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CHANGING THE WORLD

The entrepreneurs tackling society's challenges

WOMEN IN INNOVATION



This will enable Head Set to continue our work using virtual reality to build a more resilient generation of journalists at a time when arrests, physical assaults and harassment of the media has risen sharply around the world.

Kate Parkinson

Kate Parkinson will use virtual reality to help journalists working in high risk, hostile locations build key skills in resilience through company Head Set.

It was a first-hand experience while working as a foreign correspondent that inspired Kate to found Head Set, alongside fellow correspondent Aela Callan.

While reporting on the civil war in Libya in 2011 her cameraman, and husband, Olivier Sarbil was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Despite having had hostile environment training, Kate froze and couldn't remember what to do.

Remarkably, Olivier survived, but Kate suffered post-traumatic stress for years, linked to her body's response to the incident and a feeling of helplessness.

The experience set her on a new path and she established Head Set two years ago to create virtual reality training tools for people with high risk jobs.

For Kate, a complete overhaul of the approach the media takes to safety training was required alongside better access to mental and emotional support for those who risk their lives doing dangerous work.

She says, 'I am thrilled to be part of a great legacy of women who have received the Women in Innovation Award.

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Kate adds that behind most successful women in innovation, there are other innovative women who believe in her, support her and push her forward. In her case, it was co-founder Aela who encouraged her to apply.

She will focus her project on showing how virtual reality can be used to build resilience towards the psychological challenges of working in hostile environments.

The research has the potential not only to transform the way journalists train, but support anyone who works in dangerous or high stress situations.