



NURTURING A DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM

# NURTURING A DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM



# TRAVERSING THE INCLUSION COSMOS



## SUN

### Celebration of Individuality

Empowering individuality, freedom of self-expression and leadership.

## MERCURY

### Freedom from Bias

Innovation through unbiased communication and education.

## VENUS

### Organizational Citizenship

Driving relationships and oneness through inclusion.

## EARTH

### Belongingness

Leveraging change, leadership and sustainability.

## MARS

### Community Outreach

Socially responsible collaborations driving passion and courage.

## JUPITER

### Growth and Development

Connecting optimism, vision and diversity into a holistic growth model.

## SATURN

### Structures and Support

Fostering discipline, maturity and responsibility.

## URANUS

### Diversity of Talent

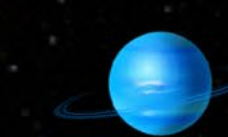
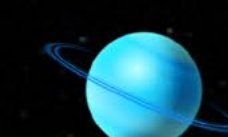
Diverse hiring celebrating youth, freedom and innovation.

## NEPTUNE

### Promoting SAP's Purpose

Inspiring change and dreams while carrying SAP's purpose.

Diversity and inclusion are driven by social collaboration and helping people stay authentic to who they are. This solar system is a symbol of the social justice, gender parity and freedom at SAP Labs India.



# SAP LABS INDIA – CREATING A UNIVERSE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



As an organization, SAP Labs India believes that a diverse and inclusive workforce is not only essential but also a reflection of the world we live in. Having said that, we also recognize that diversity goes beyond labels and categories based on age, backgrounds, experience, neurodiversity, disabilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, and more. It encompasses anyone with unique thought processes, personality traits, and perspectives.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we remain committed to inspiring our employees to be their authentic selves. With inclusive leadership, employee network groups and a wide range of initiatives, we take pride in building a diverse ecosystem that welcomes every unique individual.

The 9 key sections of this book are spread across the features of the sun and 8 planets combined together, in other words, the **inclusive cosmos**. From the **Sun** that celebrates the core essence of **individuality**, the **Earth** that symbolizes **belongingness** to **Uranus**, the epitome of **diversity of talent**, we linked our vision to achieve organizational citizenship, community outreach and most importantly, **faith in SAP's purpose**.

Through this cosmic journey, we showcase SAP Labs India's commitment to an inclusive and collaborative culture. Join us in celebrating the **power of people** at SAP Labs India.



25 Years of  
**SAP LABS  
INDIA**  
Innovating for the world

**Diversity + Inclusion**  
D&I in our DNA

SUN



# CELEBRATION OF INDIVIDUALITY

## Illuminating the Path to a Brighter Tomorrow

The sun may be just one star in the vast expanse of the solar system, but its influence is felt throughout our solar system. The sun commands everything else and provides the energy and warmth that sustains life on our planet. Similarly, at SAP, we recognize the power of individuality, self-expression, and leadership in driving positive change and fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

This section features stories from people who have used their individuality and power to cause change for good. By shining a light on these stories, we hope to inspire and empower all employees to embrace their own uniqueness, as well as appreciate and value the uniqueness of others.





# THE LITTLE THINGS

## WHY SUCCESS IN D&I ISN'T ABOUT NUMBERS

My journey towards diversity and inclusion began at a young age, shaped by personal experiences. Unknowingly, since childhood, people wear bias-rimmed-glasses and categorize fellow beings based on their stature, skin color, gender, place of birth, upbringing, culture, ethos, language, etc. Being a small, petite kid with glasses, I had to face some of this myself. However, I also observed that there were individuals who looked beyond that, treated everyone equally and with kindness and what difference it could make for my own confidence. Having witnessed both the sides as I was growing up, made me realize the power of inclusivity and inspired me to influence and shape an environment that values diversity and inclusion.

Formally, I had been working on other Labs India initiatives like engaging with colleges and the talent coming out from there. I loved that and D&I seemed like the next logical step for me to take up.

To me, **diversity** is not simply a formal definition of "characteristics" like **gender, generation, or disability**. It also means being inclusive to people with **different mindsets, thought processes, and experiences**. And the truth is, we need diverse perspectives to foster creativity, innovation, and growth.

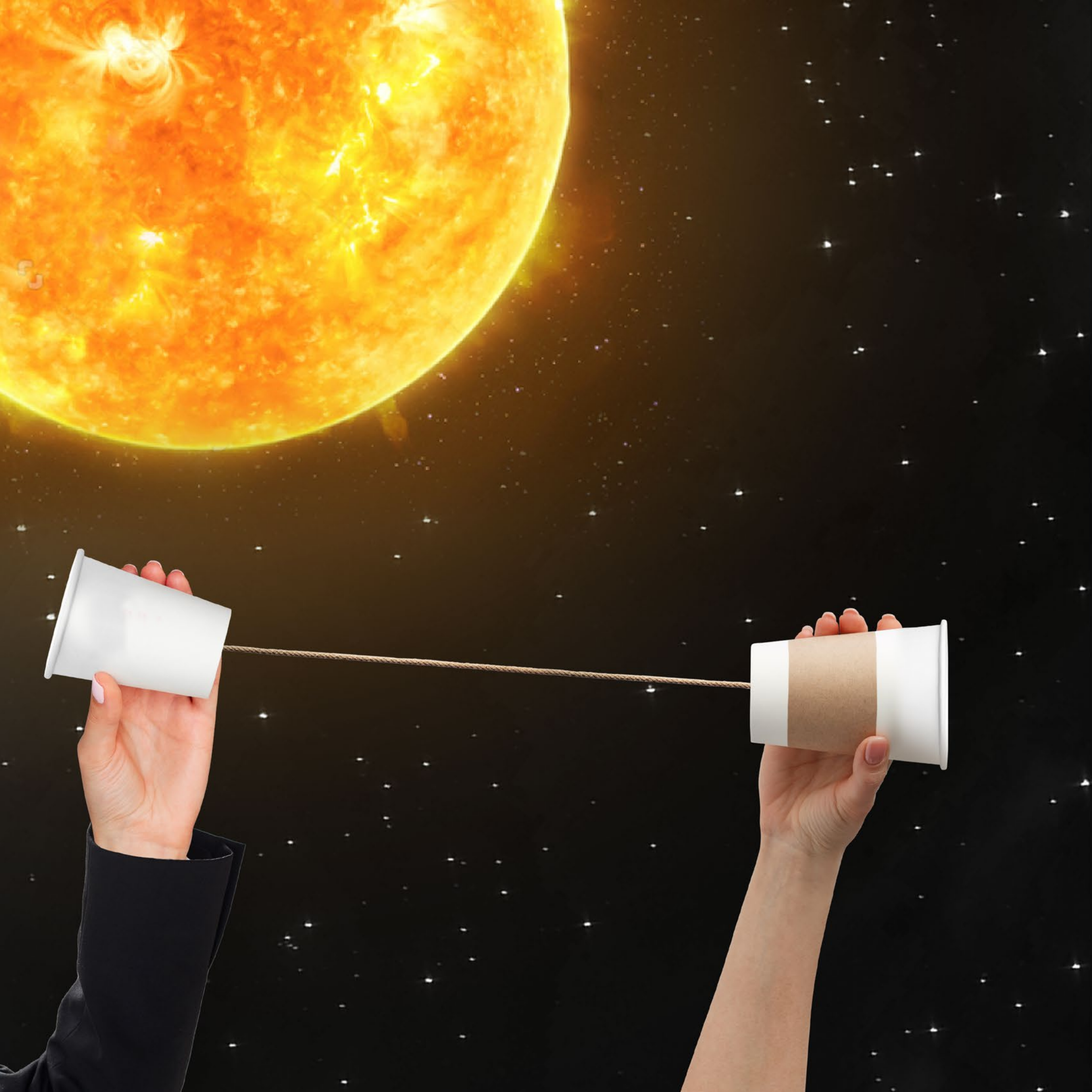
I've been fortunate to be part of some special initiatives, including Autism at Work, which was a great learning experience for me, because before that, I had little knowledge about the autism spectrum. And at SAP, it wasn't just about checking a box and hiring individuals on the spectrum but creating an environment that allows them to feel comfortable and thrive. Another area that I feel is often overlooked in the diversity and inclusion space is the support and development of early talent, specifically those with 0 to 2 years of experience. At SAP Labs India, we have made great strides in this area, offering new hires opportunities to attend events, participate in innovation initiatives, and join programs like the Nascent Leadership Program, which emphasize the importance of capabilities and potential over age or tenure.

One thing that needs to change in society is the prevalence of jokes about differences. We need to ensure that people are not preoccupied with thoughts like "Can I say this without being judged/ made fun of?" In a few years, my hope is that we will have reached a level of maturity where diversity, inclusion, and acceptance are ingrained in our collective mindset, creating an environment where individuals can be themselves without hesitation.

What motivates me to stay involved in D&I is the little things, like hearing positive impact stories or seeing the smiles on the faces of parents of our Autism at Work talents or seeing the Early Talents shining bright. Success, for me, is not measured by numbers. It's witnessing conversations changing, judgments fading, and awareness growing. It is change in attitude, emotions, and perceptions – intangible but powerful.

**Rishabh Tripathi**  
Vice President – SAP S/4HANA  
Test Engineering Team,  
Co-Lead – Diversity & Inclusion,  
SAP in India





## THE KEY TO INCLUSION

### UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF EMPATHY

Growing up, my family moved around frequently, exposing me to a variety of people from different backgrounds. This foundation allowed me to learn the value of diversity from a young age.

Asking "why" has always been a natural part of my approach, but when I was just starting my career, my peers would often dismiss me as a party pooper, which made me feel self-conscious and caused me to stop speaking up. However, my boss at the time recognized my unique perspective and encouraged me to embrace my differences as a value. Having worked in various organizations, I've come to appreciate how much diversity and inclusion (D&I) is part of our conversations here at SAP Labs India. I credit the managers and mentors for encouraging different points of view and out-of-the-box thinking.

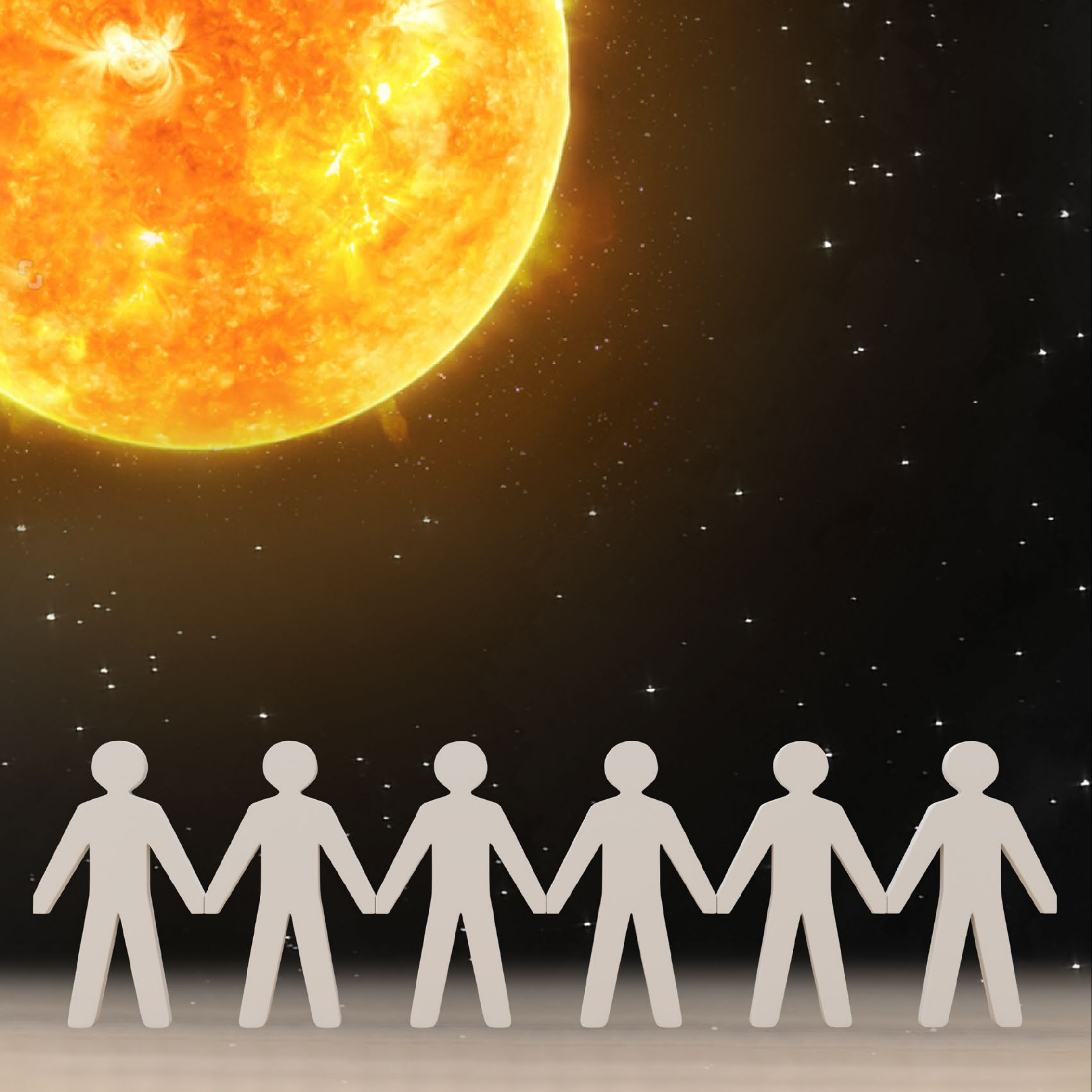
Though D&I at SAP initially focused solely on gender, I'm proud of how it has expanded to include many pillars. I remember being part of a cross-generational program that showed us the immense value of having five generations work together. And, when I took on a program to groom new managers, it was a wonderful feeling to see the journey they embark on because of your push – a true 'aha' moment.

In D&I, I believe KPIs are important because they provide a measurable way to track progress towards diversity and inclusion goals. However, I want to make a difference beyond KPIs by having more conversations about the hard stuff. And, normalizing these discussions would be a great win, rather than having them tagged as D&I conversations.

I am a firm believer that the workplace should be a reflection of the world we live in. This means that our teams should reflect the varied perspectives, experiences, and values of the world, in order to better understand and serve it. For that, we need empathy – a word often used without being fully understood. It's difficult to get rid of all the unconscious biases that come from years of conditioning. However, by just putting ourselves in someone else's shoes, the world can start to look very different. And the cycle of inclusion will start.

**Shweta Mohanty Roy**  
Head of Human Resources





## SMALL ACTS, BIG IMPACT

### MY JOURNEY OF TRUST, SUPPORT, AND GIVING BACK

My experience as a Product Manager for 15 out of my 19 years at SAP Labs India has taught me that valuing diverse perspectives and opinions is crucial to promoting inclusion.

I have been fortunate to have people who believed in me and invested in my growth. This has motivated me to pay it forward and help others in the same way. Becoming the co-lead for our D&I program was an easy decision to me.

The Care for Life Program is something that is very close to my heart. The idea behind it was to address the financial burden that can be overwhelming for employees who go through difficult times or for the family members of employees we've lost. Instead of sending out mails asking for help, we came up with the idea of creating a fund through voluntary monthly donations. To a single employee, it might be the cost of one coffee, but together that amount can go a long way in improving someone's livelihood or giving their family a chance at a comfortable life. It also gives them one less thing to worry about as they grieve or process their feelings.

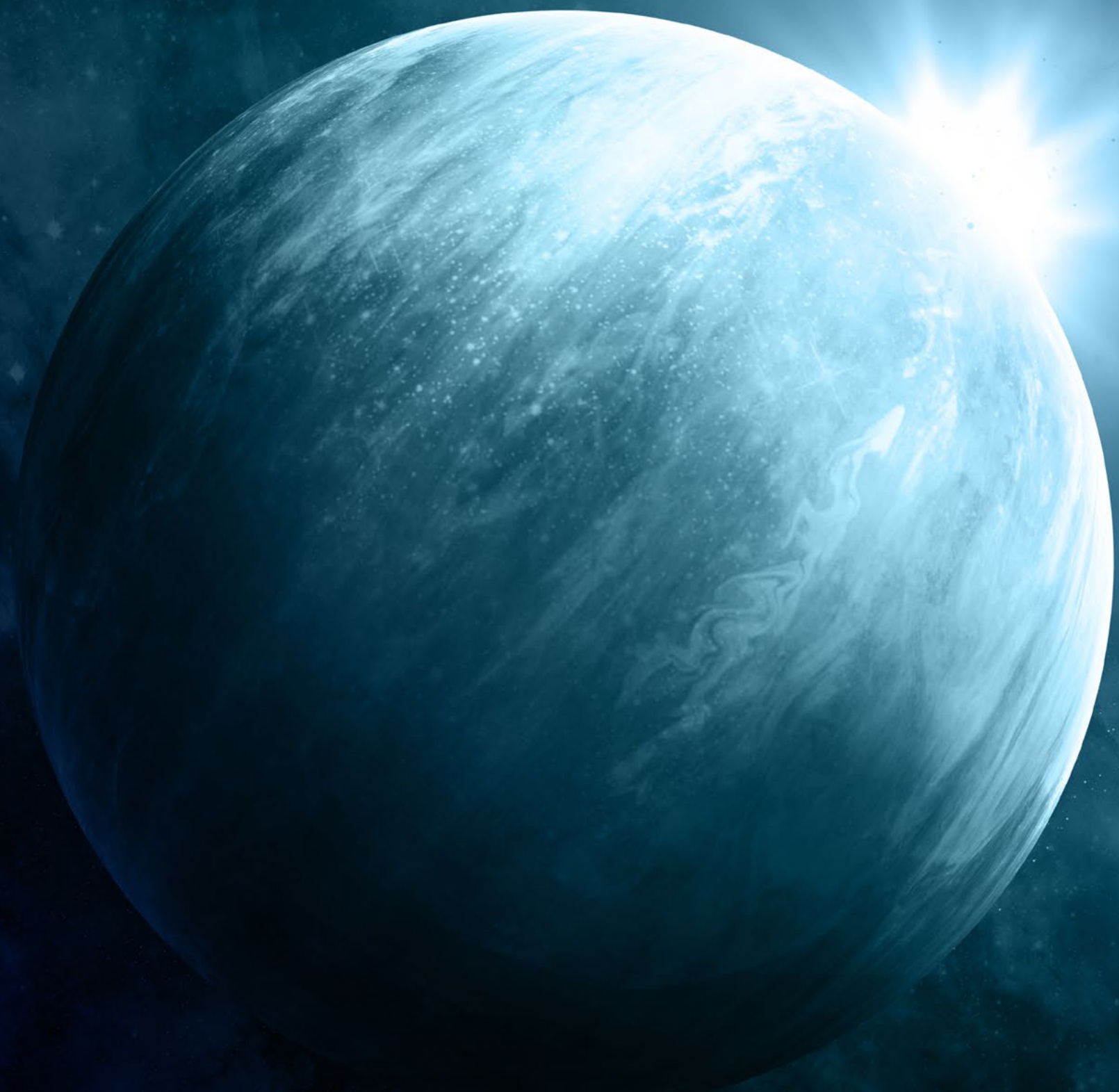
To me, success in the D&I space isn't just about fulfilling quotas or requirements. It should be something that occurs organically. While it's true that we've made progress, it's important to shift our mindset and focus on areas where we're still lacking.

One of my recent proudest moments was when SAP Labs was recognized as the best place for women to work. And, being featured in Harvard! However, what really makes me happy is hearing the personal stories of the people who gained from the programs and seeing them grow despite the obstacles in their way. These everyday moments show that we are on the right path.

In closing, I want to emphasize that diversity and inclusion should not be limited to just a few categories. It's much broader than that. It's a part of everything we do at SAP Labs India. And, wherever you find that you can help someone – help. Find a cause and give back. As demonstrated by our Care for Life program, a small act of kindness can make a big difference.

**Soumya R**  
Vice President,  
SAP SuccessFactors





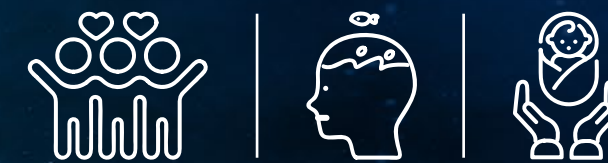
## FREEDOM FROM BIAS

### Breaking Down Barriers to Open Communication

As we explore the importance of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, we must first focus on one of its most crucial aspects: freedom from bias. At SAP Labs India, we recognize that bias can manifest in many ways, including unconscious biases that can affect everyday life at the workplace.

Mercury, the planet of communication, education, and intellect, is a fitting symbol for our efforts to eliminate bias. By engaging in healthy dialogue and educating ourselves and others, we strive to create a more inclusive workplace.

In this section, you'll discover inspiring stories that question conventional thinking and encourage self-reflection. Along with our various initiatives and constant commitment to diversity and inclusion, we hope these stories help nurture safe spaces with empathy, acceptance, and growth. More than anything, we want every individual walking into our doors, to feel valued, supported, and empowered to bring their whole and authentic selves to work.





# MENTORSHIP MATTERS

## OVERCOMING BIAS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TECH

My journey with SAP started 25 years ago, during a time when being a woman in the tech industry was a rarity. In fact, I was the only woman in a department of almost 10,000 employees.

I thought the world has come a long way since then. But, in 2015, when my daughter was one of only four girls in her computer science class at IIT, it became apparent that not much has changed. If you think about it, women in banking and medicine continue to progress, but why do women in technology hold back? Is it because of the prevailing societal perception that technology is a male-dominated industry?

Early in my career, Diversity and Inclusion wasn't a prominent topic. As a trainer, I was mentoring individuals who turned to me for guidance. Eventually, as awareness and support for D&I grew, I focused on coaching and supporting women in their career growth. My motivation comes from the belief that I achieved success in my career, in part due to the support of those who believed in me and aided me along the way. I want to pay it forward and help other women reach their full potential. It's rewarding to see at least 10 of my mentees in senior roles at SAP, and even those who have moved on, reach out for advice and encouragement.

Still, I remind myself daily that I am not immune to biases. While advocating for the promotion of women, I strive to ensure that their advancement is based on merit and not just on the grounds of D&I.

At SAP we are fortunate to have a supportive environment that enables us to thrive. However, it's essential to ask ourselves what we can do beyond creating code and closing tickets and how we make a positive impact while also fostering a more inclusive environment for all.

### Uma Rani TM

SVP and Head of Private Cloud Products,  
PE PCP CIM AIS





## FROM SKEPTIC TO ADVOCATE MY JOURNEY WITH D&I AT SAP

Back when I was working in globalization services, someone asked me what I could do for D&I at SAP Labs India. I have to admit, I wasn't convinced of its importance and lacked personal experience of being treated differently. However, I attended the meeting, and it completely changed my perspective.

I was fascinated by the group's survey findings, which brought to light the challenges women face in their career journeys. I immediately became more involved and even volunteered to lead, when the opportunity arose.

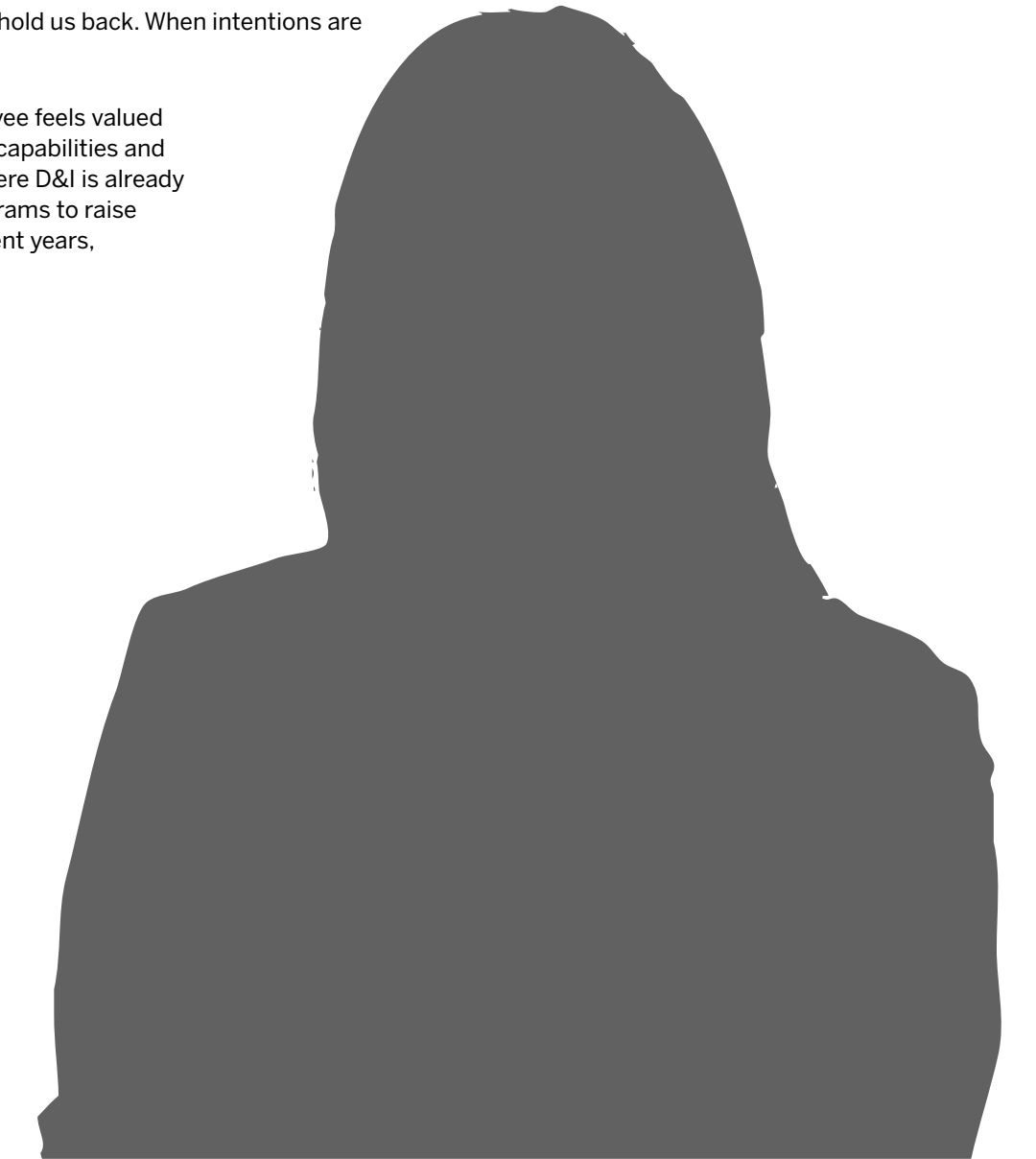
During one of our exercises, we realized that the obstacles faced by women, as well as the interventions needed to overcome them, varied depending not just on life events but their T-level band too. So, we came up with a program "Leadership at all Levels" (recognized for promoting inclusivity), where we discussed ideas like speed mentoring, which gained popularity and was eventually implemented globally. We also learned to recognize and appreciate the support successful women receive outside of work, which we called "Sparkle" for my success.

What I feel happy about is how we were a group of 60 passionate volunteers from across the organization working on D&I at SAP, driven solely by the desire to effect change and make a difference.

Hiring a talented employee from the spectrum made me realize that we need to create more opportunities and not let our fear (or unconscious bias) hold us back. When intentions are right, we need to take that leap of faith.

My vision is for us to be a workplace where every employee feels valued and empowered to pursue opportunities based on their capabilities and willingness to learn, free from fear of discrimination. Where D&I is already ingrained in the culture, and we don't need special programs to raise awareness. While I have seen significant progress in recent years, there is still a long way to go.

**Manjusha Nair**  
Country Director, SAP Concur India  
and VP APAC Concur Services,  
Concur Services



VENUS



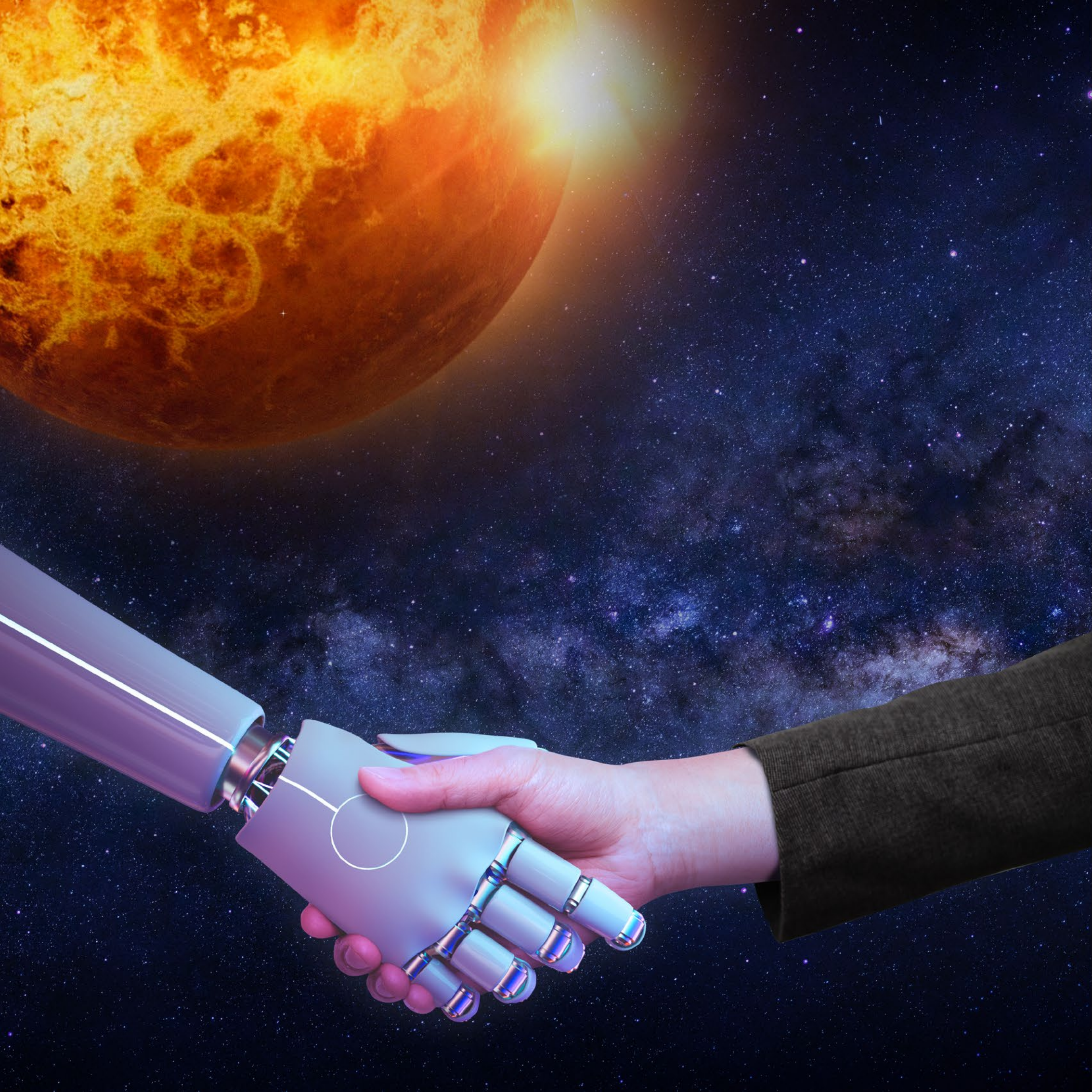
# ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP

## Shining Examples of Going the Extra Mile

Venus, known as the brightest planet in our solar system, has been associated with qualities such as compassion, kindness, and empathy. These are the same qualities that are at the heart of organizational citizenship, which is all about employees going above and beyond their job descriptions to contribute to the betterment of their workplace and colleagues.

In this section, we highlight stories of those who have asked the tough questions, delved into the root causes of inequality and underrepresentation, and taken action to promote change. From mentoring and conducting workshops, to starting or supporting programs that encourage diversity, these individuals show us that true purpose is not defined by one's job title or role.





## BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY

I've been with SAP for 16 years and collaborated with the D&I chapter for over 7 years. Attending my first Grace Hopper Celebration in 2009 was a transformative experience for me, as the focus on women in tech and the sight of women leading the charge was a departure from the other conferences I had previously attended, which either had a mixed audience or lacked female representation. This inspired me to want to make a difference for women in tech, leading me to participate actively as a speaker, committee member, panel discussion moderator, and workshop conductor. With the support of SAP, I was honored to chair the Grace Hopper Celebration in 2021.

While on this path, I saw that women face issues when it comes to career enhancement and development, so we developed career workshops titled "Turning Your Snakes into Ladders" which were eventually conducted globally with both women and men. To further my goal of promoting women in tech, I have been actively involved in various events and even had the opportunity to conduct a workshop in the US. I continue to mentor women in tech and non-tech, and we even conducted a tech star challenge that received traction in virtual mode.

A few years ago, I worked with NASSCOM on Women Wizards Rule Tech program, focusing on career growth paths and trending tech areas. We had masterclasses and sessions open to women outside SAP, with SAP women as mentors.

The SAP Women in Tech program continues to be something I'm passionate about and I see it as a platform for women to display their expertise. To me the program is a success when it breaks through biases and stereotypes, providing opportunities for women to demonstrate their skills. Every engagement is a chance to learn and grow, and as I always say, "To be successful, one must learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable."

**Krithika G**  
Senior Development Manager,  
Application Innovation Services,  
Private Cloud Products





# EMPOWERING WOMEN, CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS

## MY EXPERIENCE WITH BWN

In 2017-18, I joined SAP Business Women Network (BWN) and was entrusted with the responsibility to lead the India chapter. I was always a passionate, high-energy manager and wanted to make a difference here as well. The first thing I questioned was why women weren't at the forefront when it came to talking about topics in tech. But I wanted to walk the talk, so I collaborated with NASSCOM and actively participated in educating women in the IT industry on cloud computing. I even encouraged other female colleagues to join me in organizing external sessions.

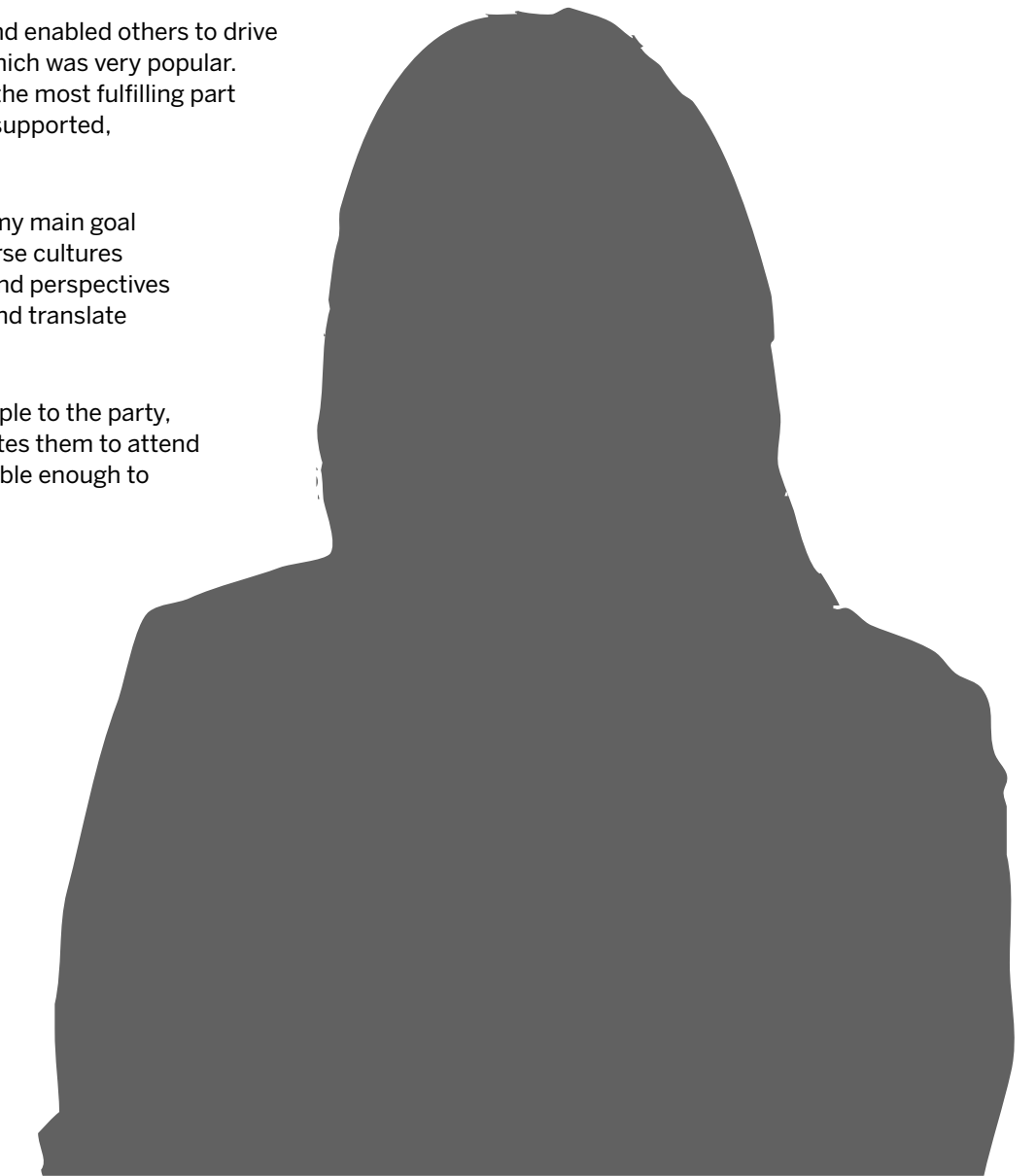
To identify the barriers that hindered women's progress, we developed a charter to pinpoint the areas where we could have the most impact and we discovered that it wasn't a lack of education that was keeping women out of STEM fields. So, we took a closer look at the root causes of the issue, questioning whether it was due to intrinsic factors like confidence, or extrinsic factors like a lack of opportunities. That's when we came up with "Maintaining Business Acumen" (MBA) program which was open to the entire organization and was a huge success with over 1,000 participants. We organized a series of workshops called "Take Charge" which focused on addressing extrinsic factors that may hold women back in their careers.

I stepped back from being the face of many programs and enabled others to drive bold initiatives, like the 'promotions during pandemic' which was very popular. More than the awards and recognitions I have received, the most fulfilling part of being associated with BWN is seeing the women I've supported, being recognized for their performance and success.

Now as BWN Regional Head for APJ and Greater China, my main goal is to facilitate cross-learning and awareness across diverse cultures and communities. By understanding the unique needs and perspectives of each region, we can tailor our approach to inclusion and translate it into tangible business goals.

To me, it all starts with inclusion. Diversity is inviting people to the party, and inclusion is inviting them to dance. But what motivates them to attend and what music and environment makes them comfortable enough to dance – is for us to find out and provide.

**Sapna Ramaiah**  
Head of SME Application Unit,  
ERP For SME





# UNLOCKING ALLYSHIP

## THE POWER OF UNLEARNING AND KINDNESS

While it is a little embarrassing to admit this after having worked in D&I throughout my six-year career, I cannot hide from the fact that I was once a person who laughed when people didn't grasp technology as quickly as I did, a person who intentionally concealed her urge to wear certain clothes because they were considered "not feminine enough," and a person who felt that reservations were unfair.

But I think the point of inflection was when I heard the global trans icon, Alok Vaid-Menon speak at my college. Listening to their story, in person, left me shook to the core. How could them existing be a threat to their existence? It was a concept too twisted for me to not care about anymore.

And that is when I realized the first time that there is so much more to the world than what meets the eye, and we'd be fooling ourselves if we ever think we know all that there is to someone as complex as a human being.

I began reading up on topics of feminism, equity, identity, and social justice. In the process, I became more aware and kinder to myself for the mistakes and errors of judgment that I unknowingly made in the past. You can't know everything. No one can.

At SAP, I started my D&I journey as an Early Talent Ambassador, going on to become a generational diversity trainer, and then an LGBTQIA+ inclusion trainer, and nothing could have been more fulfilling than this.

It is heartening to see that there is just a small first step that initiates the journey of allyship. It is agreeing to unlearn. And it is even more humbling to see how many people take this step every single day.

With initiatives such as **Breaking Generational Myths** and **It's None of Your Business**, I've had the opportunity to speak with so many people at SAP and do my part in helping them get on the path of unlearning and finding the kind of ally they wish to be. The fact that the curriculums have been put together with so much care and sensitivity demonstrates how much kindness and respect is afforded to every person at SAP. No one needs to feel threatened. We are on this journey together, and knowledge is the key to creating significant change!

**Sarina**  
designation





## BELONGINGNESS

### Where Everyone Feels at Home

Belongingness is a fundamental human need to feel connected, accepted, and valued by others. Our Earth is a shared and interconnected space where a variety of creatures coexist and depend on each other for survival.

Just as every living being plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of the planet's ecosystem, every individual has a unique contribution to make in our communities and workplaces. By embracing and celebrating our differences, we can create a sense of unity that fosters creativity, innovation, and growth.

The stories in this section demonstrate how a sense of connection and belongingness can help build stronger, more connected teams.





## RESPECT

### THE KEY TO D&I IN OUR DNA

15 years ago, when I was in another company, my manager said something like “You are a compassionate and inclusive person in all you do, so would you like to be part of a team that focuses on that?” That’s how my relationship with D&I began.

At first, we aimed to increase inclusivity for the PRIDE community, which wasn’t easy back then and even involved arranging anonymous calls to meet with leadership. However, as I engaged more with this community, I became increasingly convinced that the more we include those who have traditionally been excluded, the better we are as employers and human beings.

I worked in similar roles with different companies but always had my eye on one that embodied a holistic approach to diversity and inclusion – SAP. So, when I saw this unique position – Global Leader for Cross-Generational Intelligence, I applied.

At SAP Labs India, I’ve felt at home from day one. The supportive environment has helped me grow both personally and professionally. I was even backed by my managers and colleagues when I pursued a post-graduate degree in human rights law at NLS.

Diversity in a team, with members from different generations and experiences, exposes varying thought processes. We saw that first hand when the diverse data collected by the team after workshops resulted in valuable authentic primary data. This triggered the idea for a white paper and then a thought leadership paper which not only gave us visibility, but impacted how D&I in India is viewed globally.

Ultimately, I think our policies reflect our commitment. It’s the details – like the clauses for same-gender parents in our adoption leave and paternity benefits policies. Even if the people actually needing them are few, the time and effort taken to gather market intelligence, consult with insurance companies, and design such policies, demonstrates our company’s genuine care and concern for ALL employees. For me, it’s a place where I feel comfortable bringing my whole self to work, realizing that I am a work in progress but knowing that SAP is supportive of me in this journey.

**Annice Joseph**  
Global D&I Leader – People  
& Operations





## BEYOND COMPLIANCE SAP'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES

My journey with SAP has been a year old as we speak. I inherited a team and a Real Estate portfolio that was already extremely sensitive to Accessibility and D&I – my contribution was perhaps to make this focus second nature to everything that Global Real Estate and Facilities (GRF) did. I am very proud of SAP's commitment to Diversity & Inclusion – what differentiates us is our outreach to create the right environment that fosters freedom of choice and courage to express. This aspect is even more crucial for attracting and retaining talent as we emerge out of the shadows of COVID.

For many years, SAP has been committed to creating a culture of innovation, promoting diversity of thought, and fostering outreach programs that prepare the leaders of tomorrow. GRF is spearheading this effort by creating a workplace that continuously strives to cater to all dimensions of diversity and inclusion, including persons with disabilities (PWDs). Some of the initiatives we have implemented include PWD-friendly facilities, such as wheelchair-friendly ramps for entry and exit to the workplace, tactile paths and braille signage for the visually impaired, and even a specially designed stage lift for climbing onto the stage in the auditorium. This focus will be further amplified in all future SAP workplaces in the region.

While inclusivity at the workplace is a top priority, it's important to remember that people must be at the core of this approach for it to be truly holistic. To this end, we have recently hired several housekeeping staff members who are differently abled. We provide trainings on diversity and inclusion to develop a culture of inclusion and respect, as well as a safe and encouraging work environment. In an industry first, GRF conducted a cultural event for vendor staff on International Women's Day. Seeing outstanding staff response, we are committed to more such engagements.

The SAP Metro Art project was a unique collaboration with BMRCL where SAP tied up with Aravani, a transgender art collective, to create a platform for expression of the transgender community through art, awareness and social participation. This initiative honoured the unique identities and potential of the transgender community.

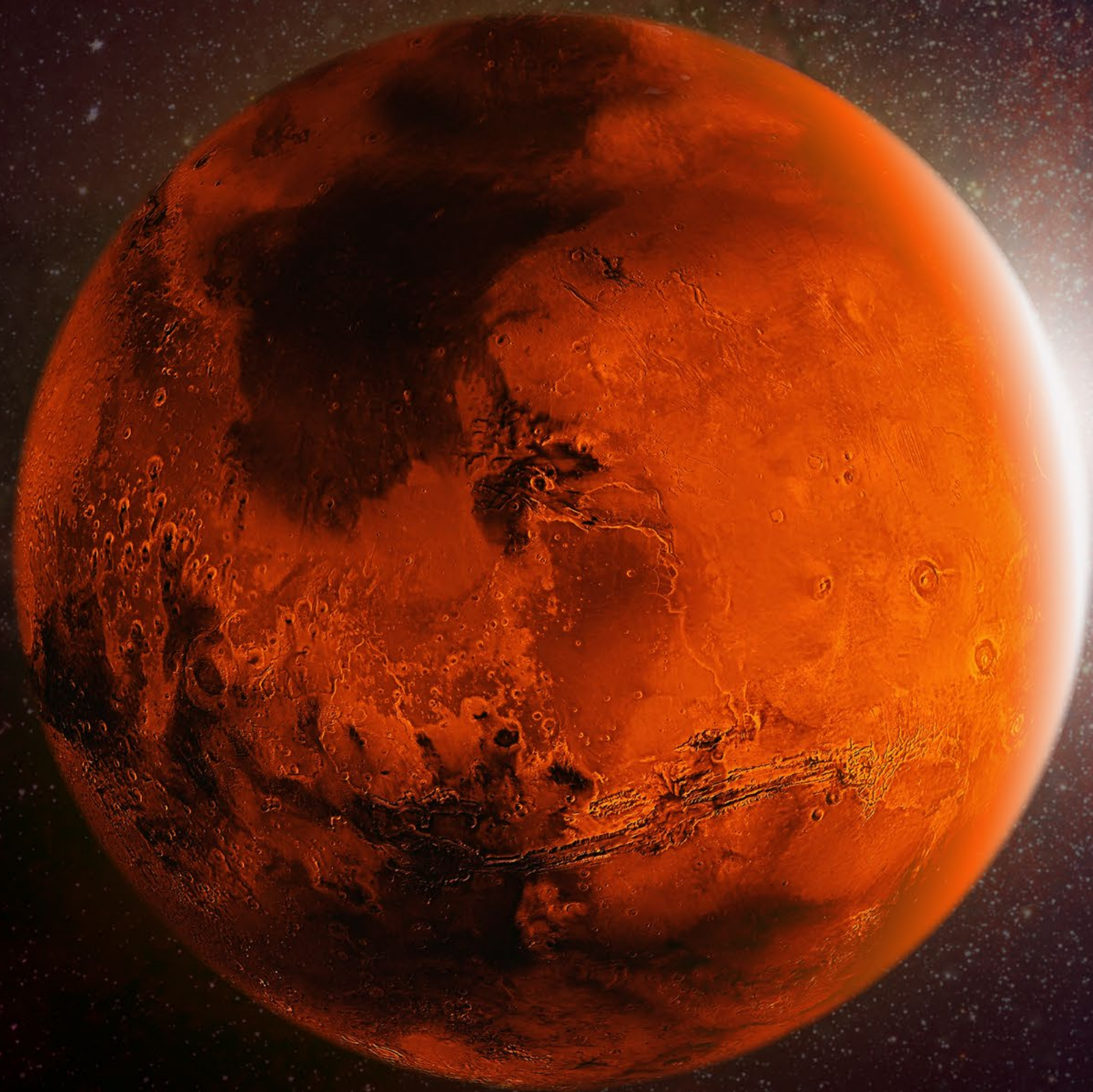
As a regional GRF leader, it is imperative for me to create a more just and equitable workplace for our employees. Prioritizing DEI can have positive effects on our ability to innovate more, make better decisions, and have a more productive workforce.

### Roshan Gowda

Regional Head,  
APJ & Greater China – Global Real Estate and  
Facilities (GRF), SAP Labs India Pvt. Ltd.



MARS



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Inspiring Connections and Changing Lives

Mars is often associated with action, passion, courage, and drive, qualities that inspire us to make a positive impact in the world around us. At SAP Labs India, we believe that community outreach is a powerful tool for bringing people together, creating meaningful connections, and fostering a sense of belonging.

From the Autism at Work Program to the Empower Ananya initiative and the Aravani Art Project, the stories shared in this section demonstrate the impact of community outreach on creating a more connected and inclusive world.



# EMBRACING DIFFERENCES FOSTERING A NEURODIVERSE WORKPLACE

My journey with D&I at SAP Labs India started 12 years back when Ferose VR initiated the autism program. There was very little awareness about autism at that time. The government had not yet recognized it in the Disability Bill. We partnered with Enable India to learn more about autism and set up a defined process and structure for the program.

When we started this program, we realized that kids with autism in India had very little exposure outside their immediate caregivers and they all came from a very protected atmosphere at home. They were also excluded from mainstream society since very early years, starting with schooling.

So, the biggest challenge was: how do we foster inclusivity at the workplace when schools and overall society have been excluding autistic kids? We brought together members from across the community for discussions on neurodiversity at the workplace: parents, schools, colleges, hospitals, and the corporate world.

My primary inspiration to pursue D&I is the joy of helping someone build an independent life. When people on the autism spectrum are given the right atmosphere to explore their interests and skills, they thrive and become independent individuals.

The biggest dream for all of us working in the inclusivity space is to give these individuals a sense of belonging in the world rather than just making them fit in. I realize that although I joined this program with the intent of making a difference and serving the society, in reality, the program has served me and makes me a better person every day.

**Archana**  
Marketing and Operation Specialist  
and Autism at Work Program Co Lead,  
Product Engineering



My main reason to join this program was to do my bit in giving back to the society. I am a reticent person and in general, I don't get to spend a lot of time outside office hours to contribute towards initiatives that improve the society. This was an ideal opportunity to get involved while working at SAP.

When we started hiring, busting common myths was a real eye-opener for me. For eg: people on the spectrum lack social engagement skills and do not make a lot of friends. Or that most people on the spectrum don't have technical skills.

Throughout this journey, we interacted with a lot of parents as well. To them, the program was a new lease of life for their kids that brings the relief of knowing that they can truly become well-rounded independent members of the society.

The Harvard Business Case initiative captures very beautifully the full impact of this program and how it has motivated other companies, universities and even government bodies to explore new ways to hire autistic people at work in a way that can create business impact.

What we started and what we're working on is nothing short of a revolution. A decade ago, the meaning of diversity was limited to only gender diversity; hiring people with disabilities was looked at as a CSR activity. We've come a long way from there. Still, we are just scratching the surface with the autism program but we know that there is a huge pool of talent waiting to join the workforce. And it is organizations like SAP that can create some great opportunities here and make that difference.

Back in the early days, when people saw someone wearing spectacles, it was considered a disability. But today, I don't believe anyone thinks of it like that. The day we transform the larger society to view other disabilities in a similar way, it would mean success to me.

**Kiran Venkataramanappa**  
Development Manager,  
Central Business Configuration





## PUTTING MY HAND UP

### HOW D&I BECAME MY PASSION

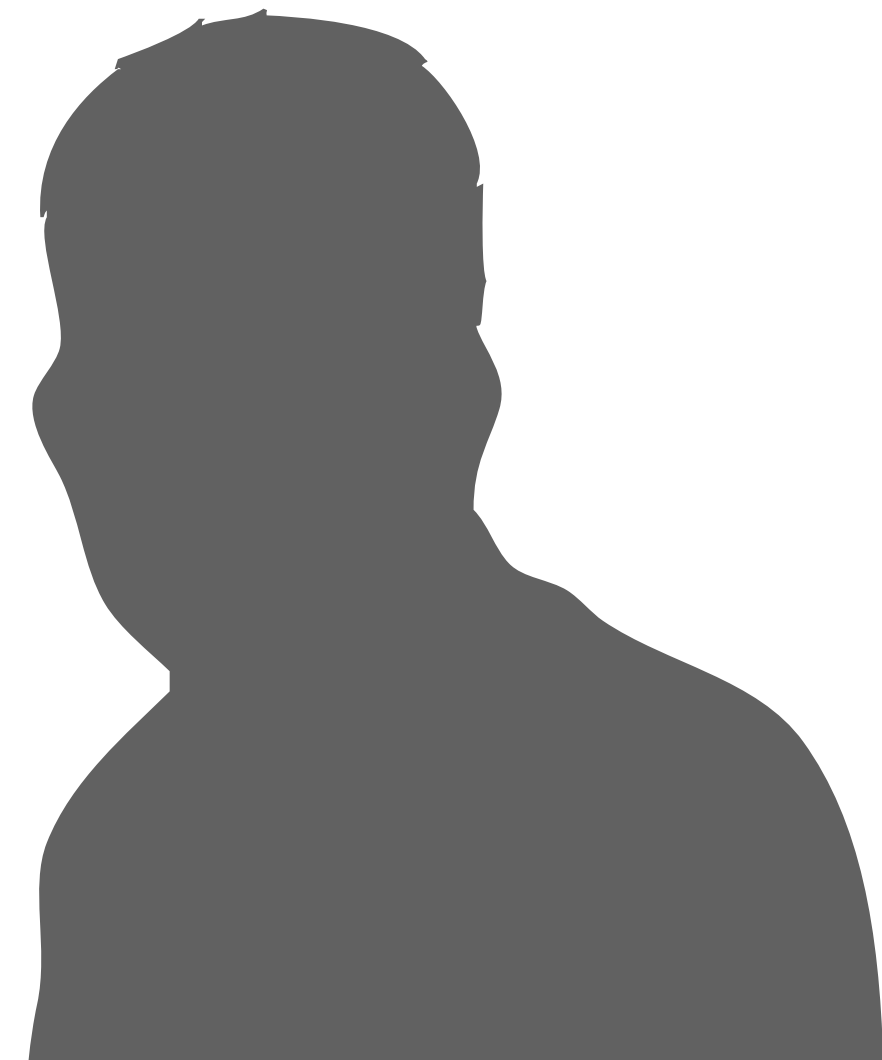
D&I in our DNA. That is our tagline. It is punchy and it conveys the message. But probably unbeknownst to the original creator(s) of the tagline, it contains, I dare say, a beautiful absurdity. Perhaps even a paradox. DNA – that molecule of life, the code of heredity – is itself the root cause of all diversity. So, to say that we have diversity in our DNA is like stressing the obvious. But then, no behavior of ours can be changed and made free of bias unless it becomes a part of our core – our DNA. Here, DNA assumes the quality of a metaphor. Our need to teach and understand things in terms of stories and narratives is fulfilled, in our case, by DNA. It is our code. Both literally and figuratively.

My D&I journey has been a bit of a paradox too. The more I think I understand something, the more I have a feeling I know less. Even if I were to attend the same awareness session I attended earlier, I walk away slightly more enlightened. When I first started the journey, I did want to be free of all bias. As with so many things in life, sometimes hindsight can tell you how silly your ambitions are. The ambition of being bias free faced the same fate, in my case. Sometimes you are complete by being incomplete. That meant I just have to learn every day. But then, I am in the company of some of the best teachers – my colleagues at the D&I team in SAP in India.

Every step of my D&I path has brought with it new 'aha' moments. While I played minor roles earlier in my career, the real turning point was accepting the role of the lead of Pride ENG at SAP in India. To say that it was an eye opener is putting it mildly. We had some successes. And we had many occasions to course correct and learn. But I can say with confidence, we started talking and executing on things that no one else was doing. We created the Coming Out Support Framework to help colleagues that would like to come out at the workplace. We instituted listening circles as a safe place for colleagues to be heard. We were involved in the Bangalore Metro Pillar project where SAP worked with Aravani Art Project, a trans artist collective for creating artwork on the metro pillars. We are in the process of creating a Pride-themed physical space in one of our buildings. The list goes on.

As a Cisgender male, I have often been asked as to why I was leading the Pride ENG group at SAP. The short answer: I am a bit of a put-my-hand-up-er. I tend and want to get involved. So, when I was asked if I would like to lead the group, I said yes. But the long answer, paradoxically is also short: I have D&I in my DNA. Diversity and Inclusion is so important to me that I could not say no to an opportunity where I could contribute actively. Without that, I am just practicing what is being taught. Someone, however, needs to figure out what needs to be taught as well. I will put my hand up for it. Always!

**Sai Parlapalli**  
Lead, Support Center – India, SAP



JUPITER



# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

## Expanding Horizons to Explore the Unknown

Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, is associated with growth, expansion, healing and miracles. It reflects our commitment to creating an environment that fosters individual growth and development. At SAP Labs India, we encourage our employees to explore new opportunities, ask questions, and acquire the necessary skills to thrive.

In this section, we share stories of those who have embraced this philosophy and the transformative impact it has had on their lives. From acquiring new skills through training programs to actively seeking out opportunities for personal and professional growth, these individuals demonstrate the power of continuous learning.



# EMPOWERING EMERGING LEADERS

## HOW THE ILEAD PROGRAM TRANSFORMED OUR CAREERS

I began my D&I journey at SAP by contributing to the Gender Intelligence pillar. When the iLead program was introduced, I was involved in the conception phase, collecting and providing feedback. As someone aspiring to become a leader myself, I was excited to transition from a contributor to a participant in the program.

Mentoring was a standout experience for me. Throughout the program, I worked closely with my mentor, for assignments and other tasks. Beyond the practical skills I gained, I also had the opportunity to learn about her personal journey and experiences, which was incredibly valuable. In addition to the mentoring component, the leadership sessions, led by women leaders and workshops, provided valuable insights and allowed us to look inwardly as we assessed our strengths and areas for growth to prepare for leadership roles.

Prior to joining iLead, I always knew I wanted to work in a people-oriented role and was already being groomed for it internally. With the teachings and insights from iLead, I was confident in taking on a managerial role within my existing team, which arose a few months into the program.

The iLead program's tagline, 'Prepare to Lead,' resonated with me. It made me realize that while opportunities may arise, it's important to be prepared and confident in my abilities to lead. Through iLead, I had the opportunity to network with other cohort members, engage in meaningful conversations, and participate in a learn-and-share dynamic that provided valuable insights and helped me grow both personally and professionally.

**Ranjinii Thiyagarajan**  
Development Manager,  
ERP Logistics

Prior to joining the program, I had only attended a few workshops about D&I initiatives in general. At the time when I was unsure about my next career move and contemplating whether to just continue as an architect, my manager saw my potential and nominated me for the iLead program.

At the introductory session, I was inspired by the words of the speaker when she encouraged us to commit to the program, which I ultimately did.

Through iLead, I was able to gain exposure to new concepts and perspectives, such as impactful communication and personal branding, that I had not previously considered as an individual contributor. The talks from different leaders, as well as the invaluable mentoring sessions, also played a significant role in my growth and development. The program also addressed the common feeling among women that holds them back from applying for leadership roles, instilling confidence and providing the necessary building blocks to succeed.

Within a few months of starting the iLead program, I acquired the fundamental leadership skills and self-awareness needed to apply for (and eventually secure) a managerial position. The mentorship and cohort group resources provided through the program have continued to support me in my SAP journey. Additionally, I often recommend the program to others and still rely on the lessons I learned from iLead.

In summary, the biggest gain from iLead for me was self-confidence, as it helped me overcome my doubts and gain the confidence to step out of my comfort zone and take on a leadership role.

**Amrita Prabhakaran**  
designation





## GROWING MY TRIBE

# HOW I FOUNDED SAP WOMEN IN CYBER SECURITY (SWICS)

I joined SAP's security team in 2006, at a time when not many companies were aware of the need for security and data privacy. Fast forward to now, and every department and team has recognized cybersecurity and data privacy as a priority.

However, I noticed that there was a significant lack of women in this space. In fact, till a few years ago, I was the only woman in the room during meetings. I believe in being the change you wish to see, which for me meant improving representation for women in cybersecurity. I knew SAP's welcoming culture would support me in working towards a solution, and I even had the opportunity to discuss the issue with Sindhu Gangadharan in an elevator, of all places.

With her support, along with HR and the D&I team, I was able to turn my idea into a reality and founded SAP Women in Cyber Security (SWICS). We came up with a program to build in-house talents by providing training and mentorship to women, enabling them to seize opportunities in the security and privacy domain. For that, we curated content for a training program and even offered hands on experience, mentorship, and more.

SWICS is my brainchild and close to my heart. But starting anything new comes with its challenges. Virtual onboarding and training during the pandemic were difficult, and keeping the team motivated when outcomes were not as expected was important.

I'm proud to say that in our first year, 25 women completed our program, with 4 landing full-time roles, 2 securing short-term assignments, 2 getting internships, 2 participated in Breaking Internal Barriers, 5 spoke at conferences, and 3 published papers.

For me, success and reason to celebrate lies in the fact that these numbers represent people who have flourished and are making an impact. I think true diversity and inclusion can only be achieved when everyone feels seen and heard. The numbers and achievements are a reflection of the progress we have made, but ultimately, it's about creating a more inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

### **Sailaja Vadlamudi**

VP Security & Data Privacy and  
Global App Sec Lead, ERP Digital  
Supply Chain Cloud



# STRUCTURES AND SUPPORT

## Embracing a Circle of Inclusion and Care

Saturn's iconic rings are a stunning example of the power of structure and support. Countless individual particles of ice and rock orbit the planet, held in place by its gravitational pull. At SAP Labs India, we believe in the importance of providing a similar kind of supportive environment. By establishing a framework of support and resources, we can create an environment where every individual can thrive and contribute to our collective success.

In this section, we share stories of individuals who have taken a stand for ethics or come together to help those in need. They serve as a reminder that we are all in this together, and that none of us are alone in our struggles or triumphs.





## ONE STEP AT A TIME OUR HOLISTIC APPROACH TO D&I

In my view, a policy or an initiative is successful, even if it's changed one person's life. It's important to remember that diversity and inclusion efforts are a continuous process, and we cannot solve all the problems at once. It may feel uncomfortable or challenging in the beginning, but like anything else, it takes practice. With time, we can change the culture of an entire organization, one step at a time, while constantly checking the impact. If we are better than we were yesterday, we have made progress.

In the last couple of years, we have understood the essence of inclusion more deeply, which is the reason our approach towards D&I is holistic. We are no longer talking about a single Employee Resource Group (ERG) but are focusing on all employees at every stage of their life and their journey at SAP Labs India. Personally, I look forward to the day when inclusivity is second nature to us, and we no longer need to focus on it as a separate issue.

Our D&I initiatives are primarily led by volunteers who are passionate about the topic and want to contribute to this space. We don't have 100% dedicated D&I resources, but we believe that when like-minded people come together, they can create magic. That's what we strive for as the D&I team at SAP Labs India.

Our focus is on putting our employees at the centre and understanding what will make them feel most fulfilled at work. By prioritizing their well-being and happiness, we enable them to focus on innovation and creativity. This philosophy guides us as we continuously improve our policies, hoping to instil a culture of trust, collaboration and inclusion.

**Anita Joshi**  
Director, HR





# STANDING UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

## MY JOURNEY IN UNDERSTANDING D&I AT SAP

Until 2008/2009, Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) initiatives were mainly focused on equal career opportunities for women. It wasn't until 2017, when SAP in India launched inclusive initiatives for the LGBTQIA+ community, that I truly understood the meaning of D&I. Interactive and experience sharing panel discussions made me a believer in SAP's D&I objectives. All credit goes to my then-manager, a member of the PRIDE community and now a good friend.

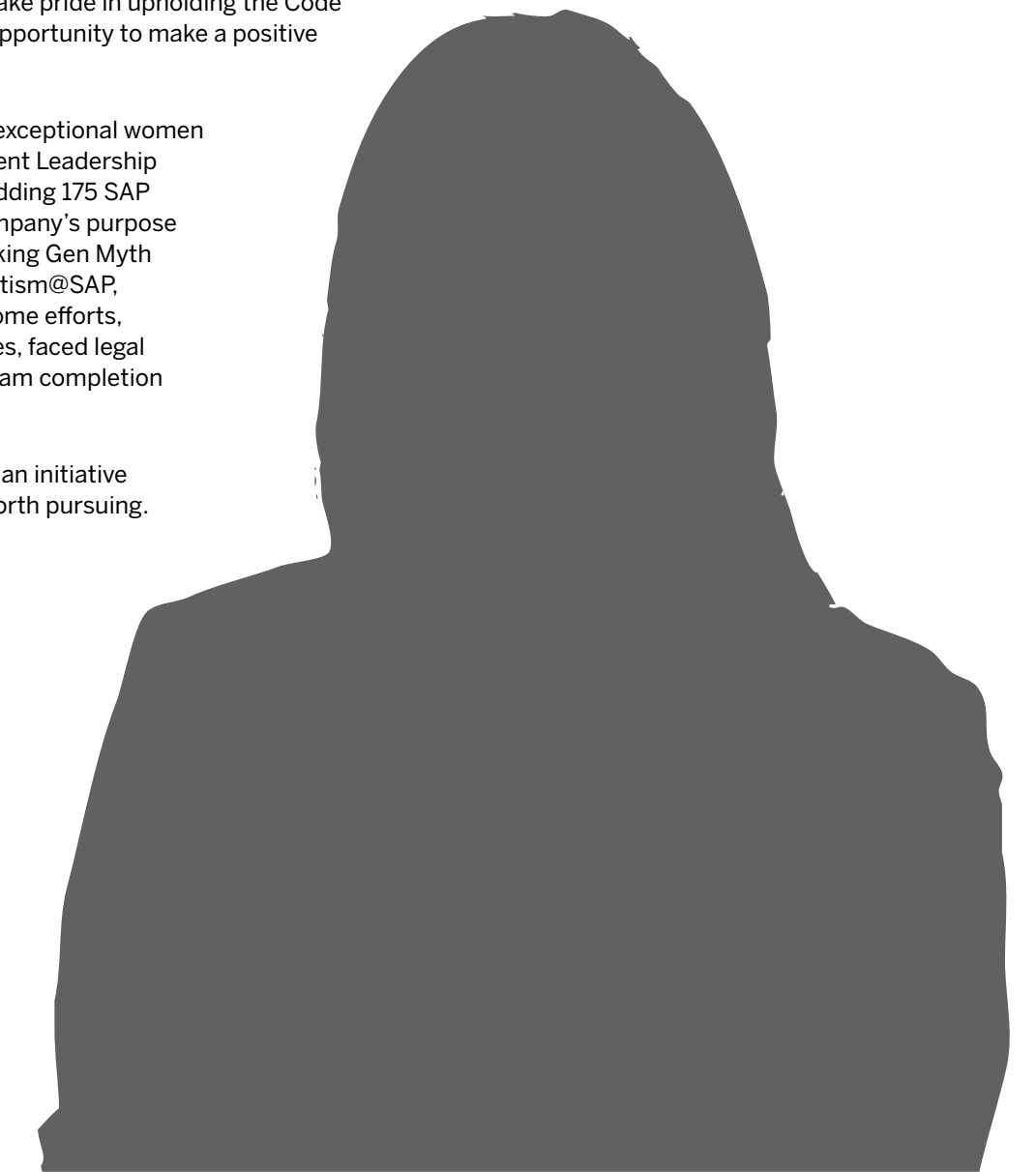
As a part of the D&I community, several committed individuals have driven initiatives to inspire an inclusive environment at SAP. Also, there are teams that go above and beyond their day-to-day business goals to drive change and create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected. It is this passion and a purpose-driven approach that has kept me attached to the D&I community at SAP.

Life has a funny way of taking unexpected turns. Engineering was my back-up plan, but I always dreamed of pursuing a career in law. However, being a part of RAW at SAP has given me the chance to realize my dream of standing up for what's right. I could be the voice of my peers who have experienced discrimination or harassment but may fear retaliation for speaking out. I take pride in upholding the Code of Conduct and Ethics of SAP, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make a positive impact in the workplace.

As for our initiatives, the iLead program has given us 51 exceptional women primed for leadership roles at SAP. Meanwhile, the Nascent Leadership program, recently finished its third consecutive batch, adding 175 SAP talents to the pool of individuals ready to further the company's purpose of improving the world. Our D&I initiatives, such as Breaking Gen Myth workshops, Cross Generational Mentorship program, Autism@SAP, and PRIDE@SAP, have also been successful. Although some efforts, such as those for SAP alumni and transgender employees, faced legal and data protection challenges, the satisfaction of program completion and positive impact drives me forward.

I view failures as success if I learn from them. As long as an initiative adds value to me, my peers, and the organization, it is worth pursuing.

**Jyotsna NR**  
Designation



URANUS

## DIVERSITY OF TALENT

### Building a Universe of Unique Perspectives

Uranus, the seventh planet from the sun, represents an innovative spirit, enlightenment, and ingenuity. As the planet rotates on its side and moves through space with an eccentric orbit, it embodies the principles of change, progressiveness, and freedom.

At SAP Labs India, we believe that a diverse range of talents and perspectives is essential to fuel innovation and drive progress. In this section, we feature stories from our special talents, who have shared their unique skills, wonderful personalities, and valuable experiences with us, helping us build a more inclusive and dynamic team.





## OPENING DOORS

# MY EXPERIENCE WITH SAP'S AUTISM AT WORK PROGRAM

As an autistic employee at SAP Labs India, my journey has been a mix of emotions, but overall, it has been an amazing experience. I first heard about the Autism at Work Program at SAP through EnAble India, an organization that provides training for employment for individuals with disabilities.

SAP has been a game-changer for me on my journey so far. I have been provided with a good job position that suits me very well, and I have had the opportunity to learn new skills and tasks. The mentors, managers, and teammates at SAP have been nothing short of incredible. They are understanding, concerned, encouraging, supportive, helpful, assistive, accepting, inclusive, and trustworthy.

One of the most exciting things that SAP has provided me with is the opportunity to give speeches, meet with other organizations and companies, and host the Autism Summit and India Inclusion Summit events. I have also had the opportunity to write and publish blogs about autism and other topics, and one of my Autism at Work Blogs has been featured as a post on different social media platforms and got published on the SAP website.

I also had the unique opportunity to feature my umbrella photo on the SAP Jobs Page, participate in many autism projects, and participate in community service activities with the Autism at Work Team. I have also had the chance to practice yoga with my colleagues from the Autism at Work Program.

In closing, I would like to say that I sincerely hope other companies around the world follow the example set by SAP by opening doors for people with autism and offering them employment opportunities. No person should be left out.

**Asha Sreedhar**  
Quality Associate,  
SAP Business Network





# ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

## MY JOURNEY AS A VISUALLY IMPAIRED EMPLOYEE AT SAP

Seven years ago, I attended a training program organized by an NGO. There, I met some members from SAP, and expressed interest in future opportunities. As it happened, there was soon an opening specifically for someone who was visually impaired, so I applied and got in.

SAP has been very supportive of my needs, implementing changes to make the workplace more accessible, like lifts with braille tactile buttons and door-to-door cab service. They also assigned a dedicated staff member to assist me in navigating the cafeteria. A special moment for me was participating in a 5km walkathon despite not having been involved in sports since losing my sight at 18. With the help of a running partner, we completed the walkathon together, reigniting my interest in sports.

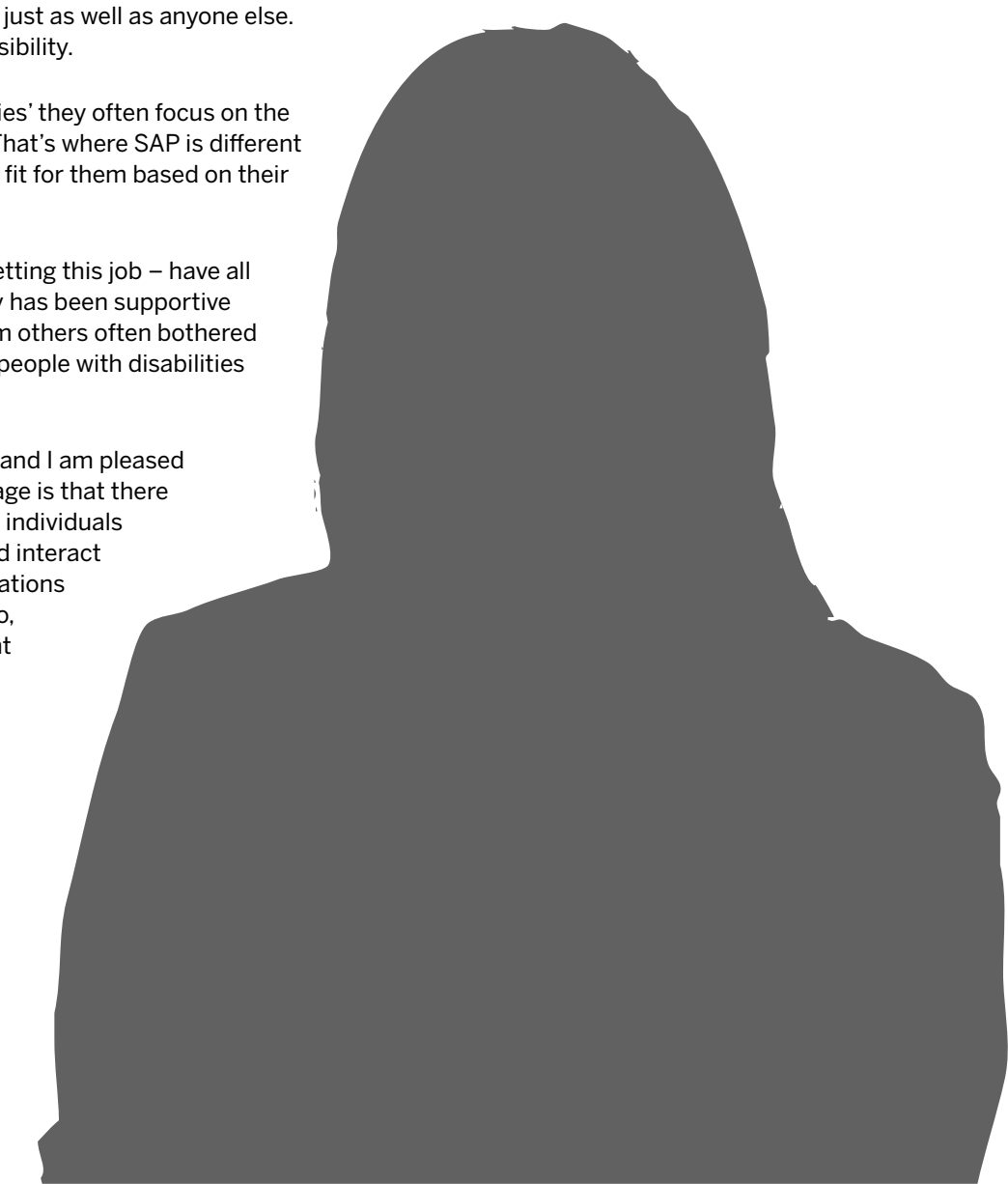
The work that I do is very close to my heart, as it involves technologies that help people like me feel more independent. Although we are not yet at 100% accessibility, the increasing attention on this topic is encouraging. Walking around campus I have been asked about my job and how I perform it despite my visual impairment. It's been an eye-opener for people to see that I can work just as well as anyone else. It's a privilege to be able to raise awareness about accessibility.

In my experience, when people say 'person with disabilities' they often focus on the 'disability' part, instead of the 'person' or their abilities. That's where SAP is different – the focus is on a person's abilities and finding the right fit for them based on their skills and strengths.

Pursuing a career in technology, moving to Bangalore, getting this job – have all been significant accomplishments for me, and my family has been supportive every step of the way. Since losing my sight, the pity from others often bothered me. But my success has challenged the stereotype that people with disabilities cannot function independently.

I believe that diversity and inclusion is an evolving topic, and I am pleased to see the positive direction it is taking at SAP. My message is that there should be more awareness on how to communicate with individuals who may have differences, such as disabilities. We should interact with them like any other colleague, have normal conversations and work together to achieve common goals. By doing so, we can break down barriers and promote an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

**Surbhi Lohia**  
Designation





## CHOOSING VISIBILITY THE POWER OF BEING OUT AT WORK

I disclosed my gender identity to my parents at the age of 23, but unfortunately, their reaction was not what I expected. I was met with censorship and a ban on any discussion related to LGBTQIA+ topics in my own home. My mother even suggested that I should move out of India because she couldn't believe that her child could be non-binary after she raised me as a woman. As a result, I made the decision to never return home and instead build my own life in Bangalore.

When I applied for jobs through the placement cell, I heard about SAP Labs India and had a feeling that it could be a good fit for me. I had heard from my seniors and friends that SAP had an inclusive work culture, which is why when I was asked why I chose SAP, I had a simple answer. Despite being initially sceptical about coming out at work, my manager had an open and supportive conversation with me when I disclosed my pronouns. His words of encouragement were one of the main reasons I decided to come out at my workplace. Knowing that I would be working in a non-judgmental environment gave me more confidence. My teammate always made sure I felt seen and heard, and the folks at Pride@SAP were welcoming and supportive.

Being out at work has given me the power to own my identity. It was my choice, to be visible, to be loud, and to help claim accommodations and accessibilities for people from the community (whether out or closeted). I must say that being out has its own impact. During my closeted era, I was always in the outlook of finding somebody like me who was out and proud. It gave me strength and courage to understand who I am. It gave me hope that there is someone who will understand what I am going through and that there is someone whom I can go and talk to. I aspire to bring that tangible impact to my people from the community. Many of my cisgender, heterosexual friends, cousins, and colleagues have become more self-aware and supportive since I came out. It has made them better allies.

Positive words for the future: "Society will try to sell you sweaters in pink and blue. Reclaim your power, go grab the greens, pinks, purples, reds, yellows and every color you like. Make your own sweater, that fits you, that defines you, that celebrates you. And always remember, there is no one way to be a particular gender."

### Anjitha KA

User Assistance Developer Associate,  
SAP SuccessFactors



NEPTUNE



## PROMOTING SAP'S PURPOSE

### Pioneering Progress with a Larger Vision

After journeying through our solar system, we've come to the final planet – Neptune. It's a reminder that no matter how far we've come, we must never forget our roots and core purpose. At SAP Labs India, our purpose guides us towards a future where inclusivity and diversity are integral to our success.

The stories in this section teach us the immense value that early talents and atypical individuals bring to the workplace. By embracing diversity, we can work together towards a brighter future, where we help the world run better and improve people's lives.





# EMBRACING DIFFERENCES

## MY JOURNEY WITH AAW AND INCLUSION

10 years ago, I volunteered for SAP's CSR activity at a home for differently-abled kids, most of whom were orphans. The visit was truly life-changing, as I discovered the immeasurable joy of bringing happiness to others.

Steve Jobs' words about thinking differently inspired me to appreciate the value of individuals who are different, like Einstein and Jobs himself, who were able to achieve remarkable success despite not conforming to societal norms.

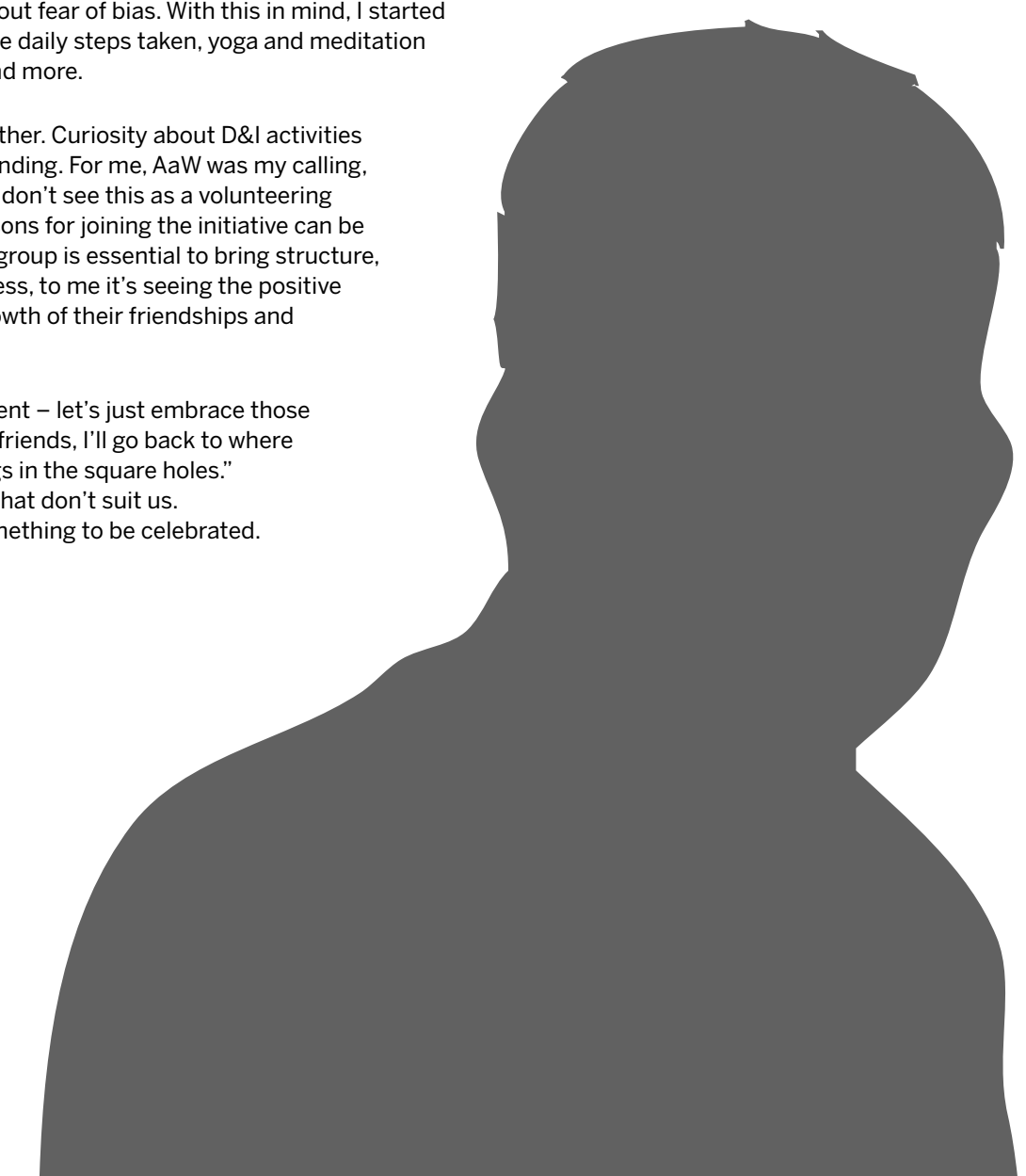
I was introduced to autism through an autism awareness group activity at work. In 2018, I got the opportunity to teach yoga to those in the AaW group, which led me to become their friend. I learned that just like neurotypical individuals have different social preferences, those on the spectrum do too. Some may struggle with maintaining eye contact, be nonverbal, or prefer discussing facts over small talk. By understanding each individual's needs, we can build connections and make them feel comfortable. This is what inclusion is all about.

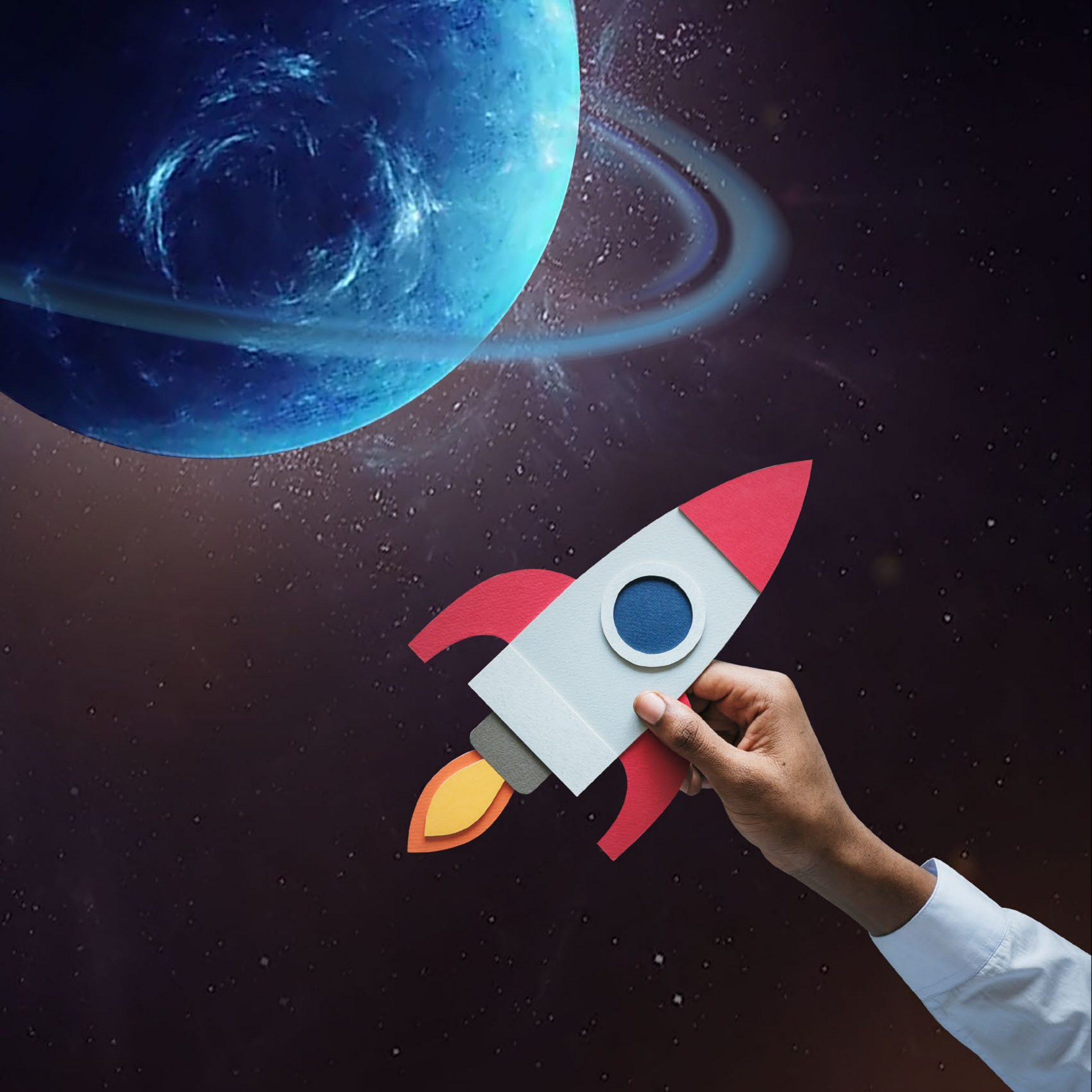
A support group is crucial for being oneself without fear of bias. With this in mind, I started "Friends for Autism", where we discuss things like daily steps taken, yoga and meditation sessions, lunch outings, storytelling sessions, and more.

SAP has been the platform that brought us together. Curiosity about D&I activities is the starting point for awareness and understanding. For me, AaW was my calling, for someone else it might be another program. I don't see this as a volunteering activity or CSR, I do it for fun. But, while the reasons for joining the initiative can be different, having different kinds of people in the group is essential to bring structure, variation, and a diverse perspective. As for success, to me it's seeing the positive changes in the people I've met, including the growth of their friendships and support networks.

My message to everyone is that, we are all different – let's just embrace those differences. And as for a message to my special friends, I'll go back to where I started – by quoting Steve Jobs "the round pegs in the square holes." Let's not try to fit ourselves or others into roles that don't suit us. We are all special in our own way, and that is something to be celebrated.

**Karthikeyan B**  
Development Expert,  
PCP Application Innovation Services





## EMPLOYEE-FIRST CULTURE

### THE ROLE OF THE EARLY TALENT AMBASSADOR NETWORK

By 2020 I had the privilege of experiencing the true SAP spirit of 'Inclusion for all'. This included a remarkable candidate experience, making valuable engineering and development contributions. I also took on stretch assignments such as being the Global Early Talent Ambassador from Labs India and leading the SAP Early Talent Ambassador Network, India chapter in 2020. When I was given the opportunity to participate in the Community Business' 2020 D&I in India Best Practice Conference & Awards, I saw it as an excellent platform to showcase the extensive cross-generational inclusion focus that we have cultivated here through the SAP Early Talent Ambassador Network, for the 'Employee Network Award'.

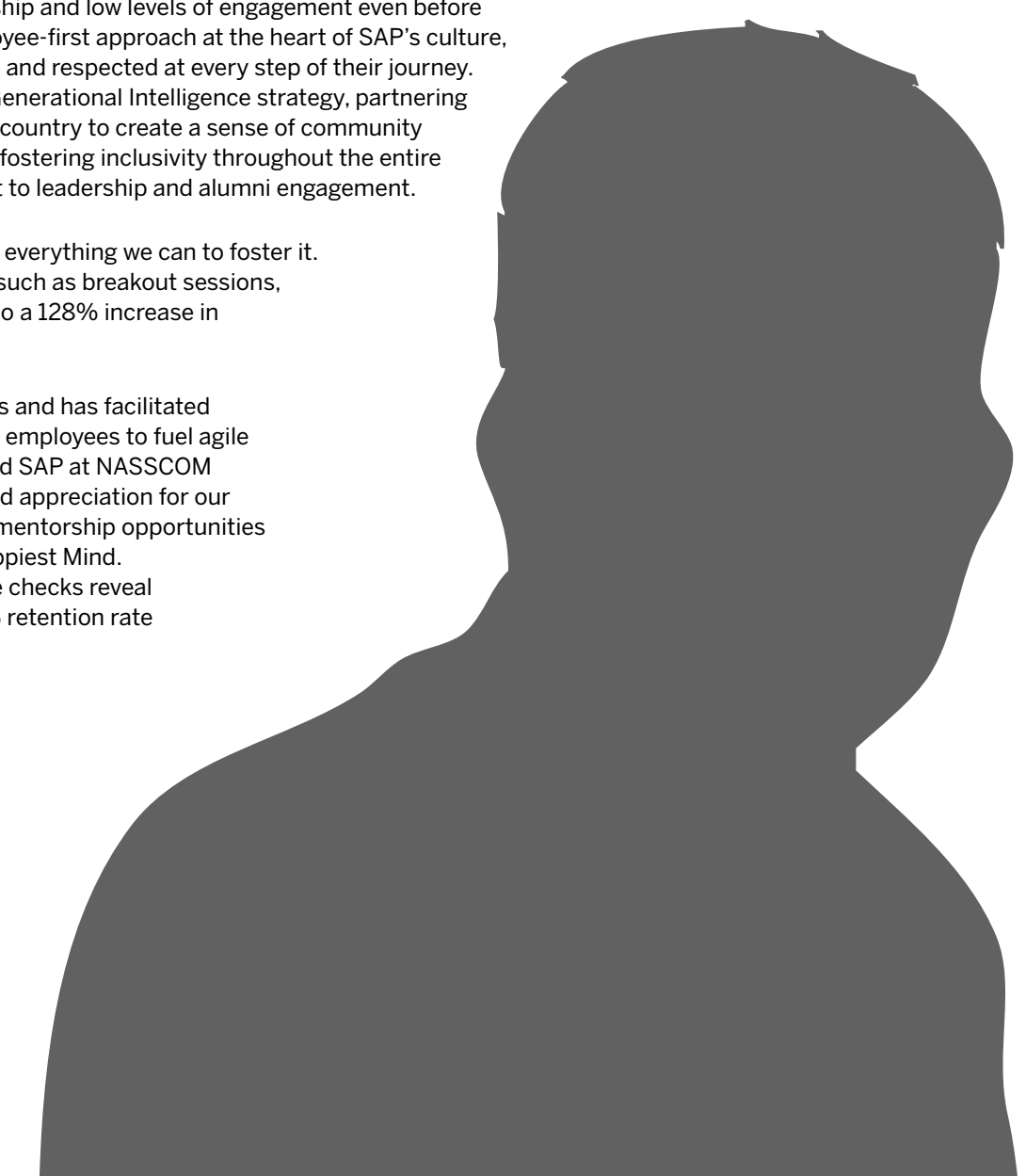
With the help of colleagues and experts, we highlighted our inclusion practices for a multi-generational workforce based on SAP's 'How We Run' behaviours. This employee-run network powers talent integration, community engagement, and supports new Early Talents in their journey with SAP.

Initially, we experienced a lack of trust in leadership and low levels of engagement even before the inception of the ETA Network. With an employee-first approach at the heart of SAP's culture, it's imperative that all our employees feel valued and respected at every step of their journey. The ETA India chapter aligns with SAP's Cross-Generational Intelligence strategy, partnering with other Diversity & Inclusion initiatives in the country to create a sense of community and promote retention. Our efforts are aimed at fostering inclusivity throughout the entire employee journey – from hiring and engagement to leadership and alumni engagement.

Our diversity is our greatest strength, and we do everything we can to foster it. The Early Talent Ambassador network's events, such as breakout sessions, fireside chats, and stress-busting activities, led to a 128% increase in employee engagement.

The ETA network partners with various programs and has facilitated over 50 dynamic engagements, reaching 5000+ employees to fuel agile collaboration. Moreover, the network represented SAP at NASSCOM Diversity & Inclusion Summit, 2019, and garnered appreciation for our initiatives and actionable takeaways, leading to mentorship opportunities for companies like Sutherland, Refinitiv, and Happiest Mind. Most importantly, our internal surveys and pulse checks reveal high engagement, trust in objectives, and a 96% retention rate for high performers.

**Yash Agrawal**  
Senior Project Manager,  
SAP PLM & Engineering





## 10 YEARS OF AAW LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

It was my passion that led me to become a part of the AaW project. Time has flown by, and it's incredible to think that we've been a part of this amazing initiative for 10 years now, and we couldn't be prouder.

The colleagues on the spectrum underwent training on how to work on their assigned projects, as well as other daily tasks such as boarding the shuttle and picking up their own food. Through this, they gradually formed a small network of friends and even began meeting with IT and administration without the support of a buddy. Working with them was made easier due to their skillset of working systematically and taking things one step at a time. However, multi-tasking and adapting to new situations posed a challenge for them. Despite the obstacles we faced, we made a commitment to never give up. The support from their parents was also commendable and brought us immense joy, especially when we saw the smiles on their faces. It was truly priceless.

At S/4HANA Test Engg, we are fortunate to have four colleagues working on different topics who have been warmly accepted and included in all our events and activities. I have the pleasure of mentoring and working closely with two of them, and I enjoy spending time with them and giving them my undivided attention during our conversations. Their unique skill set has been an asset to the Browser Testing project, and they have excelled at it over the years. As a team, we have decided to focus on their strengths, which has helped them believe in themselves and stay confident. They are hardworking, honest, disciplined, and punctual, always following their routine work. They are straightforward and never speak lies, which I appreciate. One of the reasons I enjoy working with them is their pure innocence.

Thanks to the support from SAP and the collective efforts of our colleagues, we've been able to sustain and evolve our work successfully for the past 10 years. It's crucial for society to understand what autism is, embrace it, and treat individuals on the spectrum with the same respect as any other individual.

The AaW initiatives implemented by SAP should always be exemplary and serve as a benchmark for other organizations to follow.

**Michelle**  
Team Asst,  
S/4HANA Test Engineering  
& AAW Mentor

