

Falling Walls Engage launches its first Hub in South Africa

- The launch in partnership with the University of the Western Cape (UWC) took place in November in Cape Town and follows the Hubs in Mexico and Japan launched earlier this year.
- Participants of the launch event addressed topics such as agrarian justice, participatory approaches for water and food security, sustainable agriculture and biodiversity, human-animal relations, access to STEM education, institutionalization, and impact in Science Engagement.
- South Africa is the 9th country to join the international Falling Walls Engage Hub network.
- International Engage Hubs aim to foster dialogue and collaboration among local science engagement communities and stakeholders, to co-create solutions and act together for better Planetary Health.
- Discover all international Falling Walls Engage Hubs here: [Falling Walls World Engagement Map](#)

Berlin, 21 December 2022. The South African Hub launch event was co-hosted by the International Relations Department and the Faculty of Natural Sciences at UWC. **Jacqueline Goldin**, Falling Walls Engage Winner 2021, supported the event organisation. Goldin is the founder of the project "Diamonds at the Sole of their Feet", and an extraordinary associate professor of Anthropology and Water Sciences, Centre of UNESCO Chair in Ground Water at UWC. *"This is the beginning of our journey with Falling Walls to make sure that we promote Science Engagement practitioners for the benefit of our country, our region and the African continent"*, says Goldin.

The wide landscape of local community organisers and researchers, from grassroots organizations to the academic and policy levels appeared as an obvious choice for the new Hub in South Africa. *"It became clear from our early discussions with Jaqui Goldin and the community members from the region that South Africa would provide an incredible space to discuss pressing challenges around health and climate change"*, says **Niklas Marzinek**, Community Manager at Falling Walls Engage.

In addition to online participants, around 50 Science Engagement practitioners, academic representatives, researchers, policymakers, and students from the University of the Western Cape attended in-person. The four designated panel chairs - **Dr David Fig** (University of Cape Town & Biowatch South Africa), **Dr Amber Abrams** (Future Water Institute, University of Cape Town); **Dr Zani De Wit** (University of Cape Town) and **Dr Aviva Tugendhaft** (University of the Witwatersrand) provided insights on the relevance of science engagement to achieve equality and social justice, drawing upon their experience in research, community engagement, activism, and policy development in South Africa.

With a long history as a promoter of social justice, the University of the Western Cape was an ideal partner to launch the new Hub. Other partners included Falling Walls Engage's network partners mesh and the Berlin School of Public Engagement and Open Science, who hosted a workshop as part of the event.

In 2022, three Falling Walls Engage Hubs were launched in Mexico and Japan, in addition to the co-hosting of 6 events in active Engage Hubs which respectively took place in Montreal, Nairobi, Stockholm and Buenos Aires. The existing 9 Hubs are locally embedded network nodes driven by local Hub Managers who connect networks in their region to co-create and drive global impact on Planetary Health through Science Engagement.

To learn more about Falling Walls Engage visit falling-walls.com/engage/

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About Falling Walls Engage:

Falling Walls Engage is the global platform for Science Engagement co-hosted by the Robert Bosch

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Stiftung. The mission of Falling Walls Engage is to connect and support established and emerging Science Engagement stakeholders to generate mutual benefits for science and communities all around the world.

The impact we want to see is improved trust in science on a global level through participatory approaches for addressing and shaping global societal challenges such as Planetary Health. Our vision is that long-lasting improvements on people's lives through fact-based decision-making can contribute to the overall wellbeing of society. More: falling-walls.com/engage/

About Falling Walls Foundation:

The Falling Walls Foundation gGmbH is a non-profit organization based in Berlin, Germany, with the goal to communicate outstanding science and research to society. Through numerous projects, the organization brings together an international network of science, society, and policy to promote breakthrough thinking and find solutions to the greatest challenges of our time. Every year the Falling Walls Foundation hosts international scientific events Berlin Science Week and the Falling Walls Science Summit, which take place around the day of the peaceful fall of the Berlin Wall in November. Other projects include Falling Walls Lab for emerging science talents, Falling Walls Engage for innovative science communication, Falling Walls Venture for science start-ups, Young Entrepreneurs in Science for PhD students and postdocs, and Female Science Talents, which promotes inclusive excellence and leadership in science and business. Since 2020, the Foundation has organized the Creative Bureaucracy Festival, an international event for innovative public administration and public service. The Foundation is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Berlin Senate, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Berlin Museum of Natural History (Museum für Naturkunde) and PD – public sector advisory, as well as numerous recognized academic institutions, foundations, companies, and NGOs. More: falling-walls.com/foundation

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