openSAP Invites Thought Leaders, Episode 14

HOW TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER EQUALITY IN IT

Transcript

Sindhu Gangadharan: I think it's important that we, as a responsible and inclusive organization, not just put the onus on women themselves to bring the best versions of themselves to work. Instead, it's equally important that we take responsibility to also create the right environment for them where every woman feels encouraged, feels motivated every day at work, and also, they receive the necessary guidance, the necessary support that helps them to deliver at their best.

Elisabeth Riemann: Welcome to a special Thought Leaders episode with Sindhu Gangadharan, Senior Vice President of the SAP User Enablement Unit and Managing Director of SAP Labs India. Sindhu talks to us about her own career in technology, shares what it was like to grow up in Bangalore and explains why it's important we follow our own dreams and inspire and support others by revolutionizing the world around us. It's all about providing equal opportunities, equal encouragement, and an equal voice to be heard. I'm your host, Elisabeth Riemann, let me introduce you to Sindhu Gangadharan. As Senior Vice President, Sindhu Gangadharan leads the SAP User Enablement Unit and is the Managing Director of SAP Labs in India, a leading hub for innovation and a hotspot for talent and diversity. Sindhu joined SAP in 1999 when SAP Labs India set up its operations in Bangalore, and she later moved to SAP headquarters in Waldorf, Germany. She's worked on various products, technology, and innovation platforms, and held several strategic and leadership positions managing global teams. In January 2021, Sindhu was appointed to the Board of Directors at Utah-based Qualtrics International Inc, the global pioneer of the Experience Management software category. She also serves on the Board of Titan Company Ltd. as an Independent Director with a focus on technology. Sindhu is a member of the NASSCOM Executive Council, the apex industry body with the IT/IT-enabled services in India. She's also a member of the steering committee of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, an industry body driving the bilateral trade and deliberations. In March 2021, Sindhu was appointed to the Advisory Board of ReLoop by SAP. As a respected thought leader, Sindhu is a regular speaker at conferences. She's a passionate advocate of using technology to benefit customers and society, workplace diversity and inclusion. Sindhu

currently resides in Bangalore with her husband and their two daughters. Let's say hello. Hello Sindhu, welcome to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders.

Sindhu Gangadharan: Thank you so much, Lizzie, for having me here.

Elisabeth Riemann: It's a pleasure to have you with us here today. Sindhu, it's really great that we have the opportunity to learn from your personal experiences about how to inspire and empower equality in the field of technology. And while this is the focus of our conversation today, I feel at the beginning it's important to say, Sindhu, that the special leadership qualities that you personally embody - your energy, your drive, and your passion to help and to uplift others really makes you a truly inspirational thought leader and a role model for us all and that's completely regardless of our gender, age or chosen career path. So, I'd like to start our conversation today with a warm-up question. And Sindhu, as you know, at SAP, we benefit greatly from our diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. And you grew up and began your SAP career in Bangalore, India, before moving to work at SAP headquarters in Walldorf, Germany, where you stayed for 18 years before returning to Bangalore. So, I'd like to know, how has the city of Bangalore or Bengaluru shaped you and inspired your own life choices?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Thank you so much for the question. Bangalore is and I have to say always will be special to me. I was born and raised in Bangalore. I spent my entire childhood in the city, which I have to say was obviously a lot more greener at that point in time as it is today. And I also did my schooling and graduation in Bangalore and was extremely fortunate to have some great friends whom I continue to meet to this day. So very, very fond memories of the place. And it was around the time of my final year in school that Bangalore also saw itself at the cusp of a technology revolution, if you may will, in India. And yes, the charming neighborhoods and the pleasant weather of Bangalore definitely did attract major IT companies and other multinationals, including a SAP, to set up their base and also expand their workforce in the city. And over the next few years, I have to say, the serene and calm Bangalore that we all knew fast transformed into the Silicon Valley of India. And all these developments have definitely had an impact on how I saw my career shaping and to a large extent also influenced my choices at that point in time. Now, when SAP Labs India set up base in Bangalore, I was among the first few engineers to be hired there. And though the brand SAP was quite big worldwide, specifically in Europe, it was still at a very nascent stage in Asia or

in India particularly. So, I'm very fortunate that I pretty much started off my career with SAP and continue to be a part of this glorious company twenty two years later. So yes, Bangalore definitely has played a major and a very special role in my journey so far. And this is where it all started. And I'm really glad I received this opportunity also to move back here from Walldorf back in 2019 to lead SAP Labs here in India. So, it's such a humbling opportunity to lead also the same place where you started off as a young developer. So, yes, very grateful for this opportunity. I have to say God has been kind and I hope that answers your question, Lizzie.

Elisabeth Riemann: It's a beautiful answer, and I can only say that it's amazing just to hear you talk about your home city of Bangalore and what you really love about the city yourself and how it's changed over the years. And I think it really, you know, has a big influence where you come from, your life outlook and everything. And it's just a really special city, a really special place and really wonderful to hear you talk about the city like that. So, thank you for sharing that with us, Sindhu. And as the first female managing director of SAP Labs India, it's really no exaggeration, Sindhu, to say that you're an important role model and an inspiration for many people in technology and not just for women. So, I'd like to know who inspired your own dreams while growing up and starting out on your career.

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, so if you ask me, Lizzie, who fueled my dreams and aspirations, I'll have to give a lot of that credit to my parents because I've been very fortunate to have been raised by very strong, very value oriented parents who've always encouraged me to pursue a highly rewarding career. They always taught me the importance of hard work. I also grew up with two brothers. And I have to say, growing up, my parents had the same expectations from me as they had from both my brothers. Now, you might wonder why I call this out. I do call this out because in a lot of Indian families, girls' or a daughter's dreams are most often overshadowed by her brothers' dreams and aspirations. And we can maybe attribute this to sometimes the very patriarchal mindsets that exist in cultures. So, therefore, now, looking back, I can absolutely say that I was very fortunate that I never experienced any of that at home. While growing up, my brothers and me, we were treated alike. We were provided equal opportunities, equal encouragement, and an equal voice. I was never told not to dream or not to have career ambitions. Both my parents were great role models because they were working professionals themselves, worked very hard, and they always encouraged

me to pursue also a very rewarding career. But yes, I have to also say when it came to choosing a career my dad was very keen on me studying medicine. This is also very common in India back then, right. Many Indian parents do that, but I was always somehow more inclined towards technology. I used to always find it really very, very cool. And the more I read about technology in those days, the more I was attracted towards it and also the opportunities it opened up for mankind was so, so immense. And I started to understand the potential technology has to shape society and the world in general. So, I'd say my dad had to eventually budge. And he did support my decision to study computer science engineering back then. And in those days, Lizzie as you know, like many of my peers, I was in awe of how Steve Jobs was actually in the process of transforming the modern world with technology that Apple was building, right. And also, his whole approach to technology and also his unwavering belief in technology innovations helping to transform humanity had also such a huge, profound impact on shaping me as a technology leader and it continues to inspire me every single day. So, I'd say, yes, Steve Jobs has been a huge, huge influence in my technology journey. And now looking back, my decision to choose technology over medicine, I think did me real good. So, it gave me such a huge opportunity to be part of this glorious company for over two decades.

Elisabeth Riemann: Wonderful. Thank you, Sindhu. And for listeners then at the beginning of their working lives, do you think it's enough to have a passion for technology? Is that enough to build a career in IT in itself? I've been wondering here about the importance of role models, as you say, and mentors in the tech industry and to what degree perhaps we're still defined or perhaps limited by gender stereotypes. What do you think?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, it's a great question, and I do think passion is definitely a good fuel to start off, right. And it's impossible if you ask me to build a successful career if you're not passionate about what you're doing. Twenty two years into my career, I'm still very passionate about technology and the problems we can solve for humanity. So, yes, absolutely. Passion will definitely give you a great start. But what is also most important in your early years is to stay persistent in your efforts. And I say this to a lot of the young engineers I have the opportunity to interact with at work because it's not every day that you get a chance to change the world. And when you do get that, I'd say really hop on the ride and help revolutionize the world around you. And this will not

happen in a single day or every single project. We are all bound to fail multiple times. But it's important that we should not feel discouraged or it's important that we do not lose focus from the bigger picture. And of course, you'll always find guides, you'll find mentors who will help you with your journey. And we all love our mentors, don't we? We go to them for advice, career advice, sometimes it's just also personal advice because we admire them. We emulate them, we respect them. We trust them as individuals who we can seek advice. And many times, when we have a mentor, we also are looking at them for a sense of validation from some key important milestones, key decisions that we are making in our lives. And this obviously has a direct impact also on your career path and also on the choices that you make. Therefore, I think it's very important to also find good mentors and who will encourage you, who will also motivate you at different steps along your journey. And those of us who have found good mentors are indeed quite fortunate, I have to say. We have to be grateful to our mentors. But on the other hand, I also want to raise the point that we are also equally responsible for the choices we make. And so, it's also important that we need to think critically about whatever advice or suggestion we get from our mentors, because mentors are also human beings, right they're also framed by the journey that they are going through. So, I believe that we should not go with blinders on when you follow a recommendation or a suggestion, but really spend time for yourself you know, the journey that you are going through. So, think through and then take decisions also based on your self-assessment and not just based out of all the external factors or your influences.

Elisabeth Riemann: That's wonderful advice as well, and I really like it and it resonates with me as well when you say the importance of having a mentor and being grateful to have an opportunity to have that sounding board and to really have a positive role model, but also being very much in tune with what's important to ourselves as well so what dreams and aspirations we have, and really being quite resilient and sticking with that and really pursuing that goal come what may. And really staying with it when the times get tough, I guess, too, as well. And Sindhu, what in your experience are some of the challenges that women face when building careers in the tech industry? And how can we encourage more women to pursue a career in tech?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, Lizzie, so when you look back at history, right, so we have a lot of leading figures like Madam Marie Curie, who was the only person to have won double Nobel Prize in physics and chemistry, and that too in the early nineteen

hundreds. Now, over a century and countless groundbreaking innovations later, the persisting gender gap in technology, or more widely the STEM field, continues to remain a matter of grave concern. Now, this is a matter of concern because, why? Because it's proven and I think there's enough studies out there and reports and really smart people who have analyzed the data. And it's clearly proven that a very diverse workforce clearly makes us smarter, makes our organization smarter, makes society smarter. And if you just look at also the 2020 McKinsey report states clearly that diverse companies perform better. They hire better talent and have a lot more engaged workforce. And they are also able to retain their workforce better than organizations that do not focus on diversity and inclusion. But despite all of this, it's still a bitter reality, like I said, that women still remain widely underrepresented in IT roles. Now, to understand this better, I'd say it is very important to also identify some of the factors that contribute to this very disturbing trend and also deter women from pursuing a career in STEM. Firstly, if I just reflect and in some countries like developing countries like India, particularly if you go into the rural areas, you'll see that girls and young women do not have access to quality education and also they do not have the necessary guidance to also help them pursue a career in advance fields like STEM. And what is another challenge is there's not enough role models for a lot of the girls to look up and take inspiration from when it comes to STEM related careers. And besides that, what is also important to note is that women who do join careers in STEM, we know, and I don't want to generalize, but there is still a lot of discrimination at the workplace, which is if you just look at the industry overall, it's predominantly male oriented in our industry. And when I talk about discrimination this can be in the form of pay, it can be in the form of opportunities, it can be in the form of respect, it can be in the form of treatment at work, and many more. And to add to all this, another important factor is the family and kind of the peer pressure, which also discourages many women from pursuing a highly rewarding career in STEM. So, taking into consideration the demands of all of the different roles, until a woman is expected to play be it of a mother, daughter, wife, sometimes a daughter in law, a mentor, we've talked about manager, what it will be, right? I mean, all of these different roles. I think it's important that we as a responsible and inclusive organization, not just put the onus on women themselves to bring the best versions of themselves to work. Instead, it's equally important that we take responsibility to also create the right environment for them where every woman feels encouraged, feels motivated every day at work, and also, they receive the necessary guidance, the necessary support that helps them to deliver at their best. Now, when we talk about creating the right environment, of course, it consists

of certain aspects which include many of the points that I mentioned earlier, like pay equity, very important. Right. Or flexible work options, equal opportunities, giving them opportunities for leadership development, mentoring - we talked about that as well. All this become extremely important. And fortunately, we know at SAP we make very conscious and sustained efforts on all these fronts with very comprehensive policies and daily practices. For instance, we take great pride in the fact that SAP is an equal pay and an equal opportunity organization. We've adopted the equal pay for equal work policy and we therefore proactively promote pay transparency, which I believe also strengthens the trust between our female colleagues and the organization, really driving each of us to deliver at our best. So, long story short, I'd say effective intervention is needed on the part of organizations and more than just relying on individuals to perform at their best, and this is so much needed to foster a truly diverse, a very inclusive workplace where, like I said, women feel comfortable and feel empowered to come to the workplace every single day and also contribute to their organization's growing trajectory. And now, I mean Lizzie, not to forget, right, with physical locations becoming irrelevant, I think it's such an exciting time for women to really chase their dreams, break that glass ceiling if you believe it exists. Right. And emerge as truly powerful women.

Elisabeth Riemann: A lot of potential there as well, and as you said, it's a very exciting time, it's challenging right now, but in the challenges, also opportunities as well that we can grasp. And I think it's this additional flexibility. But I do know from colleagues it's very difficult with the different hats you have to have on, the different responsibilities and roles that we can all identify with, I think. What I wanted to ask you, Sindhu, as well is if you could share some practical tips for women already in STEM careers and leadership roles and also maybe tips and advice for women who want to become the next generation of female leaders. What's your advice?

Sindhu Gangadharan: What really stops women from taking up leadership roles is, is sometimes all these commitments that they have right, commitments to engagements in your personal side of the house. And I believe, like I said before, as far as families and organizations, if you're able to create a comfortable environment for women, where she can really chase both her professional and personal goals with equal ease, I think that that is important and that will encourage a lot of women and hopefully we'll also see a lot of many more women leaders around us. And to your specific question about management tips for women in leadership roles, I always use this tip, which I've found,

which I've also learned from a good friend of mine, and particularly when you have this question on this crossroads of how do I juggle between my personal and professional lives and whenever I find myself in these kind of difficult situations, I always use this analogy of this crystal ball versus rubber ball analogy that a dear friend of mine introduced me to. So, how does it work right, so at work or in personal life? Yes, we absolutely right, we talked about the different roles we take on. So, you constantly juggle a lot of balls and therefore it's becomes very important that at any point in time you're able to identify what ball you're juggling at that point in time. Is it a crystal ball or a rubber ball. Now, right, because if you drop the rubber ball, it can come back, it's fine. But if you drop a crystal ball it will shatter. Right, so you have to be smart enough, at that point in time, which ball are you juggling? It can be your personal side or in your professional side. But make sure that you don't drop the crystal balls and make sure at what time, which is your crystal ball, and make sure that you gauge through this lens.

Elisabeth Riemann: I've never heard that before, but that is just amazing, we all have this kind of visual of us juggling balls, keeping plates spinning, but to have the rubber ball and the crystal balls, that that's incredible.

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, that analogy always works and puts things into perspective, I think, and like I said, when you gauge all your opportunities or tasks that come your way, no matter from which side you use that to prioritize. Right. And so, the next time when you get the question, can women have it all? As long as you know how you juggle, you know, of course. Why not?

Elisabeth Riemann: And a crystal ball is, of course, very, very precious, and I think the time we have as well

Sindhu Gangadharan: Of course.

Elisabeth Riemann: Is very, very precious and the time we have is limited. Right. So, I know you're an expert as well when it comes to time management. So, can you give us any tips and tricks there as how we can really optimize our time and really keep these rubber balls going as much as we can by optimizing time. But what do you suggest there?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, for me, what always has worked is really in a day, prioritize what are your must-have-done goals, right? And really make sure that you take time. Sometimes it's the most difficult task that's on top of your list. But you have to make time and you have to get done with that. And once you're done with that, you know, you kind of feel a lot more relieved to deal with everything else that's coming up in the rest of the day. But always prioritize because sometimes, again, depending on the balls you're juggling, right, it goes up and down and comes back again. So, I'd say as long as you get through with the most important ones and work towards that, the rest you will be able to handle.

Elisabeth Riemann: Excellent advice. Thank you, Sindhu. I'd like to talk back about Germany and India, and you moved to SAP headquarters in Walldorf Germany, it was initially a plan to stay for two years and it turned into 18, so considerably longer. So, I wanted to ask you, what was your own personal experience of moving to a foreign country to live and work? Can you tell us a little bit about your life experience there?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yeah, that's true initially when we planned to move it, and when I say it was my husband and me, we decided it's just going to be two for two years. And it's interesting right now that when you look back at the conversation that I had with my husband back then, we ended up spending close to two, two decades there. And Lizzie, my husband also works for a SAP. So, back then it was him who had received an opportunity to move to the headquarters, part of his role. And when we discussed the opportunity, I still remember this sense of bafflement because so many thoughts going on, because if at all, I wanted to move out of India back then. I always wanted to move to the US. Right. So, Germany was never on the charts. And I still remember asking him, why Germany? We don't know the place, the language, the people. There were so many questions I have to say that I was like really not prepared for it back then. But we did move. And I also was fortunate to get a transfer. So again, back then again, SAP supported me. So, it was it was it was great. And within a couple of years of working at the headquarters with diverse teams and multiple products, I have to say I realized that this was one of the best decisions I've made because the move to Germany gave me so much exposure very early on in my career. Right. And over the next few years after moving there, I also had the opportunity to hold several strategic and leadership positions across our portfolio, be it in leading the Integration Suite or when we built the whole solution for the Financial Services Network, building out our portfolio on IoT,

Process Orchestration or even for that matter, driving the Intelligent Enterprise program at SAP. And if I just look back and just reflect on were there any challenges? Absolutely, yes. And what strikes out very distinctly from back then was language. Right. And I still remember during the initial years, while conversing at the workplace was never a challenge because everyone was so kind to speak in English. But when it came to a lot more of the informal conversations, like a coffee corner meet or you're meeting somebody for lunch, I really could not contribute to those easy, free flowing conversations, which is so much needed, like, you know, to break ties between you and your colleagues and form those very strong, powerful bonds. So, I remember very early on I took a resolve to learn German and I did this. Indeed, I mean, there were German classes. Yes, but very limited. But most of my German was learned spending or watching German television at home. That really helped me. And I think this really was very key to also help us settle into the overall German social fabric, which was so important for me. And because it was an it was also clear that if we do this, we have to do it properly. Right. And just like that, what close to two decades passed by, like you said. Yes, two years turned into a long 18 years. Both my girls were born in Germany. And when I look back, I only have very fond memories of Germany. And Germany still continues to be home. So, our move back to Bangalore in 2019 was not really planned. Right. It just happened that the executive board was looking for someone to lead the SAP Labs here in India. And at that point in time and fortunately they thought that I would be a good candidate for the role. So, when I was told about this, I knew that this would also mean a significant learning curve because I was, of course, returning back to India after almost spending 18 years in Germany. And of course, your outlook in life also changes. And a lot of my thoughts are, you can say, having a very German outlook to it. So, I still remember the discussion then in 2019, discussing with the family and the relocation to India. Of course, you can imagine the girls had a very tough time saying goodbye to their school friends. But yes, everything eventually worked out well. And now it's going to be two years that I'm back in the city where I was born and it definitely looks different, like I said. But the pulse still remains the same and very, very grateful to be back here.

Elisabeth Riemann: Fantastic. Thank you for telling us that story, and I'm always very interested because I'm an expat, too. I grew up in the UK and I've also lived in Germany for almost 20 years now. Time passes so quickly, as you know as well. And it's a blessing, I think, in many ways to feel at home in two countries. On a good day, you feel

you have two homes, on a bad day, you feel like you don't know where you truly belong. So, Sindhu, I was pleased to hear that you and your family naturally feel at home in the two countries and particularly your daughters as well. So, because you have the experience of living and working in both India and Germany, I wanted to ask you, what are some of the similarities and differences between these countries when it comes to the topics of equality and inclusion? What have you observed and experienced there?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Now, Lizzie, like you rightly said, right, I think we're all fortunate when we have that exposure to have the best of both worlds, like you said. And I have to say, if I look back growing up in India, I clearly imbibed this can-do attitude, right. That that I clearly that that's something which has been with me right from childhood, which has given me the confidence to truly believe in myself and take on any challenges. Because in India there's so many challenges that you grew up with. Right. So, whereas spending so much time in Germany, I learned to take a very structured approach to also achieving things, achieving desired goals. And my time in Germany really taught me to think through decisions and also pushed me to have a kind of 360-degree view on all aspects before kind of going out there and committing to something. So, I think it's a combination of both, or the balance of both, of this can-do attitude combined with having a structured approach has really helped me to make my decisions. And really once I take those decisions to own it and completely work hard towards delivering on it. And talking about differences and I mean, of course, when you look at the work cultures across the countries. Right. And in Germany, I've seen clearly my colleagues treating work as work. Then they come on time, they leave on time, and get back to their personal life. Whereas in India, really work takes first priority. Right. And I believe that balance is so much kind of that interweaving. I'd always say it's an interweaving across both because both are important. Or if I just look at a couple of other things, like in India, you quickly become friends with your colleagues, right? It's just you break ties very quickly, which I think can be very positive in in an office experience because you make people feel immediately welcome, comfortable at their workplace. In the West, I feel people maintain that very professional relationship at work, which, of course has its own positives. And it really you have to know that. Right. And you take time to build those relationships with colleagues at work and then they become friends and then that those friendships are for a lifetime. Right.

Elisabeth Riemann: Absolutely.

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yes, it takes time, but once you invest time, then those are it doesn't matter where you live in the world, they are always your friends. So, you asked me about diversity and inclusion. So, I'm very fortunate to have worked in very diverse teams at the headquarters in Germany. And the diversity aspect of an individual's workplace, of course, adds to the whole work experience. And also, I clearly believe that this exposes one to so many different perspectives. And I think we already mentioned it earlier. Diversity makes us smarter. And I'm clearly of that belief that it makes us also a lot more receptive to new ideas, new perspectives. And I'm trying to emulate the same here at our labs in India office as well, because, well, India is a country that that celebrates diversity and truly so because there's probably no other country in the world with so many different languages, so many different faiths, and such a variety of culture. Right. And as a nation, we are truly blessed as well in that sense that this is in fact part of the core. Right. But when it comes to gender diversity at the workplace, I have to say we still have to make significant strides towards much more inclusive work culture. And so, when I took office at Labs, India back in 2019, this was also one of the goals that I set up for myself, but also for the organization. And I'm so proud that our leadership takes a lot of conscious effort to ensure that everyone gets the same opportunities, the same treatment, and the same respect, irrespective of their gender or background. In fact, Labs India has been ranked among the best places to work in India exactly because of that. Right. Owing to this equal opportunity culture that we that we thrive on.

Elisabeth Riemann: That's fantastic and something to be very, very proud of as well. So, if we stay with the spotlight on SAP Labs India, can you talk us through some of the key initiatives at SAP in place when it comes to promoting equal opportunities and encouraging women to pursue their careers in technology?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Yes, absolutely, absolutely. So at Labs India, if you just look at what we are passionate about, Lizzie, and I'm talking for the fourteen thousand strong family that we have here at SAP in India, I think one thing that that goes across and across teams across LoBs it's the commitment that you have from people to also give back to the community. Right. And I want to call out this award-winning digital literacy initiative that we have called Code Unnati. And the Code Unnati was created to propel the whole topic of digital inclusion in the country. And that fits also nicely with what we stand for as an organization, because in terms of the skills that our people bring to the

table to kind of close that digital divide in India. And if you just look at what we've accomplished through Code Unnati, SAP in India has trained over a million children across 14 states on our digital curriculum. And when we talk about women in the workplace and we know that, and I mentioned it earlier on, when we talk about particularly women in those areas of the society that need support, we launched the Girls Power Tech Initiative to really inspire young girls from the weaker socioeconomic backgrounds to take up, like I said, a career in STEM. And here we are also partnering with our own customers like Mahindra and Mahindra, here we've launched Project Nanhi Kali to promote quality education and digital access to underprivileged children. And we also, together with the government of India, we've signed statement of intent with Atal Innovation Mission at NITI Aayog, which, where the focus is really about adopting also what we call often Atal Tinkering Labs. And this is really the idea is all about building a very solid foundation in science and mathematics, in electronics, in subjects like mechatronics, building those digital skills, the computer literacy. And it's going back to the school students because we want to give them access to education and access to these very specific digital skills because they can then cultivate a spirit of innovation, spirit of curiosity that will help them. And we've also partnered with a lot of the industry bodies like NASSCOM to also build out these kind of future skills that are so much needed in India, because there's a lot of, of course, skilling needs, but also reskilling and also upskilling of the industry workforce that's needed because we're talking about two million professionals out there and also potential employers, employees and also students that need to be upskilled over the next years. And recently, we also initiated, and particularly in these Covid times, and given that a lot of the schools had to resort to online education. Right. Of course, children from families where they can afford laptops and all that could continue that without any disruption. But that was not the case for so many young children. And so, we initiated also a laptop donation where we donated a lot of the pre-owned laptops to government-run schools in different Indian cities. And so many thousands of students and lots of teachers are able to benefit from this initiative, as there is still this, like I said, a major section of the Indian society who can't afford this basic infrastructure for their kids. So, at Labs India, if you ask me, we go beyond gender differences and really try to bring in how we can clip those economic and infrastructure differences that we see in our society here. Right. Then see our own unique ways, how we can help create a very inclusive society where talents and skills can outshine everything else.

Elisabeth Riemann: Absolutely, and it's giving back to the younger generation and just thinking that not everyone has the resources to have the equipment that they need at home to continue with home schooling, it's giving young people the best possible start in life and that's really wonderful.

Sindhu Gangadharan: I think that's the best part about my job, Lizzie, having this opportunity to give back to the place that I grew up, that's what keeps me going day in, day out.

Elisabeth Riemann: So, Sindhu, please, can we conclude today's episode with your closing sentiment for us?

Sindhu Gangadharan: Sure, Lizzie, I mean time has flown talking to you today, but I have to say, we live in today, living in very interesting times today. Right? I mean, the Covid situation in India is still raging. I mean, we are seeing the second wave, but at the same time, Covid has truly transformed the way we all function and be at work or be in our personal space. And it's really up to us, like we talked about earlier, how we can leverage this unique opportunity to also chart out our growth journey by really building upon all these different possibilities now the pandemic has thrown on us. So definitely, I'd say interesting times ahead, Lizzie. And like I always say, interesting times also result in equally interesting opportunities. So, with that, thank you so much for having me here. For all our listeners today, please stay safe and stay healthy. That's what is most important. Take care.

Elisabeth Riemann: Absolutely, thank you so much. Thank you for listening to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders with Sindhu Gangadharan. I'd also like to thank our sound engineer, Miguel Caroli. If you've enjoyed this episode, please share, rate, and leave a review. And also be sure to check out openSAP's free learning offering of Massive Open Online Courses, Microlearnings, and Podcasts on opensap.com. Don't miss your next invite. Subscribe now.

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