



September 28, 2007  
Global

### Friday 28 September

Professor **Nuria Chinchilla** (Spanish) opened our plenary session on Friday. Professor Chinchilla is the Director of the International Centre for Work & Family at IESE in the Universidad de Navarra, Spain. She talked about “societal capital” and the need for “family-responsible companies based on solid values”. Actually, some of you might recall that Jill interviewed Professor Chinchilla about her book, *Female Ambition*, some months ago. If you missed it, you can read that Interview **below**.

### Female Ambition

#### Female Ambition

Dr. Maria Nuria Chinchilla

Dr. Maria Nuria Chinchilla is professor in the department of managing people in organizations and director of the International Center on Work and Family at IESE Business School - **Universidad de Navarra**, Spain. Her areas of specialization include work, family and organizations; managerial competencies; career and time management, interpersonal conflict and not-for-profit organizations.



Prof. Chinchilla is a business consultant and member of several Advisory Boards. Co-author of several books, such as: “Female Ambition: How to Reconcile Work and Family (2004); “Decision Criteria in the Selection Processes in Spain. Are women discriminated? (Fundación ADECO 2003); “Two professions and one family (Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Benestar i Família 2003); *Undertaking in Feminine* (1999); *The Women and her Success* (1995); and *Leadership Paradigms* (2002). She is married and the mother of one daughter.



#### ExpatWomen's Interview with Nuria

**ExpatWomen:** Dr. Chinchilla, thank you so much for letting me talk to you today about your book, *Female Ambition: How to Reconcile Work and Family*. All professional women are trying to find work/life balance; can you quickly summarize the main topics covered in your book?

**Nuria:** The main focus of the book is on the individual, the woman herself. Each and every one of us needs to set clear priorities, learn time management techniques to balance work and family. Another important topic is the family. Family equals co-responsibility. Women need to work with their husbands to balance the tasks of keeping the household running and taking care of the children. The third important topic relates to companies and how their acknowledgement of work/life balance is crucial. Companies need to become more family-responsible. The final topic concerns the government. We need public administrations that reward companies who are family-responsible just like they do for abiding the laws of not polluting—family stability means a secure community.

**ExpatWomen:** Let's expand on your comment about being responsible. What do mean exactly by this?

**Nuria:** Have you ever seen a woman with five children who seems to have it all together and another woman with one child who seems to be falling apart? The key to success is time management and saying NO. Many women get caught up in work and become work-alcoholics. They really do not know how to turn off. Hewlett Packard (HP) actually has a program internally to help these types of

woman. I suggest getting a Coach to help you if you are having problems setting priorities.

**ExpatriateWomen:** With regards to your comment “family equals co-responsibility,” are men ready to help out more around the house and with the children?

**Nuria:** The family is the great existing area where everything important is free. Here people are loved and accepted just for themselves at all times. Although difficult it may be at times to live together, families tend to forgive, protect and care for their members. If you do not spend time with your family or are constantly stressed when you are in their presence, what impact is that going to play on your relationships? The high proportion of broken marriages is partly due to neglect of family life in a society where the only things that are valued are things on which we can put a price. If family is important to you and your husband, you can easily create a co-responsible family.

**ExpatriateWomen:** Which industries seem to be the best at being “family-responsible”?

**Nuria:** I would say the companies that are doing this best are the IT (information technology) and pharmaceutical companies. IBM and HP have seen the costs of turn over and burn out from their female employees and have institutionalized practices to try to retain female employees. Of course this depends on the company and the country's culture. We have on our website an interactive self-diagnostic test to see if your company is family-responsible ([www.iese.edu/icwf](http://www.iese.edu/icwf)). We rate companies from A to D. A being system-enhancing and D being system-destroying. System-destroying means the company does not give the individual time to be a spouse, parent, son or daughter and thus pollutes the society with singles who have no time to build a family, divorces, nervous break downs, non-available parents, etc.

**ExpatriateWomen:** How can laws passed by governments help?

**Nuria:** Here in Spain, I am working with the government to try and set up a point system for companies that would lead to tax reductions if the companies are considered family-responsible. It is like the Quality programs of the ISO. If we do not try and change society soon, we will have many single people working long hours and never having time to create a family, or many more divorces and children with no parents to take care of them because they are working all the time. Is this the society we want to become?

**ExpatriateWomen:** If you could share 5 tips for professional expatriate women regarding work/life balance, what would they be?

**Nuria:**

1. Create a good network of people you trust and do not be afraid to ask for help and favors. Do this as soon as you arrive (even before if possible) where you will be living. You need at least 3 or 4 people you can count on.
2. Delegate. Get help at home, cleaning etc. Delegate the material things, not the relationships. Do you want to spend time after work doing the laundry or helping your child with his/her homework; cleaning the house or inviting friends over for dinner? Do not feel guilty you cannot do it all,

feel thankful you have a support team to help you.

3. Triple-check the contract before signing to go overseas. Ensure that your company is FLEXIBLE about that fact that you are a woman with a family. Make sure that the contract includes things like relocation services, paying for schools, help finding your husband a job (if applicable), etc. And ensure that you have a clear indication on where you will be going after the contract ends, to help ease the family's transition.
4. Negotiate with your spouse on who does what. Sit down and speak about how you are going to divide the responsibilities. Write them down so you both remember what you agreed to.
5. Develop a new habit... the ability to just say NO! Learn how to prioritize, and do not feel guilty for not being able to do everything.

**ExpatriateWomen:** Thank you very much Nuria and wish you every success in your research and personal life.

**Nuria:** Thank you very much for taking the time to interview me, it was a pleasure.