

Falling Walls Engage Evaluation Report

Berlin, 18 October 2021. Moving the field of Science Engagement forward: Falling Walls Engage has just published its first Evaluation Report. Within three years of existence, the project included almost 1300 Science Engagement practitioners/projects/organisations in its global platform. In total, four initiatives were awarded the prestigious international “Falling Walls Breakthrough of the Year” award and 5 Falling Walls Engage Hubs were launched on 5 continents. Falling Walls Engage has been able to foster and empower a growing community of Science Engagement practitioners through more than 30 activities around community building and Science Engagement promotion. All these initiatives have been potentiating profound exchange and collaborations among the Engage global platform and beyond.

From collective action against the COVID-19 pandemic to global warming, Science Engagement holds the key to fighting current health, environmental, political and social challenges with fact-based public discourse and evidence-based policymaking. Since November 2018, Falling Walls Engage, a global Science Engagement platform hosted by the Falling Walls Foundation in cooperation with the founding partner Robert Bosch Stiftung, successfully promotes Science Engagement initiatives around the world to foster long-lasting exchange, co-learning, and co-production of transferrable science-based knowledge. The initiative aims at increasing trust in the research system and the scientific evidence produced, as well as bringing science and society closer together. As Wiebke Rössig, Director of the Cluster Science and Society at the Falling Walls Foundation, points out: “Engaging everyone with science is now more important than ever. With Falling Walls Engage, we aim to show that the inclusion of multistakeholder perspectives in the scientific process and policymaking, is crucial for tackling current global challenges”.

In the course of the project’s existence, Falling Walls Engage gave visibility to over 500 Science Engagement projects and more than 250 Science Engagement practitioners, as well as over 450 organisations. The project hosted dozens of community building and Science Engagement promotion activities, from capacity-building workshops to discussion panels. From November 2018 to June 2021, Falling Walls Engage received 382 applications from 138 countries that have been qualified for the distinguished “Falling Walls Breakthrough of the Year” award. The subsequently selected 152 finalists presented their projects in the Falling Walls Engage Finale. In 2020, Falling Walls Engage launched Hubs in Kenya, Sweden, Argentina, Canada, and Australia. The Hubs connect regional Science Engagement communities with the global Falling Walls Engage platform through a series of events addressing regionally relevant topics. The networking promoted by the Hubs and the Falling Walls Engage Finale led to 32 collaborations established among community members, on the development of existing or new Science Engagement initiatives, as well as the exchange of ideas.

Building on the evidence and lessons learned presented in the Evaluation Report, Falling Walls Engage identifies the need to further support the integration of dialogue with and participation from society into the scientific process and policymaking. Falling Walls Engage will keep on professionalizing the field and promoting the institutionalization of Science Engagement.

Falling Walls Engage would like to thank their founding partner - Robert Bosch Stiftung -, and global partners - Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Wellcome Trust -, as well as community members, Hub and network partners, for their contributions to the impact presented in the Evaluation Report.

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