



Carol Iddon

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about?

I'm currently Acting Chief Executive for Action for Children, and the thing I enjoy most about my job is meeting our people – whether that is a member of staff who is doing things, every day, which make a difference to the lives of the children and young people we are here to support, or those children, young people, or parents – whose stories always inspire and move me.

What is your role with Action for Children?

As above – a new role, but I have been with Action for Children since 2003. During my time with the organisation, I have held a number of different roles.

Who is your role model?

My primary role model was my mother. She was an amazing woman in so many ways, and she always encouraged me to be the very best I could be.

Throughout my childhood, she was there – encouraging me. She allowed me the freedom to grow, to experiment, to fail, but then she lifted me up, dusted me off, and set me back on the path to success.

She never let me think that, because I was a girl, I couldn't be anything I wanted to be. My dad died when I was a teenager, and she steadfastly ensured that me and my siblings continued to have the opportunities to help us grow. She died four years ago and I still miss her wisdom, her wit, and her challenge to me – keeping me focussed on being the very best I can be.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

Throughout history, women have been at the forefront of some of our greatest achievements, and yet, in parts of the world, women continue to be abused, mistreated, and misunderstood. But even in the face of all this, they continue to be strong and resilient through adversity. We have a duty to celebrate all that is great about women, and continue to fight for those less able to fight for themselves.

What advice would you give other women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

Be brave, be true to yourself, and never give up .

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Aisha Minhas

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about?

I am a Service Assurance Team Manager at TalkTalk, and what I love about it is leading, inspiring, and mentoring people. It is also very fast-paced, which I enjoy.

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

My achievements include being offered a Professional Management Degree apprenticeship from TalkTalk. I was also recognised as one of the best people managers, out of 42, in the Great Place To Work survey, having been in my role for seven months, and with no previous people management experience.

I also won the TalkTalk Hero Award, for 'Every Customer Matters', in November 2017. I believe that, with focus and hard work, you can achieve anything.

Who is your role model?

My role model is Baroness Karren Brady

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

I think it is important because women are inspirational in their own right, and no matter what walk of life they are from, they continue to inspire – so we should embrace and celebrate!

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

The advice I would give is, never be afraid. Everything is possible in life – never impossible. Try new things and be open to new things – if it's not for you, then at least you can say you tried. There is always a way, and you must remain focused! This helps you in your career and this feeds your drive!

Anything you want to add?

Women rock!

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS

Sally Hanson

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about?

I am a marketing consultant (self-employed), which I absolutely love, as it gives me the opportunity to work with some fabulously forward-thinking organisations, of all different sizes, and people from different cultures. They all have a passion to achieve their goals, with a great team spirit in doing so – it's contagious.

What is your role with Action for Children?

I am extremely proud to be Chair of the Thames Valley Byte Night. This year will be my 15th Byte Night!

Byte Night is Action for Children's largest annual fundraiser: a national 'sleep-out' event across 12 regions in the UK, of which Thames Valley is one. Each year, hundreds of like-minded people from the technology and business arena give up their beds for one night, to help change the lives of vulnerable young people. Each sleeper has a commitment to raise a minimum of £600 to take part. Byte Night is one of the UK's top 17 mass participation charity events and is the largest charity sleep-out, having raised over £10 million since the first event in 1998.

Who is your role model?

Michelle Obama springs to mind when I am asked this question. She is inspirational. Michelle Obama is one of the most powerful women in the world, but a selfless woman. She has helped to change a nation for the better, and she is an evangelist for women/girls around the globe. She believes women/children around the world deserve quality education, and does not shy away

from the subject when speaking to international leaders. She highlights the fact that many places in the world don't give women/girls the 'luxury' of an education i.e. in some places, girls are viewed as less worthy of an education than boys, so when a family has limited funds, they'll educate their sons instead of their daughters.

She has changed – and continues to change – the mindset of so many in respect of this. Priceless.

She is also a fashion icon, a devoted mother, an accomplished lawyer, and a writer. She is totally selfless – supporting her family and values above all.

I love her quote: "Whether you come from a council estate or a country estate, your success will be determined by your own confidence and fortitude."

She gives people confidence and hope.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

Because so many women fought for better rights for all women, and that will always be something to celebrate and be thankful for. Women have a voice and are now respected for it

What advice would you give other women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

Have a clear picture (visualise it) of what you want to achieve and, most importantly, believe in yourself.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Sarbjit Athwal

Survivor of Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage, Author, Speaker, and Founder of True Honour Charity.

Sarbjit was just 19 when she was forced into marriage, and moved into her husband's very strict family home, which included her mother-in-law, her brother-in-law, and her brother-in-law's wife. Her mother-in-law treated the two daughters-in-law like servants.

Her sister-in-law, Surjit, was more rebellious, and – as a consequence – was regularly beaten for her disobedience. When the family found out she was having an affair, drastic actions were taken: they took her to a family wedding in India, where her mother-in-law arranged for her to be drugged, strangled, and thrown in a river.

When Sarbjit found out what had happened to her sister-in-law, she was terrified. She was told that if she breathed a word, the same thing would happen to her: she was silenced – fearing for her life. But the stress nearly killed her, and, finally – lying in hospital, thinking she might die – she told her parents what had happened.

Finally, she became a key witness in the police investigation, and her mother-in-law and Surjit's husband were arrested and sentenced to life in prison.

Sarbjit became the first person within a family connected with an honour killing to go into open court, waiving her anonymity to break the notions of 'shame' that had killed her sister-in-law. And even though she has faced intimidation and threats from her community, she will not be silenced.

Sarbjit's role model – ex DCI Clive Driscoll – inspired her to join the Metropolitan Police Service in the hope of helping other victims, like herself, to come forward.

Her book, 'Shamed', tells the story of how she survived living in a murderous family that almost killed her. She has also been recognised

in the House of Commons, and commended for the work she continues to do. As a key speaker at conferences, she continues to raise awareness and keeps the issue of honour killings at the forefront of everybody's mind, as "safeguarding is everyone's business."

Sarbjit is the Founder of True Honour charity, and says: "Three years on, my passion grows, every day, to help and support anyone suffering injustice. Within the culture, I face many challenges, as people do not wish to speak about these issues, but slowly my message is spreading, like a ripple effect – reaching out to thousands and helping to save lives.

International Women's Day highlights the strength and courage of those women who have suffered, and survived against all odds. It celebrates the victory of every achievement, and recognises what has been done. It let's women know that 'you matter'.

My advice to young women is – no matter who you are, where you are from, or whatever you have been through...you are strong women, and can be anything you want in life. And please believe in yourself, because we need strong women like you to celebrate International Women's Day.

Sarbjit can be contacted on
www.truehonour.org.uk
sarbathwal@truehonour.org.uk

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Vivienne's story

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about it?

Non-Executive Director of FIFA – the first black woman to hold this position in the UK. I am also a Senior Diversity and Inclusion Professional.

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

My achievements:

Getting the position of Non-Executive Director of Football: it was a transparent and thorough recruitment process. 65 people applied and I was one of the 6 new Directors selected. The Board now consists of 1/3 BAME staff.

Being the only black female with this position, I am a role model and it comes with a lot of responsibility to inspire other black women to look into senior opportunities in sport. Many are scared to, because they don't see people who look like them in such positions, but we have to smash the concrete ceiling.

I am also Chair of the Footballers Anti-Discrimination and Football Disciplinary panels for The FA. I was the first black woman to be Chair.

Challenges:

The biggest challenge is being female and black in a male-dominated industry that struggles with diversity and inclusion. Commitment is just a word – action is required. Also, I often find being the only black female in a leadership position is a challenge: we face the greatest challenges in the workplace, and when climbing the career ladder.

As black women, we don't fit the mould and this is what I feel many organisations struggle with. Organisations praise themselves for making strides when it comes to the "gender agenda" and the "one-size-fits all" gender approach, but this very rarely means black women.

Who is your role model?

Sorry I can't pick just one, so...

Oprah Winfrey – she was the first ever black woman I saw with her own talk show. I used to

watch all her talk shows. When she launched O Magazine, I subscribed – and still do.

Beverley Thompson – she was the first black woman I met who was a senior manager, and she had fantastic dress sense. All I ever saw was black women in admin positions – NEVER senior management. She started her career as a probation officer and stayed in the criminal justice system, as one of the key figures driving change within the Metropolitan Police Service, when it was announced they were institutionally racist.

Michelle Obama – what can I say? I love this woman!!!!

Nelson Mandela (Madiba) – The father and grandfather of peace. My idol. My adopted grandfather.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

There are many women all around the world who have paved the way for current and future generations, broken down the barriers, and smashed concrete ceilings.

However, we must acknowledge there is still a long way to go for equality. In the mean time, we must celebrate theirs and our achievements as women. We must stop being apologetic for what we have achieved and what we want for ourselves and our careers.

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

We still have a long way to go. Strap on those Nike trainers (make sure they are comfortable), because we have to keep pushing forward on the long road. The road won't be smooth! Each day, we are taking steps for change. Rosa Parks, and many before and after her, started the journey for change.

Anything you want to add...

BE YOURSELF. Don't try and copy someone else. Be Authentic!

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Latoya's story

I recently founded I'M STANDING TALL and, via the company, work predominantly with schools and youth hubs (among other organisations), to train professionals about safeguarding and how to have a child-centred approach within their organisation.

I train young people how to develop positive leadership skills, so they can go on to support others, via peer mentoring. I also facilitate group sessions for them, and deliver workshops for parents and carers.

I love working with young people and I am passionate about wellbeing, so I actually love all elements of my job. However, if I had to pick the best bit, I would say it's the direct work with young people – I enjoy watching them grow in confidence as they learn new things.

I have three achievements that mean the most to me, personally:

1. Passing my driving test – it took me four attempts, but I persevered and got there in the end. It was more than a driving test to me: it was a taste of freedom and independence.
2. Leading in child protection across a four-phase school: it was a huge role and a huge achievement for me, which allowed me to work directly with young people, and train the staff. It was the first time I didn't have to give up one role to do the other, and it was a stepping stone to my ultimate achievement.
3. Setting up I'M STANDING TALL, as it has been a dream of mine for a while. I just never thought I'd be brave enough to finally push myself out of my comfort zone to do it. It's still early days, and I know there will be ups and downs, but it feels like one of the best decisions I've made.

My role model would have to be my grandfather, as he was an extremely intelligent person who overcame serious adversities – including racism – to become successful. He believed in me, and continually pushed me to be the best version of myself; a lesson I have kept with me to this day.

It is important to celebrate International Women's Day, to recognise all the amazingly courageous women, across the globe, who are taking action and leading the way, with significant steps forward. However, it is also important to celebrate to remind us of the gaps we still have to close and the fact there are still women's voices that go unheard.

My #ProgressForChange advice is to try to be the best version of yourself and don't be scared to go against the grain! As long as you remain true to your values, you will always have your integrity, and one can only respect integrity.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Natasha Broomfield-Reid

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about it?

I am currently the Director of my own Diversity and Inclusion consultancy. I enjoy that I can be flexible, manage my own time, and decide how to develop and grow the consultancy. I also love working with a range of different people from a range of organisations, and supporting them to embed Diversity and Inclusion within their organisation.

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

My achievements include carrying out management supervisory roles while relatively young, and overcoming the barriers of those who struggled to be managed by a younger person. I found that proving them wrong, and being good at my job, often worked!

Within Diversity and Inclusion, I have been successful in supporting the organisation I worked with, as the EDI, to achieve accreditations, awards and accolades, which has been great e.g Top 100 Stonewall Employer, Top Trans Employer, the first national charity to achieve the Leaders in Diversity, and winning a Disability Smart award.

I have also enjoyed the challenge of working with individuals who did not understand the importance or value of Diversity and Inclusion. It has been great when 'the penny drops', and they start to understand that Diversity and Inclusion is of paramount importance within organisations, and that inclusive practice ensures that service users, employees, and volunteers are supported effectively – improving morale, retention, performance, and outcomes.

Who is your role model ?

Oprah Winfrey. She has shown that she has strength, tenacity, humility, intelligence, and more! She's also a great philanthropist, an ambassador for women, and has given so much back to the community, including programmes specific to women/girls.

She's a warm person, who seems very approachable, and someone who many people can relate to.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

Women have faced inequality and discrimination for many years. It's not so long ago that women could not get a bank loan in their own right. There are still issues regarding equal pay and women often not getting the same opportunities as men. Therefore, we still need to promote the positive contribution that women can make to society. We also need to give a positive image to girls and women, and show them that they can succeed.

It would be nice if we didn't still hear 'this is the first woman to...' carry out a particular role. Women are still hugely underrepresented in senior management/ leadership in many sectors. There needs to be more visibility of the great women around us.

We are still fighting for equality and need to continue to do so for many years to come.

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressForChange?

It's really important that when you see gender bias, you challenge it. Use inclusive approaches and support other women/girls. I love the saying 'Each one, teach one' – we can learn from each other.

Be proud to be a girl/woman and don't let anyone treat you unfairly, inappropriately or in a discriminatory way because of your gender. Find your way to challenge what is wrong – whether directly or with support from a colleague or friend.

Anything to add?

Just to say that there are so many people, both in history and currently, who are excellent role models to girls/women, but we must not forget those role models who are around us every day. There are so many women we can learn from; whether this be how to succeed in the workplace or how to be positive, considered, thoughtful, and strong.

Women should also support each other: it takes other women, and men, to spread the important messages regarding gender equality.

Also, hard work and determination goes a long way – failure is success, if we learn from it: #DontGiveUp.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS

Mehvish Goheer

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about it?

I currently work as an in-house solicitor at an international chartered accountancy firm based in South London. Working as a solicitor while being a mother of two children has its ups and downs, like most things in life!

I'm fortunate that the majority of the time, I can balance my work life around my family and work from home when I need to, or leave earlier to collect them from school, which is one of the things I cherish most about my job. I was conscious of choosing a profession that would support me as a mother.

Law is a fantastic career in its own right and has allowed me to – through my experiences – further myself as an individual, and have the knowledge to help people, whether they can afford a solicitor or not.

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

In my seven-and-a-half years working in this role, I have had a 100% success rate in all my litigation cases, which is no mean feat. I have been praised by judges, and the opposition, on my thorough handling of claims, diligent attention to detail, and for my concise drafting. I am now looking to set up my own firm of solicitors.

The biggest challenge I faced was when my daughter was sixteen months old: she was diagnosed with kidney failure and was on dialysis for three years. During this period, I also completed my training contract and it was undoubtedly the hardest time of my life. I was simply in survival mode and had no choice but to keep going, even if I wanted to crumble.

I would work at the firm during the day, as a professional woman, and come home and be my daughter's carer; setting up her dialysis machine and ensuring her meds were given on time, changing dressings on her catheter, setting up her feeding pump for the night etc. She was very ill at the time, but thankfully she has now had a kidney transplant. When I think back to that time, I have no idea how I managed. There were times when I had to take a day off from work, or be unable to attend a hearing as she would suddenly be admitted to hospital. There were times I didn't sleep more than a few hours at night, but was up each morning, working as a trainee solicitor. I kept going for my children, and they are now proud to say their mother is a solicitor!

Who is your role model?

My role model is undoubtedly my father. He is simply a remarkable human being who built a hugely successful international business from very difficult and humble beginnings. When I was a little girl, he would say that he wanted me to be a lawyer and – one day – a judge, but I had no idea what I wanted to do. The wisdom and guidance he instilled in me has paid off and now I can say I'm a solicitor, and make him proud. My father was adamant that we should make the most of our education and appreciate the opportunities we have been given, and now I relay the same message to my own children.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

Women make the world complete. They are our mothers, daughters, sisters, wives. Regardless of who they are, what they do, or where they are from, they all face daily struggles and achieve daily accomplishments. They are the strength of the family unit and they take this strength with them through their careers, to become brilliant in whatever field they are in. The struggles of a working mother are understood by me, but I was a carer too. Sometimes, just being one of those things is a daily challenge, but only women can cope with it all and do so with a smile on their face.

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

Your education is the most important foundation you have. You must realise NOW that this is the time to start building for your future. Not many young women know what they want to do with their lives, and it is very confusing. Studying law and practising law are so very different. Try and do some work experience in an area that you are interested in, and keep your focus... it is so easy to get distracted, especially with social media playing such a major role in young women's lives these days.

Anything you want to add?

I wish all women would remind themselves, on a daily basis, how brilliant they are and how beautiful they are... because there is no doubt that women are simply amazing.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS

Ange's story

I am a female senior leader in special education and I am also a Director of my own limited company. I incorporated that company following the closure of a school which I loved, and the stresses of closing a special school drove me into interim management.

My hope is that I can share my wealth of experience and skills, to help special schools who may be struggling, so that they become more effective, pupils' outcomes improve, and learners flourish.

As part of my role as a Director, I network often and I am an active follower of #WomenEd – an organisation developed to promote female leaders in education. Their statistics are staggering when you compare the imbalance in respect of male and female senior leaders in education, and, therefore – as a female senior leader – I am well positioned to help campaign for change in gender equality.

The Department for Education has recognised this gender disparity and has created a coaching pledge for Women Leaders in Education, and I am registered as part of this pledge, to coach other aspiring female leaders.

My personal achievements, over the last 18 months, have included successfully starting my own limited company. This was certainly a 10% braver step, which is a strapline pledge from #WomenEd.

Part of being an Interim Head Teacher was the necessity to live away from home. This was a choice I made, and I successfully negotiated a four-day week to ensure my family life did not suffer. Living away from home certainly gave me the personal strength to believe in myself; to stand up for women who are not often seen as contractors; and to demand an equal pairing.

I can honestly say I find it hard to name a role model. There is no one significant person who has made me who I am today, except me. There

have been many inspirations, and each person who has influenced me along the way has left me with valuable beliefs. One of those people is my sister, who says she wants to be the best version of herself she can be (she was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's in her mid-40s), and my friend, whose 'live free or die' tattoo reminds me to be the authentic version of myself at all times. My own mini-motto – 'life finds a way' – comes from the movie Jurassic Park, and links my love of DNA with my values of inclusion.

There has been so much media interest in gender inequality, of late, which includes sexual harassment cases in Hollywood, the BBC and their gender pay gap, and charities auctioning off women as prizes. These are just three of the most current reasons why campaigns for gender equality and rights for women are needed.

As a leader in schools, I have the opportunity, the leadership, and the passion to act and add influence to this 'progress for change' for our next generation of female leaders. I have a motto of 'If you can, you should'. I can make a difference, so I share my story, share my beliefs, and share my drive to raise awareness of the inequality women still face today.

My advice for the next generation is don't think of your gender as a barrier to any dream you have, follow your aspirations, and be your authentic self!

If you do encounter barriers, knock them down and remember #ThisGirlCan

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Lorna Baldry

What is your current role and what do you enjoy about it?

I run my own training company – Brightlink Learning. We train lawyers, teachers and people who support those in need, as part of their job. I'm also Director of a social enterprise which works with families experiencing domestic abuse, called Restorative Change. You can see more about our work at www.choicesforchangewales.uk

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

I trained to be a lawyer, and, during my training, fell in love with teaching. I worked as a teacher and a teaching and learning leader for 17 years. I started my own business three years ago.

I'm so lucky in terms of the people I work with, and the freedom to choose how I work, where, and when.

I've had the privilege of helping people to achieve their goals and dreams, and that's something I'm incredibly proud of, but the hard work was definitely all theirs.

At the age of eight, I was diagnosed with an unusual health condition, which causes bone in the knee joint to splinter. It's painful, can have some dangerous complications, and affects mobility. Doctors said I shouldn't walk far, or stand for long, and should definitely not run or jump. They said that I shouldn't work, and would be using a wheelchair by the time I was 30.

Sometimes the pain and the difficulty I had walking made it a challenge to get to school, college, or university, and to focus while I was there.

Despite this, or maybe because of it, I started work at 15 and always had at least one job, while finishing school, going to college, and then to university. I'm 45 now and don't yet have the need for a wheelchair.

I was driven, from childhood, by a need for freedom and opportunity. Financially, things were sometimes difficult at home and, as a child, I witnessed and experienced domestic violence.

Who is your role model?

In terms of role models, I'm surrounded by a family of strong women, who each have their own inspirational stories. We spend time together, and often look back on the lives of the women before us; aunts, grandmothers, great grandmothers, who have inspired us with their strength. Keeping the stories of these women alive with our own children helps them, and us, find the inspiration to face challenges.

I'm also fortunate to know many wonderful women who are generous with their time and knowledge – both friends and colleagues.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day?

Women's stories can be a huge inspiration to other women and girls. It's difficult to get somewhere if you can't see where you're going. If we can see other women who may have had the same challenges in life that we face, we can aspire to achieve things too.

Sharing differences in our lives is good. If we understand each other, we can build real relationships and networks of support and encouragement. Appreciating each other's achievements and challenges makes us better people.

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

For me, education was the route to opening doors and creating choices for my future. Create your opportunities and ask for help when you need it.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Jan Floyd-Douglass

What is your current role, and what do you enjoy about it?

I work with organisations to align their behaviours, processes, and operations – to achieve their strategic goals. I also advise charities on governance and board effectiveness topics. I love using what I've learnt throughout my career: it creates a great range of work.

Currently, I'm also working with a charity for female BAME entrepreneurs – helping them to overcome their double discrimination – and I'm keen to get more involved with this sector, which needs huge support and much greater visibility. I continue supporting gender equality through various activities.

I also coach and mentor at a senior level, and speak to women at leadership events in the US, Canada, and the UK.

What are your achievements and what have been your challenges?

- I have reached board level in global organisations, despite having left school at 15 with no education. I ignored the jibes and energy-drainers and just stuck with it.
- I am proud to have worked tirelessly for women's equality and rights – particularly at work – for 30 years.
- Other high points (so far) include; becoming a Commissioner for the Women's National Commission, lecturing army generals at the Royal Military Academy, and being recognised as a top 100 global coaching leader, in 2017.
- Mentoring and advising many women on their careers, and watching them progress

Challenges have been the same old, same old: imposter syndrome, fighting for a voice at which ever table I'm at, bullying, discrimination, and being heard. Staying confident and focussed has been tough, but we just get on with it, don't we?

Who is your role model?

My Mother, who brought up four children on her own and started studying for her qualifications at the age of 34. She studied for, and achieved, her third degree when she was over 70 years old.

Why do you think it's important to celebrate International Women's Day

Women truly are the 'Hidden Figures' of the world's progress. So much is achieved by women, yet so little is recognised or celebrated, or even known about. International Women's Day gives us all a chance to pause and think of the women we know, or have heard about, who make a difference and inspire us – and what we can do to further women's equality and rights.

What advice would you give young women in order to achieve #ProgressforChange?

That having setbacks, or failing, is part of succeeding and achieving – so keep going. Failure simply tells us that we haven't quite got it right yet.

Be clear about what you want to achieve and why. Remember that resilience and focus are the critical attributes to acquire. Stay confident – mentors help with this. Being despondent takes up much more energy than being positive does!

Anything you want to add?

Don't listen to negative people, and don't hang out with 'energy drainers' or those who have given up. Think of a role model, and ask: 'what would they do in this situation?'

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS



Krupa Howlett

I currently work for Dentsu Aegis Network – the leading media agency, according to Recma – as a Senior Campaign Manager (Globa) for digital media buying brand, Amnet. I enjoy being able to be creative and technical at the same time, working across a range of well-known brands.

My achievements include getting promoted, receiving certifications, and seeing visible results of innovating or testing something new.

I have also delivered a workshop to the develop skills of schoolchildren in a deprived area, which yielded positive results.

The challenges are – firstly – learning the technological landscape, then keeping up with the changes, with the added global element of learning the PESTLE factors (political, economical, sociological, technological, and environmental) affecting different countries and regions around world.

I have two role models. One is Beyoncé. Not only is she an incredible artist with an amazing voice (singing is my hobby) – she’s a businesswoman (working mother) and a spokesperson for many issues affecting society. Best of all, she never apologises for who she is and I really admire that quality.

My other role model is my boss, Ashwini Karandikar, who is one of the reasons I chose to work for Amnet. It was refreshing to learn of an Indian woman in a leadership position in my chosen field.

I think it’s important to celebrate International Women’s Day because a lot of hard work has gone into making changes to a cultural mindset that has spanned many centuries, where this gender isn’t seen as equal or valued by both.

The obvious movements to mention are the suffrage movement, alongside the many unknown efforts by individuals taking a stand.

Male heroes are much more celebrated, and embedded in history, than heroines, hence why the need for a special day to reflect on how far things have come, but how much work remains. This is especially the case when, in some countries and cultures, women are still treated as second class citizens, and the legal framework doesn’t support them at all.

My advice for young women wanting to achieve #ProgressforChange is to campaign in a creative, respectful, and gracious way. It is easy to get frustrated, but it isn’t progress unless we remember that this is for better representation. This includes involving men, many of whom are supportive, and having open discussions to help foster understanding.

Being equal doesn’t mean being the same – it’s about being accepted for who you are. Celebrate your uniqueness. Work on perfecting your craft and becoming a valuable asset for the company you work for and the industry you’re in. If you think something needs to be improved, don’t complain – raise awareness and do something about it.

Take things one breath at a time, as nobody is superhuman or born with a manual on life. When things don’t feel right, move on from it; life is too delicate to procrastinate.

Go travelling, explore hobbies, volunteer, and work for a start-up (if possible), as life experience teaches you so much. From riding in a Mustang on the Californian coastline, to a commuter train in Mumbai; from singing in a band, to feeding people – it opened my eyes to the varying degrees of human life.

I would like to add that I come from a family of neglect and abuse, where one of the physical acts left me with a permanent disability. When I became safe from the abuse, I developed further physical symptoms, due to the emotional toll and stress from the years of trauma.

I also grew up in a place where I was bullied for the colour of my skin and for being geeky. We don’t always get the foundation we need, or the best start in life, but as long as you’re alive, you have the potential to change the direction of the energy. Negative experiences can fuel positive change. You can find mentors, and support from people and places you never thought existed. It’s easier to become disheartened, but never give up and you can be proud that you tried your best.

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS