

does amazing work but is very quiet about it. I was able to effectively use my skills in communication and branding to make it a known name and a leader in child development, besides providing strategic leadership. Our corporate partnerships now are also far stronger.”

The organisation is a part of ChildFund International, a global child development organization that has been working with underprivileged children, youth and families from the most remote, extremely backward and hard-to-reach areas, with a vision of “an India where children lead a dignified life and achieve their full potential”. ChildFund India annually reaches over 2.5 million children, youth, and their families across 16 states through its long-term programs and partnerships. Its unique programs provide comprehensive support to children from their conception until they reach 24 years of age by integrating health, nutrition, sanitation, gender equality, disability, education, skill training, livelihoods, child protection and humanitarian relief work.

I ask her if being a woman in a senior managerial position is harder, and Neelam says it isn't. “Global organizations today are expected to embrace diversity in all ways. I have never felt that being a woman has prevented me from doing something or that I have been perceived as being less capable. Of course, these are very individual perceptions and

I believe that you must gain the respect of the people you work with through sheer hard work.”

Neelam is a self-confessed workaholic and admits that she puts the same kind of effort into every job. “I have a huge amount of self-motivation and can never be a status quo person as I know that the only constant is change. Even though I haven't changed many jobs, I believe that I must leave behind a legacy that comes from giving the right time, commitment and stability.”

Considering the nature of her role, she admits that there have been many challenges. “When I joined ChildFund there was a lot of change that was needed and several internal operational issues that had to be improved. And when you make changes, most people will be unhappy. The first two years here were the hardest of my career but ultimately what worked was that everyone recognized that the changes were for the organization and children we work with.”

Neelam lives with her mother and is very close to her sister and nephews but admits that she has no work life balance and is not burdened by the fact. “I enjoy my work and do it at my own pace. If I am exhausted I just shut off for two days and don't think about it. I have a quick recovery mode and can get back to full steam after that.”

Work wise, she is clear about the path for her organization and has a



Distributing Solar lanterns and story books

CHILDFUND INDIA ANNUALLY REACHES OVER 2.5 MILLION CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND THEIR FAMILIES ACROSS 16 STATES THROUGH ITS LONG-TERM PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Neelam holding a selfie board supporting a cause

well-defined strategy for the same. “Personally however, I like to keep it flexible and go with the flow. I can switch off when I want to and do what I enjoy at that point in time, so I have a nice mix in my life.”

Her advice to the younger generation in the workplace is succinct – much like the person she is. “The first thing is to focus on what you enjoy rather than do it only for the money. What has

worked for me is that I have stuck to jobs that I have got into and delivered beyond what was expected irrespective of the level I worked in.” It is little wonder then that her previous organisations keep asking her to come back. It is stability, keeping her focus on the right things, and being committed that has worked for Neelam and held her in good stead.

