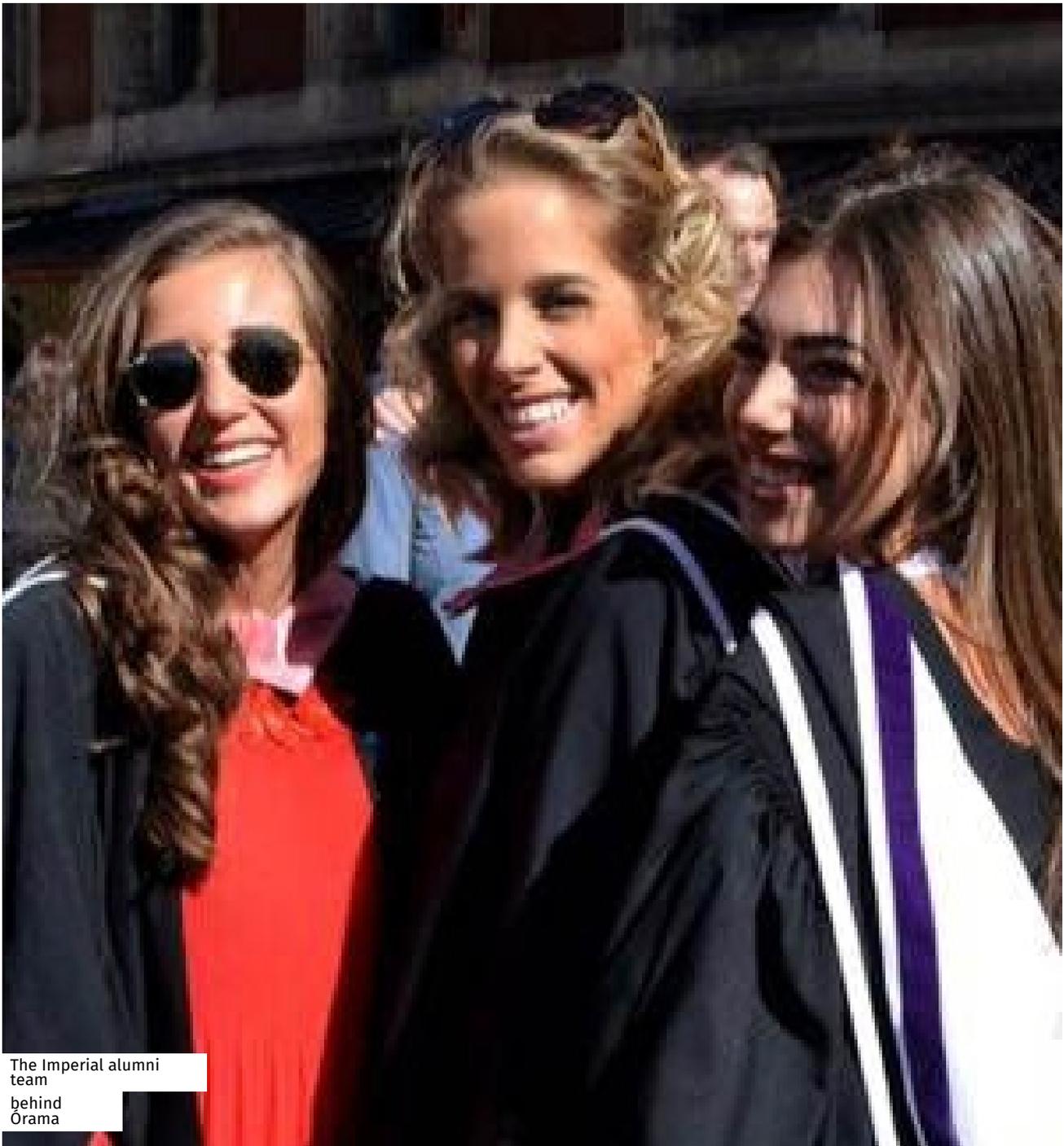


**A group of Business School alumni have created a jewellery brand that aims to help women in poorer communities develop their own businesses.**

Órama will be selling bracelets designed to appeal to socially responsible buyers who want to support and empower women in disadvantaged parts of the world.



Laura Singleton spoke to the three women behind Órama - Joelle Fuchs, Yolanda Zoma and Ilaria Gilardini who recently graduated from the Business School's MSc Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management programme. They discussed the vision behind the business and their experience of studying at Imperial.



### **How did Órama come into existence?**

Órama was the result of an idea we had to create for our Entrepreneurial Journey module. We were challenged to come up with a concept for a business and then pitch our ideas to a group of outside investors.

We wanted to create a business that would make a social impact and help empower women around the world. We came up with the idea for a piece of jewellery that would appeal to fashionable women and become an easily recognisable brand among professionals aged 25-35 with a social conscience. Yolanda Zoma, our fellow team member, came up with the name for Órama, which means vision in Greek. As a group we designed the bracelet, which comes in eight different colours with one of the following affirmations - strength, independence, vision, positivity, radiance, drive, growth and sisterhood.

### **How does Órama aim to help women?**

The business operates in partnership with the micro-financing company Opportunity International and the 'Women and Girls Appeal' initiative. It aims to give female entrepreneurs living in struggling communities around the world the chance to create their own businesses with the help of micro-

loans. Ten percent of profits from each Órama bracelet will be donated to Opportunity International. The micro-financing includes a whole package of support and guidance which goes beyond just money. When a loan is repaid, the money is then available to help other women who need it. At present, we are mainly targeting women living in Asia, Africa and South America – helping them develop businesses for their local communities and gaining access to better education.

### What is your role in the business?

Joelle is responsible for packaging and production strategy. Yolanda looks after content and business partnerships and Ilaria oversees marketing and e-commerce.

### How did your experience at Imperial help you in your current career?

We found studying at the Business School was fantastic in helping us understand the fundamentals of business and it was great to be studying alongside students from such diverse backgrounds. Órama would never have happened if we hadn't met at Imperial.

### What are your future plans to develop the business?

We are looking to secure funding from a range of investors and potential business partners before we officially launch the product with our new website in September. Following the official launch, we will start selling the products online, although we are already approaching retailers to see if they will sell the products in their stores, so we can develop an offline presence.

We would also like to extend the range to a men's and children's line and create more bespoke pieces. We are also approaching celebrities to endorse the product as well as other potential business partners. Five fashion bloggers have already endorsed our bracelet and are now Órama ambassadors for Europe.

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## Reporter



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