ACORNS
Accelerating the Creation Of Rural Nascent Start-ups

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RED OAKS TECHNOLOGY
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Vicki O'Donnell calls Gorey, Co. Wexford, home but her job often has her on the move. After leaving Maynooth University with a post-grad in Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing, Vicki's skills in mapping, satellite imagery, and data and information management would lead her to joining Ireland's Rapid Response Corps, a specialised team tasked with providing support in the world's worst disaster zones.

That experience underpins much of her work now as founder of Red Oaks Technology, where she works with humanitarian organisations, energy companies and UN agencies to provide data collection and research services, as well as develop platforms for e-learning and knowledge management.

"I've worked in NASA's Kennedy Space Centre on coastal erosion and climate change projects. I've deployed to the Philippines with the UN and even worked with the Forestry Service in Chile to monitor protected species and illegal logging," says Vicki.

"I set up Red Oaks Technology in 2018. I'm using the same skills now, just on different projects."

One such project was with the United Nations and UNICEF to revamp their training courses for people deploying to emergencies. Taking up to 50 hours of in-person learning, Vicki and her team created a platform to make it available online in three languages.

"Those courses would have been done in-person somewhere expensive like Switzerland or Scandinavia, and people would come from all over the world to do them. For UNICEF, our project was a great time and cost saver."

Vicki believes a move into the product development is the fastest route to scaling up, and is hoping to develop a compliance product in the next 12 months.

"In services, you never get time off. You need to scale and the only way to do that is with a product. We're working on information management for legislation. The big learning for me is that the money is in training and compliance."

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.

An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine