

**INCLUDING DISABILITY  
GLOBAL SUMMIT**

**2025 REPORT**

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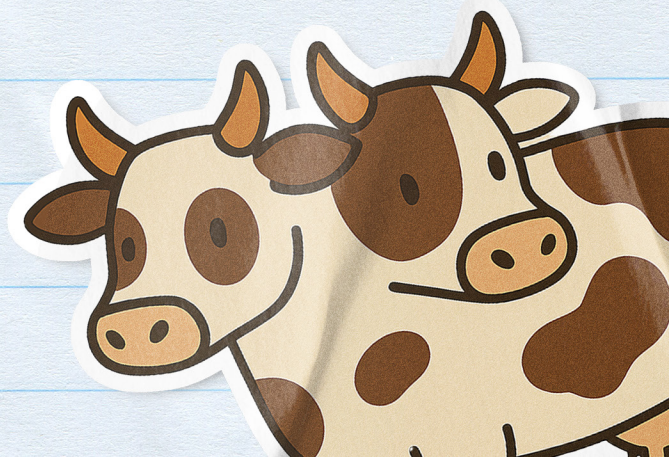
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The work continues  
the community grows  
the story is still being written





## Executive Summary

The 2025 Including Disability Global Summit (IDGS) convened virtually from April 22–24, bringing together 574 registrants from 20 countries for three days of interdisciplinary dialogue, storytelling, and collective imagination. Guided by the theme Crip Narratives: Controlling our Stories, the Summit foregrounded disabled voices and experiences across presentations, performances, and community-building sessions.

**The program** featured two keynotes, three panels, 16 lecture-style presentations, five pre-recorded sessions, three workshops, two poster sessions, one podcast, and a comedy performance—delivered entirely online and free of charge. Content spanned themes of inclusive activism, disability justice, digital access, neurodivergent learning, public health, intersectionality, and technology design. Pre-recorded sessions added global depth, addressing topics like Deaf identity in wartime Shanghai, inclusive autism research, long COVID in Black women, and reactions to U.S. policy threats.

**Accessibility** remained a cornerstone, with ASL (American Sign Language) and CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter), and live CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) captioning using StreamText. Participants praised the platform’s usability, community-centered design, and transparent support. In a post-event survey, 73% rated accessibility a perfect 5, and 27% rated it a 4. Attendees described the Summit as “inspiring,” “motivational,” and “a space for healing,” highlighting the personal, professional, and emotional resonance of the event.

**Registrants** represented a broad spectrum of professions, including educators, librarians, artists, health practitioners, accessibility experts, and students—particularly PhD students and first-time attendees from the Global South. Within the U.S., participants represented 37 states, with Maryland, Virginia, and New York most represented.

**Opportunities** for growth emerged in technical areas such as Zoom transitions, breakout accessibility, file size management, and session pacing. Suggestions included shorter event durations, expanded networking, mentorship programs, and new publication outlets. A stronger behind-the-scenes team and thoughtful moderation strategies ensured smoother operations than in previous years.

**As IDGS looks ahead to 2027**, the Summit remains unapologetically online, deeply accessible, and rooted in collective care. With its ongoing journal and growing community, IDGS continues to build a future where disabled voices lead, stories matter, and inclusion is a practice—not a promise.

**The work continues. The community grows. The story is still being written.**



## Introduction and context

The 6th Including Disability Global Summit (IDGS) took place virtually from April 22–24, 2025, reaffirming our commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and international participation. Offered free of charge and featuring a rich lineup of live and pre-recorded sessions, the 2025 Summit brought together over 574 registrants from around the globe. This year's theme, *Crip Narratives: Controlling our Stories*, invited participants to reclaim agency, center lived experience, and celebrate the power of storytelling in shaping disability futures.

The Summit unfolded during a time of intensifying political polarization, rising ableism, and continued instability in public health and climate justice. These global conditions shaped the conversations and creative responses presented throughout the three-day event. From personal storytelling to systemic critique, IDGS 2025 provided a space to explore how disabled people narrate, own, and reframe their stories in response to social, medical, and cultural forces.

Each day of the Summit offered a thematic focus:

**Day 1** explored the power of storytelling, self-advocacy, and inclusive activism through the lens of disability justice, creative expression, higher education, and public health. The day began with welcoming remarks from Dr. Paul Jaeger, IDGS co-founder and co-chair, who introduced the 2025 Summit theme and reminded attendees that the Summit remains “unapologetically online,” inclusive, and action-focused. His opening reflected both the emotional urgency and the collective strength of the community, describing the present moment as a “tornado of grief and hope”, while calling for meaningful steps toward equity and repair.

Presentations highlighted the role of activism in the ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) community, inclusive performance and neurodivergent learning, the power of disability narratives, speculative mental health futures, rural caregiving and critical public health, and the need for inclusive sexual education. Additional talks focused on access to accurate health information, student experiences in higher education and the importance of fostering visibility and belonging. The day concluded with a keynote by Jennifer Rode, setting a tone of transformation, critical reflection, and care.

**Day 2** centered on the interplay between digital life, neurodivergence, and identity expression, offering rich insights into how disabled individuals navigate technology, caregiving, scholarship, and self-definition. The day began with a hands-on workshop on cognitive access and community building through *Dungeons & Dragons*, followed by virtual poster sessions that explored poverty among families with children with disabilities and the compounded marginalization experienced by disabled refugees. Later sessions spotlighted the digital advocacy of Black mothers, and the shifting implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in narrative control. In the afternoon, presenters examined neuro-affirming assistive technologies for ADHD, information management among neurodivergent mothers, and internet accessibility through a personal lens. A panel of librarians and scholars shared how intersectional counternarratives challenge deficit-based assumptions and foster authentic self-acceptance. The day concluded with a comedic performance by Jack Freeman, whose show *EMBRACE ME* offered humorous and heartfelt reflections on dating while disabled.

**Day 3** looked ahead to future possibilities for disability innovation, inclusive design, and community-centered research. The day began with a participatory workshop that invited attendees to engage with memory, materiality, and access through multisensory exploration. A following session on universal design reframed diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) practices through proactive and sustainable accessibility approaches. Presentations included findings on vaccine hesitancy in the U.S. paralysis community, emphasizing trust-building and tailored communication, and a case study of an award-winning assistive wheelchair designed for navigating real-world challenges. A panel on disability community consulting in technology research urged a shift from tokenism to authentic co-creation. The day concluded with a keynote by Ron Padrón, who challenged the political fallacy of the “middle ground” and called for renewed investment in community building as a response to systemic erasure and ongoing threats to disabled and chronically ill communities.

**Pre-recorded sessions** enriched the overall program with globally relevant and timely scholarship. Deaf identity and community in wartime Shanghai were examined through early 20th-century publications by the Chinese Deaf community. An inclusive autism research study emphasized participatory methodologies and the insights of autistic adults. A critical race theory lens was applied to explore the healthcare experiences of Black women COVID long haulers, while a systematic review investigated the impact of ableism on healthcare professionals with disabilities. A final presentation analyzed Reddit discourse to uncover disability community concerns surrounding the proposed Project 2025 policy agenda. These asynchronous sessions offered attendees the opportunity to engage deeply with diverse, research-driven perspectives that complemented the live programming.

More than a typical academic conference, IDGS 2025 was a dynamic, community-centered space that brought together scholars, artists, activists, students, and professionals across disciplines and borders. With personal stories, performance, academic research, conversation, and deep engagement, the Summit modeled how storytelling can be a tool for liberation, connection, and transformative imagination.



## What makes IDGS unique

The Including Disability Global Summit (IDGS) is a truly interdisciplinary and cross-disability gathering. Rooted in the principles of equity and collaboration, the Summit serves as a platform where participants from various professions, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences can come together to exchange knowledge, challenge norms, and co-create liberatory futures.

What sets IDGS apart is its intentional design as an “unapologetically online,” free and highly accessible space, emphasizing the importance of inclusive, disability-led, and focused online events. This approach ensures that the Summit remains accessible to a global audience, removing geographical and financial barriers to participation. IDGS maintains a rigorous peer-review process for all submissions, with acceptance rates varying annually based on the number of submissions. For instance, the acceptance rate was 38% in 2021, 39% in 2023, and 52% in 2025. Submissions are de-identified and then sent to volunteer reviewers with a rubric for evaluation. Before submissions are sent to reviewers, the organizations of the submitters and reviewers are recorded to avoid assigning submissions to reviewers from the same organization as the submitter. Although submissions are de-identified, this extra step avoids the inadvertent identification of a submission based on the familiarity of the reviewer. Reviewer volunteers include students, faculty, and affiliated staff representing a diverse range of expertise and experience with disability.

The Summit’s leadership model is another unique aspect, with shared leadership between disabled and nondisabled community advocates. This collaborative approach fosters a space where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated into the Summit’s planning and execution.

Innovative formats—such as creative performances, tech showcases, and interactive media—further distinguish the Summit. These approaches not only enrich engagement but also reflect the diverse ways disabled people communicate, organize, and share knowledge.

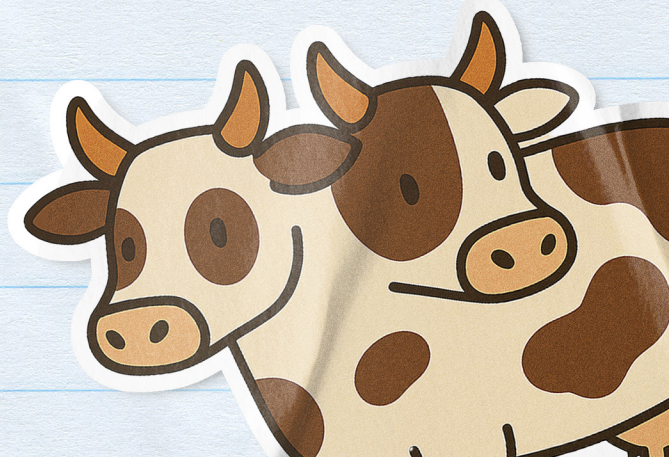
Quotations and short stories from participants highlight the unique atmosphere and transformative nature of the Summit. These testimonials reflect how IDGS has become more than an event—it’s a community, a movement, and a catalyst for change.

By prioritizing accessibility, embracing a fully online format, and fostering cross-disciplinary and cross-disability collaboration, IDGS continues to be a unique and impactful event in the field of disability studies and advocacy.



We are  
unapologetically online

we do not need  
permission to matter





## Who participated: Registrants and attendees

The 2025 Including Disability Global Summit welcomed a vibrant and diverse audience from across the globe. A total of 574 individuals registered for the Summit, with 349 participants attending live—an impressive 64% turnout rate, slightly higher than 2023. Attendees represented 20 countries, with notable increases in participation from African nations such as Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia, reflecting the Summit's growing global impact and relevance. The top five represented countries were the United States (497), Canada (31), the United Kingdom (12), India (11), and Germany (6) with others joining from Australia, Brazil, China, Georgia, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, and Turkey (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Geographic distribution of 2025 Summit attendees by country.

Figure description: This figure is a world map highlighting the countries that were represented by participants at the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit. The countries are marked in red and include: the United States, Canada, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Sweden, India, China, Japan, Georgia, Turkey, and several African countries—most notably Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, and Gambia.

Within the United States, participants joined from 37 states, with strong representation from Maryland (159, 35.3%), Virginia (40, 8.9%), New York (37, 8.2%), Illinois (24, 5.3%), California (15, 3.3%), Michigan (13, 2.9%), and Georgia (12, 2.7%). The state's distribution is shown in Figure 2. This wide domestic reach underscores the continued national importance of the Summit across academic, advocacy, public health, and community spaces.

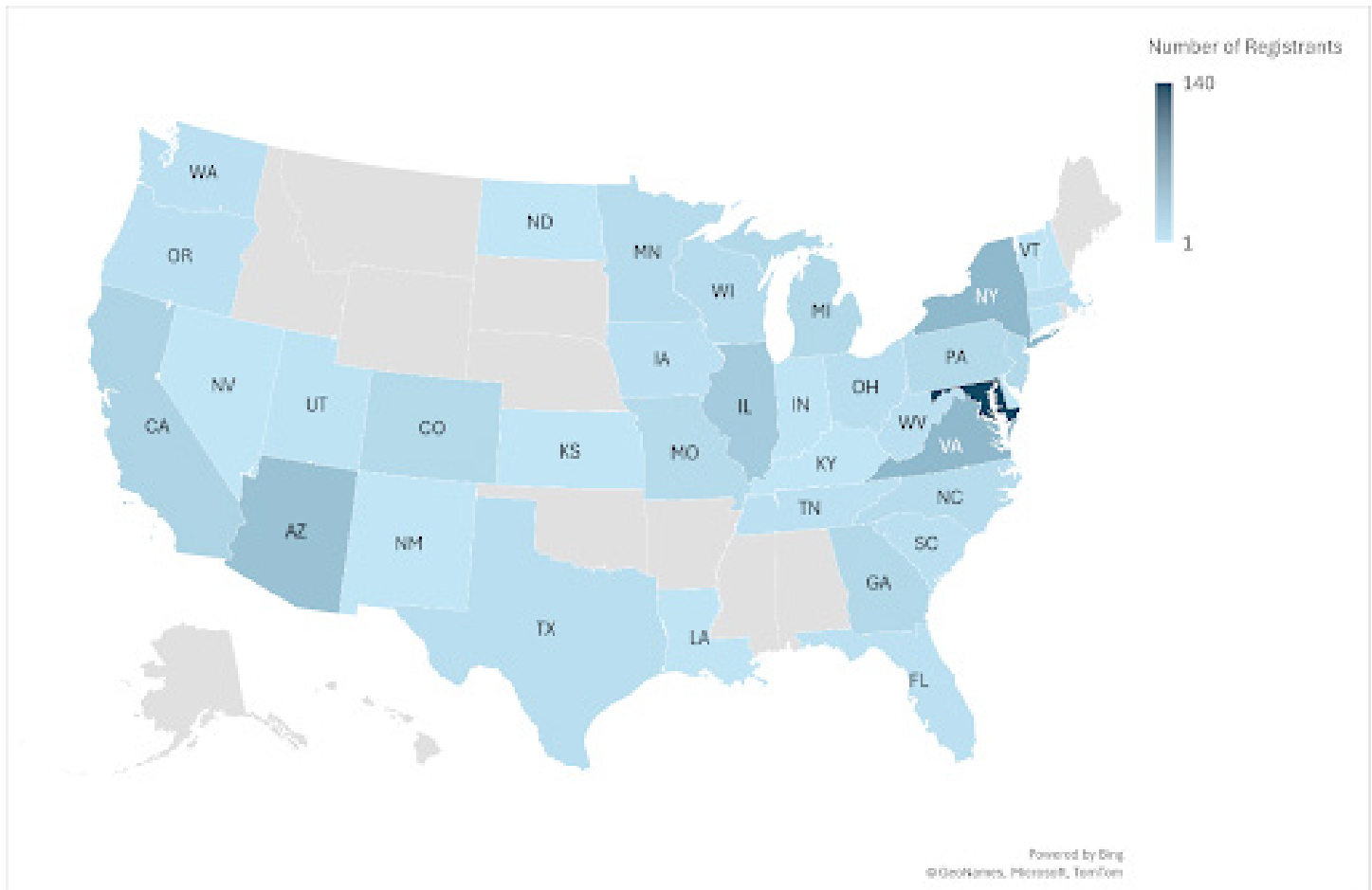


Figure 2. Registrants' state distribution across the United States.

Figure description: This figure shows a map of the United States illustrating the distribution of registrants for the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit by state. States are shaded in varying tones of blue, with darker shades indicating a higher number of registrants. Maryland shows the darkest shade, representing the highest number of registrants (up to 140), followed by Virginia and New York. States with the fewest registrants are shaded in the lightest blue, while several states, including Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Mississippi, and Alaska, are shown in gray, indicating no registrants. The map visually conveys broad national engagement, with participation from 37 states.

Each day of the Summit drew robust attendance: 206 attendees joined on Day 1, 166 on Day 2, and 137 on Day 3. The sustained engagement across all three days highlights the resonance of this year's theme, *Crip Narratives: Controlling our Stories*, and the meaningful connections participants formed through its sessions.

Participants came from a wide range of professional backgrounds, including accessibility specialists (such as ADA coordinators, digital accessibility consultants, learning designer, and assistive technology experts), healthcare and counseling professionals (including clinicians, therapists, and mental health counselors), and arts and education practitioners (such as art therapists and faculty in musicology or disability studies).



Many registrants were also librarians, professors, faculty, deans, directors, graduate students, program coordinators, and administrative staff. Institutions represented included colleges and universities, libraries, museums, nonprofit advocacy organizations, state and national agencies, religious organizations, hospitals, and grassroots collectives. Many participants also identified as independent consultants or creatives, further reflecting the cross-sector nature of the Summit.

The new audience included more students, specifically PhD students, first-time attendees, and participants from the Global South. Recruitment and outreach benefited from consistent Summit listserv communications and peer sharing, with over 1,911 members currently subscribed. We also used Bluesky and Instagram to extend our outreach to broader and more diverse communities. These strategic outreach efforts, grounded in community trust and sustained visibility, continue to expand IDGS's reach and reinforce its role as a global convening space for disability scholarship and advocacy.

## **Innovations in accessibility**

The 2025 Including Disability Global Summit continued its strong tradition of accessibility by offering comprehensive accommodations, such as live CART captioning through an external StreamText link, automated Zoom captions, ASL and CDI interpretation, and clearly communicating tech support throughout each session. These efforts were not only functional but deeply appreciated by participants. One attendee remarked, "I can see the captions" and another replied, "Magic captions! Thank you!" shortly after the captioning began, reflecting a broader appreciation for accessible communication tools and inclusive mindsets.

Repeated reminders in the chat to access presentation materials, captioning links, and interpreter coordination showed careful coordination and attentiveness to accessibility logistics. As one participant noted in response to the captioning experience, "Hopefully, technology gets us the ability to have real-time captioning. Are Meta Glasses a step in that direction?" Another participant responded, "That would be interesting to see in my lifetime." These remarks reflect gratitude for current support and excitement about inclusive design and a shared investment in the Summit's evolving accessibility infrastructure. They also showed strong engagement and a sense of community excitement among participants.

As part of our post-summit evaluation, participants were asked to rate the accessibility of the Summit on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not accessible and 5 being fully accessible. 73% of respondents gave the highest rating of 5, while the remaining 27% rated it a 4, reflecting strong overall satisfaction with the accessibility features provided throughout the event.

The Summit's accessibility team demonstrated an ongoing commitment to improvement by maintaining open communication, offering resources in real time, and fostering community dialogue about the future of inclusive tech. One participant captured this spirit by stating, "Accessibility requires community and creativity," a sentiment that resonated throughout the event.

# Summit content and engagement

The Summit featured a dynamic lineup of content across multiple formats: two keynote addresses (60 min each), three interactive panel discussions (60 min each), 16 lecture-style presentations (25 min each), three workshops (60 min each), two virtual poster sessions (10 min each), one comedy show (60 min), and four pre-recorded presentations (15 min each). In addition to the summit program, podcasts and submissions to the accompanying Including Disability journal (vol. 5) were solicited, reviewed, and published, further enriching the dissemination and impact of the event’s themes and insights (Figure 3).

 <b>2</b> <b>KEYNOTE ADDRESSES</b> (60 min each)	 <b>3</b> <b>PANEL DISCUSSIONS</b> (60 min each)
 <b>16</b> <b>PRESENTATIONS</b> (25 min each)	 <b>3</b> <b>WORKSHOPS</b> (60 min each)
 <b>2</b> <b>VIRTUAL POSTER SESSIONS</b> (10 min each)	 <b>1</b> <b>COMEDY SHOW</b> (60 min)
 <b>4</b> <b>PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATIONS</b> (60 min each)	<b>Additional content</b>  - <b>PODCASTS</b> (60 min each)  - <b>PAPERS</b> (published in the <i>Including Disability</i> journal, vol. 5)

Figure 3. Session format overview

Figure description: A 2x4 grid infographic displaying the session formats of the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit. Each box contains a bold number, session type, duration, and an accompanying icon. The graphic uses bright, contrasting icons and bold typography to clearly communicate the variety and accessibility of session types offered.

During live sessions, attendees responded enthusiastically in the chat, expressing both appreciation and joy. One participant praised the hands-on nature of a session, stating, "This is a practical exercise in audio description. I love it!" Another added humorously, "Thank you. I thought it was only a window into the comedy that is my audio processing." The Summit also featured a creative performance with live audience interaction, including jokes and commentary that energized the chat space: "One of the frogs was bullying the other frogs, too. It was the bull frog." Blending serious academic content with moments of levity and imagination created a unique, inclusive, and engaging learning environment. Attendees also shared links, resources, and personal insights, illustrating the depth of connection and community that emerged during the sessions (see Appendix).

One specific theme that emerged during the chat was the rich exchange of ideas around accessibility, shared by participants across various sessions. Attendees offered candid reflections on the everyday access needs of disabled people, providing insight into how both public and private spaces could become more inclusive. Several emphasized the importance of quiet environments, suggesting features such as "quiet rooms for prayers, decompressing, etc." and "a quiet room to shut door." Others proposed improvements to physical accessibility, including "bidets in bathroom," and "elevator in addition to the ramp." Health and sensory considerations were also raised, with suggestions like "translating pictures to a scent-free policies image is amazing," "good airflow for disease prevention," and "HEPA filters." Some participants highlighted the need for more customizable visual elements, such as "displays that can change text styles" and "tactile images." As one person noted, "Universal design... can't just be a 'one size fits all' approach... it needs to have built into it ways to communicate, manage conflicting needs... and adapt the space accordingly." These conversations reflected the lived expertise of disabled participants and underscored a shared commitment to reimagining access and inclusion in everyday environments.

Feedback from the post-Summit survey highlighted how the 2025 IDGS content deeply resonated with attendees across backgrounds and experiences:

- Participants appreciated the diversity and richness of topics, with one writing, "It was my first time attending and I was totally overwhelmed by the amazing content. I was so grateful to be in a place for inclusion and learning."
- The flexible structure and variety of sessions were also praised: "Some of the topics had no relevance for me and yet I found myself staying for the whole thing... Overall, it was just such a pleasurable experience."
- Others emphasized the value of longer, in-depth sessions, particularly on the final day: "I like that there were lots of sessions to be exposed to many topics, however, the last day was the best day because of the longer sessions."
- Creative elements were especially well received, with one respondent stating, "Thanks, all! I loved the comic, Jack." From first-time attendees to returning volunteers, the event was described as "fantastic," "amazing," and "so meaningful," with one participant noting, "This summit meant so much to me," after sharing their personal connection as the mother of a deceased adult child with disabilities.
- The online format received strong support as well, with one attendee stating, "I appreciate the online format versus in-person. There is too much ableist 'back to the way things were' than I would like. Not even hybrid events! We need more events like Including Disability."



The thoughtful curation of content and community-building affirmed the Summit's commitment to inclusive, impactful engagement.

## **Impact and takeaways**

The Summit fostered a space for personal reflection, shared learning, and community-building. Participants engaged deeply with the content and with each other, often expressing their insights and emotional responses in real time. One attendee affirmed, "Everyone learns different, learning isn't linear," while another echoed, "100000%." Several participants shared tools and strategies that support executive functioning and mental wellness, with mentions of apps like Finch, Forest, and Glean (see Appendix).

During one session, a participant encouraged others by stating, "It's disrespectful to not use those tools, they were made!" In moments of connection, attendees also highlighted mutual support practices, including "body doubling with [name of another attendee] has helped me immensely at getting day-to-day tasks done," and others echoed the importance of "teach[ing] each other cool things!" These conversations revealed how the Summit not only delivered valuable knowledge but also nurtured solidarity, peer learning, and the practical exchange of resources across disciplines.

Participants also shared powerful reflections on how the Summit touched their lives—personally, professionally, and emotionally. One attendee expressed, "Wow... Feeling heard retroactively is actually healing my past 'very not-thriving' PhD self," while another shared, "This presentation has changed me. I have a new perspective and newfound interest!" The Summit created space for deep affirmation, with comments like, "I am feeling SO SEEN as a queer neurospicy multiply disabled person with a MLIS degree here," and "Y'all saying unapologetically online means so much to me." Over the course of three days, participants described the experience as "inspiring, touching, informative, and so motivational," and "a wonderful three days of light and hope." One especially moving comment summed up the emotional resonance: "That was the sermon I didn't know I neeeeeeeded." Above all, the sense of gratitude and connection was palpable, with participants repeatedly thanking organizers and presenters: "Thank you for this space!!!!!" and "Thank you so much, fascinating discussion. I learned so much!"

These moments highlight not just what was learned, but what was felt—belonging, insight, and transformation.

## Opportunities for IDGS' growth

Opportunities for technical improvement also emerged during the 2025 Summit:

- Managing transitions between sessions proved challenging, particularly when moving participants from the main room to the waiting room. A more streamlined or automated approach is needed, or additional personnel should be assigned to assist with this task.
- The 9-person spotlight limit on Zoom required careful coordination, ensuring space for at least two interpreters meant limiting active speakers to no more than seven at any given time.
- The use of Zoom passcodes caused confusion for some participants, highlighting the need to clarify access requirements and better understand why certain users experienced this barrier while others did not.
- Google Drive has a 100MB limit for slides, and presenters should be informed about this limitation to avoid upload issues.
- Planning for breakout rooms in future workshops will require clearer coordination and accessibility considerations. Issues on some days underscored the need to speak with presenters in advance, determine whether breakout rooms are necessary, and ensure options are available for participants who require ASL interpretation in the main room. Suggestions included adding questions to IDGS registration form and to forms from the UMD Communication Access Services about breakout preferences and accessibility needs, as well as clarifying the style of breakout activities so presenters can plan accordingly—whether staying in the main room, rotating between rooms, or designating the main room as one of the breakout spaces.

A valuable opportunity for growth involves reaching out to accessibility providers—such as ASL interpreters and CART captioners—for direct feedback on their experience during the Summit. Specific input on challenges like speaking pace could help organizers better prepare presenters and moderators for future events. Sending a separate feedback request with tailored language would support more effective collaboration and overall accessibility planning.

A promising moderating practice was the personalized approach to session flow. Asking presenters in advance, “How would you like to be prompted?” for the Q&A transition helped sessions run more smoothly and respectfully. This strategy contributed to better timing and less disruption during handovers.

Committee members noted that the 3-day schedule, while meaningful, felt cognitively overwhelming. Comments like “I’m not sure I can do 3 days again... it’s just a lot, cognitive load wise!” suggest that a two-day format might be more sustainable. Others proposed shifting social elements like movie nights or comedy events to separate, optional sessions to ease the overall load. Committee members also emphasized the value of scheduled breaks, noting they were not only necessary for rest but also essential for behind-the-scenes coordination. Longer days with built-in pauses allowed time to connect with presenters and moderators, contributing to smoother transitions and overall session success.

For future planning, it was suggested to develop a virtual poster gallery—similar to the pre-recorded session format on the Summit site—to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of poster presentations.

In the post-Summit survey, participants most frequently requested educational seminars, workshops, and networking opportunities, with several also suggesting mentorship programs and additional publication avenues beyond the Including Disability Journal. Respondents also reflected on the importance of maintaining accessibility and financial inclusion. One participant emphasized, “I believe that people should be paid for sharing their lived experience/stories. That said, I would not have been able to attend if there had been a fee.” These insights highlight opportunities to grow the Summit’s offerings while continuing to center access, equity, and inclusive participation.



## **Behind the scenes: The organizing team**

The success of the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit was made possible by the dedication and collaboration of a diverse planning committee (Figure 4) committed to access, care, and inclusion. Committee members brought a wide range of lived experiences, professional expertise, and community connections to every stage of the planning process. Over the course of several months, the team coordinated fundraising, logistics, technology, accessibility supports, communications, and content curation.

One area of growth for IDGS in 2025 was the expanded behind-the-scenes team, which made the event run much more smoothly compared to past years when only two committee members carried the bulk of the responsibility. While the number of people on the backend—about ten—may seem large, each role was essential, from logistics and hosting to social media, moderation, captioning, and interpretation. Notably, having interpreters manage their own spotlighting helped reduce tech strain, allowing the team to better support accessibility and session flow.



Figure 4. Planning Committee

Figure description: An etched illustration collage of headshot of the Planning Committee. First row, left to right: Paul T. Jaeger, PhD, Sara H. Olsen, PhD, Stephanie J. Cork, PhD. Second row, left to right: Ron Padrón, MS, Nedelina Tchangalova, MS, MLS, Alexander Pilon. Third row left to right: Elizabeth A. Pineo, MLIS, Judy Ye, Alex Peterson, MA

## **Thank you to our sponsors and partners**

The 2025 Including Disability Global Summit gratefully acknowledges the generous support of its sponsors, whose contributions made it possible to deliver the Summit “unapologetically online”—free, open to all, and deeply accessible. Thanks to their funding, the event offered CART and ASL interpretation for live sessions, closed captions for recorded content, and access to powerful keynote speakers and artists. Their support ensured the Summit remained not only inclusive in mission, but in practice.

Special thanks to our sponsors:

### **Title Sponsors**

- Maryland Initiative for Digital Accessibility (MIDA), University of Maryland
- The Graduate School’s Office of Graduate Diversity and Inclusion (OGDI), University of Maryland

### **Distinguished Individual Sponsor**

- With heartfelt gratitude, we recognize our anonymous donor for their generous contribution of \$2,000, supporting our mission to create a more inclusive and accessible world for all. Thank you for championing disability inclusion and making a meaningful impact!

### **No Barrier Sponsors**

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- School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, University of Maryland

### **Thought Partners**

- Ontario Tech University



## Looking ahead

The energy of the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit doesn't end here. Everyone is invited to stay connected and continue building the movement. Join the IDGS community by proposing a session for 2027, writing for the Including Disability Journal, or contributing your ideas for future events. The journal, launched to elevate voices and scholarship rooted in lived experience, offers you publishing opportunities—so, submit your paper now.

And mark your calendars: The Including Disability Global Summit will return in Spring 2027. More details are coming, but one thing is certain: We'll continue to meet unapologetically, accessibly, and together.

## **“We do not need permission to matter”: Voices from the 2025 Summit**

The conversations sparked, the truths spoken, and the communities formed during the 2025 Including Disability Global Summit are not confined to three days; they ripple outward into policy, classrooms, homes, and hearts. This Summit was not just about attending sessions but about building futures.

Let this closing collection of voices remind every reader that disability stories are not margins; they are movements. As we look toward 2027 and beyond, the call is clear: Keep telling the stories, keep reshaping the world, and keep showing up—for each other and for the futures we all deserve.

**The work continues. The community grows. The story is still being written.**

### **Storytelling as resistance**

- “The future deserves to know that we were here, and how we lived... Our stories are a form of resistance and care.”
- “I mentioned [that] disability stories and narratives are revolutionary. They don’t want our stories to be told because of that. Our stories disrupt society... it shows that the skills we’ve learned throughout our life, it’s been difficult and a lived experience, it’s preserved.”
- “We do not need permission to matter.”

### **Access and belonging**

- “It’s not about the credentials. It’s not about the skills. It’s that we can get into the building in the first place.”
- “We too often assume that if someone needs assistance... they will ask. But why would they ask? Do they know they can? Do they know whom to ask? Do they know what to ask? Why would we make that their problem, instead of providing that as part of our services?”

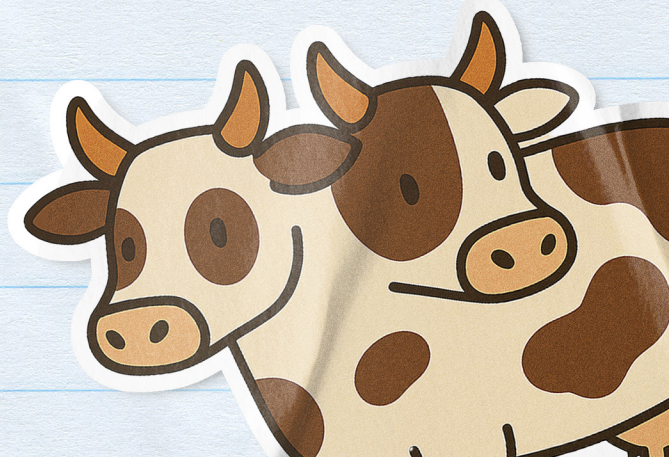
### **Reflection and fuel**

- “Take what you feel and turn it into fuel.”
- “Everyone’s life is finite, and we in the disability community know that more than anyone—here to dance with death as a form of disability intimacy.”



The future deserves to  
know that we were here  
and how we lived

Our stories are a form  
of resistance and care.





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- Jackson, T. (April 23, 2025). "ADHD, Executive Functions, Assistive Technology, & Independence." [Presentation]
- Jaeger, P. (April 22, 2025). "Welcome to the 2025 Summit!"
- Lindsay, S. (April 2025). "Ableism in the Health Care Professions: A Systematic Review of the Experiences and Impact of Ableism Among Healthcare Providers with Disabilities." [Pre-recorded session]
- Lindsay, S., Phonepraseuth, J., & Leo, S. (April 23, 2025). "Experiences and Factors Affecting Poverty Among Families Raising a Child with a Disability." [Virtual Poster]
- Macheledt, K. (April 22, 2025). "A Critical Disability Critique of Public Health: Care Work in Rural America." [Presentation]

- McDermott, L. (April 22, 2025). "Situating Neurodivergent Learning and Performance Within Neuroqueer Perspectives." [Presentation]
- McLain, E. (April 23, 2025). "The Magic of Crip Storytelling: D&D, Cognitive Access Tools, & Community Building." [Workshop]
- Oredsson, E. (April 24, 2025). "Sensing the Archive." [Workshop]
- O'Shea, K. (April 23, 2025). "Empowered Advocacy: Black Mothers Navigating Disability and Digital Spaces." [Presentation]
- Padrón, R. (April 24, 2025). "What Is the Middle Ground Between a Curb Cut and Eugenics?" [Closing Keynote]
- Rfat, M. (April 23, 2025). "Crip Narratives of Resilience: The Intersection of Disability and Refugeehood." [Virtual Poster]
- Rode, J. (April 22, 2025). "Adapt and Resist: Spoons, Unicorns and Rainbows." [Opening Keynote]
- Sarrett, J. (April 24, 2025). "Universal Design for Equity." [Workshop]
- Sathe, S. (April 22, 2025). "Thinking Out Loud: Centering Disabled Voices in Health Information." [Presentation]
- Shew, A. (April 24, 2025). "Disability Community Consulting & Expertise in Tech Research." [Panel]
- Snyder, J. (April 23, 2025). "AD and AI: Ceding Control of the Narrative?" [Presentation]
- Toman, M. (April 22, 2025). "Narratives of Personal Health and Sexual Education Experiences of Emerging Adults with Disabilities." [Presentation]
- Vaden, M. (April 22, 2025). "Well Preserved: Creating Disability Narratives." [Presentation]
- Walsh, S. (April 23, 2025). "The 'Extra Layer of Things': Everyday Information Management Strategies and Unmet Needs of Moms with ADHD." [Presentation]
- Wan, S. (April 2025). "Yin Duo and the Placeness of Chinese Deaf Community in Wartime Shanghai, 1938–1940." [Pre-recorded session]



## **Appendix: Resources shared by attendees**

### **Neurodiversity & disability identity**

- Neurodiversity: Some Basic Terms & Definitions - Introductory concepts on neurodivergence
- Chrononormativity - Explores how time expectations impact disabled lives
- TIME+NEURODIVERSITY: Background and Links - Research on temporal access and neurodiversity
- Disorientation Guide to Librarianship - Alternative perspectives in librarianship
- DEI Is Dead, Long Live DEI - Rethinking diversity, equity, inclusion

### **Accessible communication & design**

- The Audio Description Project - Suggests standards for audio description
- Alt Text as Poetry - Offers creative Alt Text approaches
- Universal Design for Learning Guidelines - Inclusive teaching design principles

### **Workplace & learning tools**

- ADHD in Real Life - Practical ADHD insights and stories
- Bear - Note-taking app for writing
- Clockify - Time tracking productivity tool
- Disruptive Inclusion Short Courses - Online courses on inclusive design
- Finch - Self-care pet app
- Forest - Focus app using virtual trees
- Glean - Audio notetaking for students
- Goblin.tools - Executive function support suite
- Headspace - Guided meditation and mindfulness
- Job Accommodation Network - Workplace accommodations guidance
- MyStudyLife - Academic planner for students
- Notion - All-in-one workspace app
- Speechify - Text-to-speech reading tool

### **Research & funding**

- B.C. Knowledge Development Fund (BCKDF) - Canadian research infrastructure funding
- Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) - Research infrastructure investments
- CYBATHLON and CYBATHLON 2024 Race Recordings on Vimeo - Assistive tech competition archive
- Listing of Disability & STEM resources (not specific to Neurodivergence) - STEM disability support resources
- NSERC CRSNG (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) - Canada science and engineering grants

### **Community & networking**

- AccessSIGCHI - Accessibility group in tech research
- Creating a Disabled Family: The Life of Carrie Ann Lucas - Memoir of disability and parenting
- Crip Create Coworking Space - Online community for disabled creators
- Disabled Academic Collective - Network for disabled academics
- Digital Community Space - Online gathering for disabled people
- Open the Gates Gaming - Inclusive gaming community and tools

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