

The Future of Disability Inclusion: Perspectives from Professionals with Disabilities

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Instructions



Welcome

Marking the 35th Anniversary of the ADA and honoring the lived experiences of professionals with disabilities in international exchange.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for participants are:

- Understand the diverse experiences of international exchange professionals with disabilities and strategies to effectively recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities.
- Build awareness of best practices, resources, and supports available to incorporate principles of disability inclusion and foster a sense of belonging in workplaces and programs.
- Generate ideas on how to transform the field together. Participants will be encouraged to commit to at least one action such as revising their hiring outreach to encourage people with disabilities to apply, streamlining their disability accommodations process, or assessing their current and future strategies for disability inclusion, etc.

Moderator and Panelists Introductions



Laurie Laird
(she/her)

Program Manager,
National Clearinghouse
on Disability and
Exchange/MIUSA



Shawn Wall
(he/him)

Founder and Executive Director
World at Hand



Dr. Chris Thompson
(she/her)

Founder and Managing Director
Compear Global Education
Network



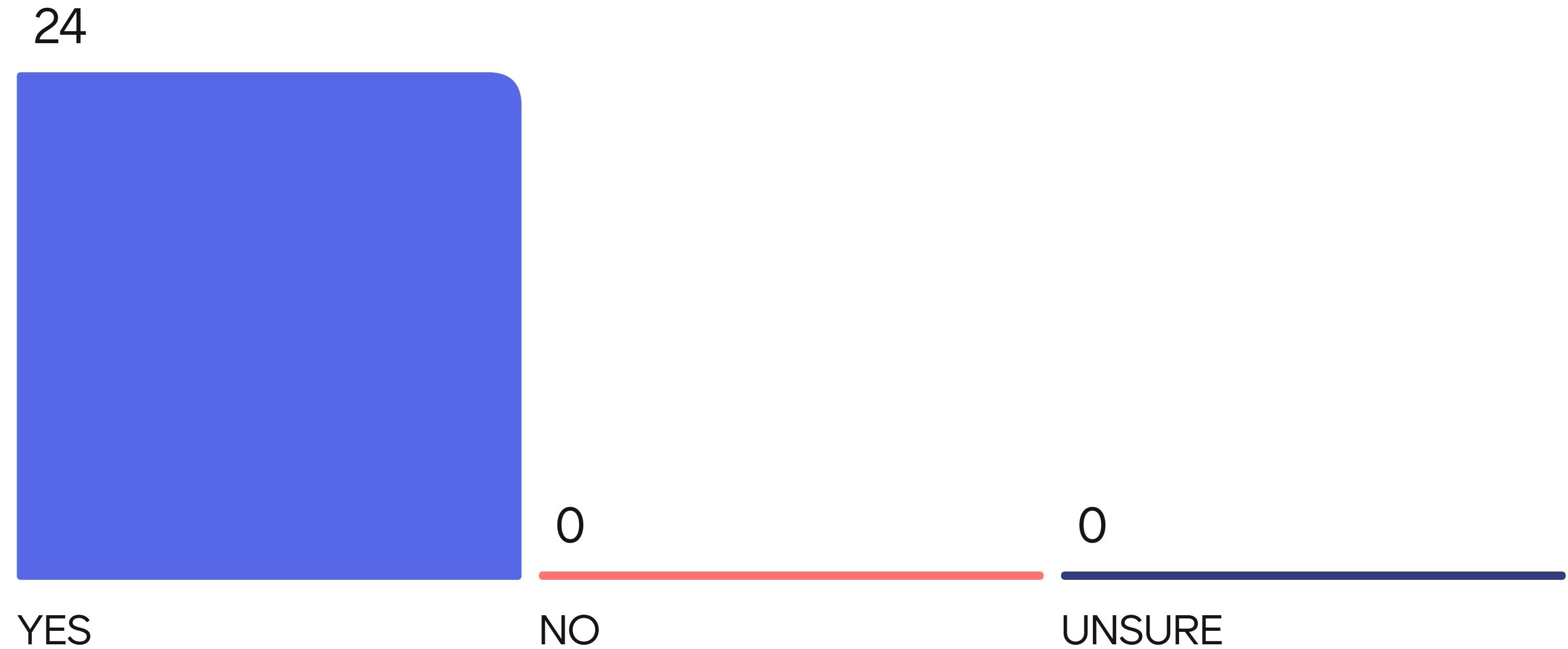
Katie Wiggins-Gawlik
(she/her)

Assistant Director of Member
Relations, US Exchanges
ISEP Study Abroad

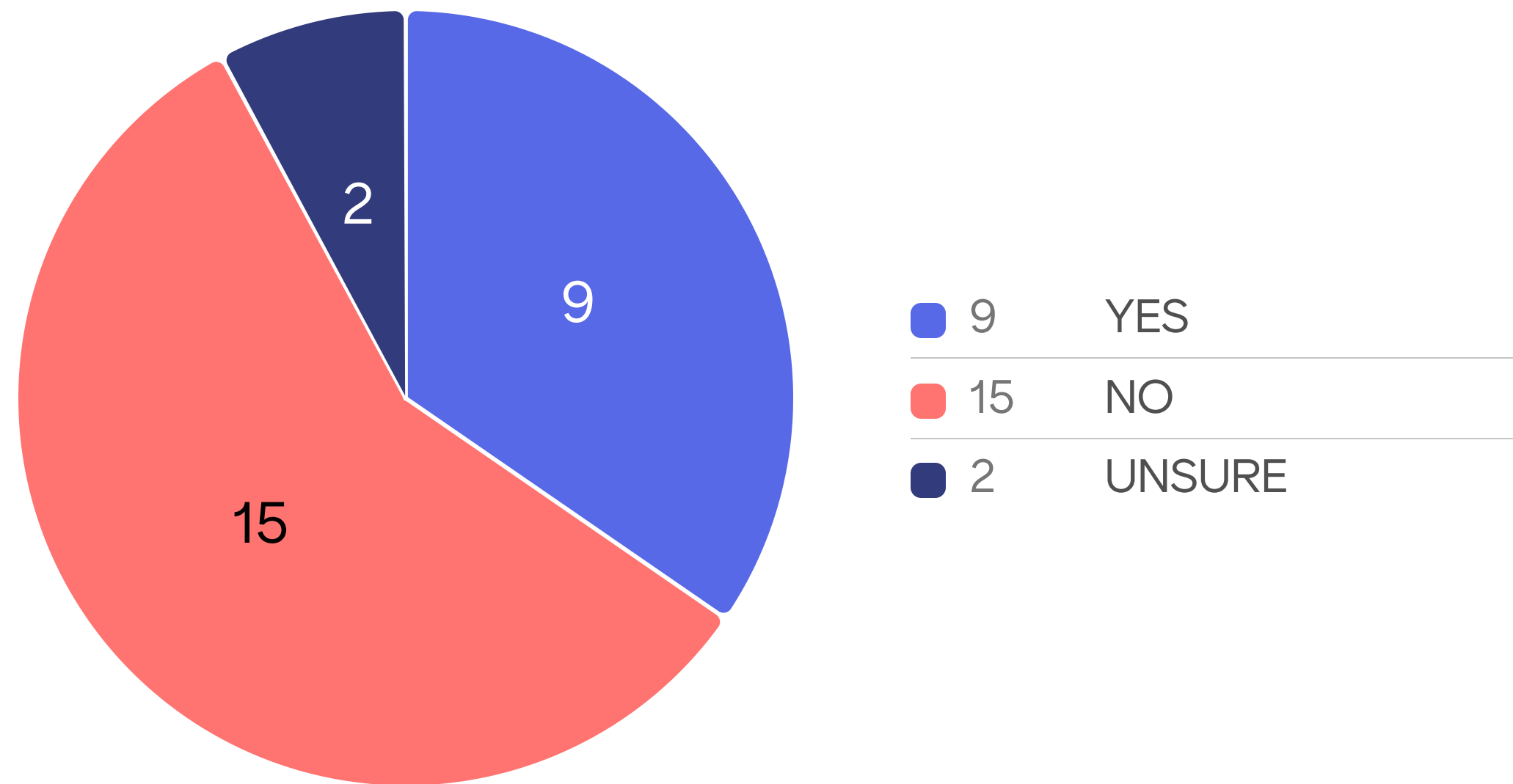
What your role in this field?



Have you worked with someone with a disability that you know of?



Are you a Self-ID-ed as a person with a disability?



Panel Stories: Navigating the Field



Dreaming Forward: Reimagining the Future

“What is your vision for the future of disability inclusion in international education?”



What barriers to disability inclusion exist at your institution?

Staff perceptions

Attitudes

Offering programs and expecting all students to be able to do all the activities and excursions

Bureaucracy

Staff availability and time to dedicate to these conversations

Lack of understanding of how one can disclose a disability, and to whom.

Campus facilities (elevators, etc) do not always work.

The rigid 9-5 hours, often requirement to work in the office.

What barriers to disability inclusion exist at your institution?

Lack of conversation WITH people with disabilities (assumptions about needs)

Lack of understanding about "hidden" disabilities

Knowledge about available services

Application design
Expenses of programs abroad

Lack of accessible transportation and housing for students. Understaffed disability resource offices.

Automatic door opening buttons are too far away from the door, so it closes before people can go through them

Lack of resources and challenging works

Staff/educator training

What barriers to disability inclusion exist at your institution?

Culture

Budgets

Not knowing enough about
the study abroad program
specifics to make an
informed decision

Website not accessible

Changing my language

Think more about
sharing my AuDHD
diagnosis with my boss

What ONE action will you commit to after today's session?

Vulnerability

Find programs ideal for students of different abilities

Learning more about the social model of disability

Sharing use of accommodating doesn't invite in

Adding disability resources to existing resources available for diverse student groups

Check in with the community to determine community needs.

Building financial support for scholarships specifically for students with disabilities (without requiring students to disclose publicly)

Asking for Support Tools

What ONE action will you commit to after today's session?

Advocate for my needs more openly and without shame.

Listening to the community's needs

Making sure i make new and current students aware of the resources that are out there but not well advertised.

Share feedback on use of the word "accommodations" with colleagues to see if we can use more inclusive wording when supporting students.

Be an strong ally as a student who advocates to make school environments more accessible for all

Learn new ways to communicate about disability in higher education, use new terms such as "access needs, support tools."

Changing language

The session gives me a moper power to go through the project of disability center at universities in Kurdistan region

What ONE action will you commit to after today's session?

Be an advocate, and believe explicitly.

Share my AuDHD diagnosis with my boss (thanks Chris!)

Adjusting the language that is used to support students

Connecting with our other offices on campus to see what resources exist and how best to facilitate that conversation with students

One thing.....

- **Katie** - Review policies related to seating arrangements on airlines and other travel arrangements.
- **Laurie** - Language is important, though don't let fear of using the wrong term prevent you from engaging. You will make mistakes, and that's okay. Use disability positive language, and ask people with disabilities their preference, when possible. Disability is one part of our identity.
- **Shawn** - Professionals with disabilities are much stronger than you may give them credit for. Overcoming our challenges and learning to live with a disability leads to immense growth, maturity and focus. Accommodations only make things better for the majority while fully supporting a minority. Never a bad thing.
- **Chris** - Support begins with not assuming. Instead, ask each person what they need to thrive, and be ready to adjust, not because they're broken, but because systems often are. The job can get done, but not everyone will do it the same way. Our role is to make space for different paths to success.

Resources

Sign up for the NCDE Monthly E-news

Access NCDE resources on disability inclusion

- Tip sheets and best practices
- Recorded webinars on various topics
- [Self-directed learning pathways](#)

Accessibility toolkits

- <https://support.google.com/accessibility/?hl=en#topic=9071908>
- [“How do we make our PDFs accessible?”](#)
- <https://www.zoom.com/en/accessibility/>



