

CienciaPR's Aquí Nos Cuidamos named Breakthrough of the Year at prestigious international event ^[1]

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La Dra. Mónica Feliú Mójer recibiendo el premio Breakthrough of the Year in the category of Science Engagement por Aquí Nos Cuidamos. Foto: Falling Walls

San Juan, PR – Aquí Nos Cuidamos, a community engagement project of the nonprofit organization Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR), was named Breakthrough of the Year 2021 in the category of Science Engagement [3] at the Falling Walls Science Summit [4], celebrated November 7-9 in Berlin, Germany. This prestigious award honors the most outstanding project breaking the wall between science and society.

Back in August, Aquí Nos Cuidamos was chosen as one of 20 winners of the Falling Walls Engage pitch competition [5], which recognizes projects that connect and involve the public with science, from among 189 initiatives in 80 countries. On Sunday, November 7, the initiative was named Breakthrough of the Year 2021 by an international jury after Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer, Director of Aquí Nos Cuidamos, pitched it during an all-day summit [6]. Aquí Nos Cuidamos is the

first project from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean to win since the competition was created in 2018.

“It was something good that has come out of what has happened to the world recently and was not only breaking the wall between science and society but it was building community, solidarity, and new forms of expertise and knowledge,” said Dr. Melanie Smallman, associate professor in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at University College London and chair of the international jury of Falling Walls Engage when announcing Aquí Nos Cuidamos as Breakthrough of the Year ^[7] 2021.

The recognition earned Aquí Nos Cuidamos a spot on the main stage of the Falling Walls Science Summit ^[8] on November 9. There, Dr. Feliú Mójer presented the project ^[9] alongside world-renowned scientists like Dr. Özlem Türeci of BioNtech, which developed the Pfizer-BioNtech mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine, and Nobel Laureate in Physics Dr. Donna Strickland, among others.

“Representing Aquí Nos Cuidamos and Puerto Rico on an international platform like Falling Walls was incredibly special. What honors me the most is that the award recognizes the essence of what it is to be Puerto Rican; our sense of community and solidarity, which combined with science, has saved thousands of lives during the pandemic,” shared Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer, who also directs communications and science outreach for CienciaPR. “This award also recognizes the hard work of Aquí Nos Cuidamos’ team, our community ambassadors, and partners, and pays tribute to the accomplishments of the CienciaPR community, which has been putting science in service of Puerto Rico for the past 15 years. This award belongs to all of them,” she added.

Aquí Nos Cuidamos, which turned a year old in September 2021, consists of a multimedia education toolkit and a community engagement program. The toolkit includes four public service campaigns focused on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination, and mental health. The community engagement program features a community ambassador program, workshops, community listening sessions and WhatsApp chats, and more than a dozen partnerships with non-profit organizations and other public and private entities.

“The past few years have been incredibly challenging for Puerto Rico, amidst hurricanes, earthquakes, and the COVID19 pandemic. Through these challenges, having a scientific community that is networked, visible, and empowered to engage with the public has been incredibly important. As we celebrate our fifteenth anniversary ^[10] of democratizing science, it is very special to see our work recognized on an international stage,” said Dr. Giovanna Guerrero-Medina, Executive Director of CienciaPR.

"The community ambassadors and CienciaPR team were glued to the livestream. As soon as we heard the jury chair say that the winning project represented something good that we got out of this, and the word "solidarity" we knew that our warmth and sense of community had reached Berlin," celebrated project coordinator Edmy Ayala Rosado.

Falling Walls is an international platform — inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 — for leaders from the world of science, business, politics, the arts and society, seeking to break down barriers between various sectors. In particular, Falling Walls Engage connects creative individuals and organizations that actively engage the public with science to generate mutual benefits for

science and society around the world.

“At Falling Walls Engage we seek the most outstanding Science Engagement projects from all around the world, we invite them to Berlin to connect with peers and showcase their way of involving society in science.”, says Anja Schoch, Head of Team and Strategy at Falling Walls Engage. “In the long-term we want to increase public trust in science and fact-based decision-making to tackle global societal challenges. Aquí Nos Cuidamos is an exemplary initiative showing how community involvement impacts and benefits all stakeholders involved. We congratulate Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer and all Falling Walls Engage Winners and look forward to many future collaborations.”

You can watch Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer presenting Aquí Nos Cuidamos starting at 06:29:06 [here](#) [6]. You can watch the moment the project was named Breakthrough of the Year in Science Engagement [here](#) [7]. To find out more about Aquí Nos Cuidamos, visit www.aquinoscuidamos.org [11].

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About Ciencia Puerto Rico

Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR, www.cienciapr.org [12]) is a global community of more than 15,000 scientists, students, educators and allies who understand that science can empower people with the knowledge, capacity and agency to improve their lives and society. The organization leverages its rich and diverse community—the largest collective of people interested in science and Puerto Rico in the world—to democratize science, and transform science education and professional training for scientists. Since 2006, CienciaPR has successfully engaged and trained scientists, students, and educators, and created culturally relevant resources and educational experiences that improve students' attitudes and interests toward science and self-confidence in their scientific abilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CienciaPR has been making Puerto Rican experts visible, informing and educating the Puerto Rican public, and keeping the response to the emergency accountable. CienciaPR's efforts over the past decade have garnered multiple recognitions, including being named a "Bright Spot" for Hispanic education by the White House in 2015 and a "Science Defender" by the Union of Concerned Scientists in 2018. You can support the work of CienciaPR at yoapoyocienciapr.org.

About Aquí Nos Cuidamos

Aquí Nos Cuidamos is a project of Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) that promotes COVID-19 prevention and the well-being of vulnerable and marginalized communities in Puerto Rico through science and solidarity. Among its efforts is the Aquí Nos Cuidamos Toolkit, a series of public service campaigns featuring science and public health educational content. The Toolkit is based on the most recent scientific data contextualized to Puerto Rican reality and culture. It has been developed by experts in science, public health and communication, with input from leaders, community organizations, non-profit entities, and the deaf community. The Aquí Nos Cuidamos Toolkit consists of infographics, animations, videos, audios, and written materials that present science in accessible and practical ways. All content in the Toolkit is available for open access use at www.aquinoscuidamos.org [11]. Aquí Nos Cuidamos also includes collaborative

partnerships with organizations such as the Puerto Rico Public Health Trust, Taller Salud, Mercy Corps, and the Puerto Rico Psychology Association, among others; community outreach efforts such as workshops and a Community Ambassadors Program, which supports 10 Puerto Rican leaders in their efforts. The project is funded through grants from the Science Sandbox program of the Simons Foundation and an Emerson Fellowship to the project's director, Dr. Mónica Feliú-Mójer.

About Falling Walls Science Summit

The Falling Walls Science Summit is part of Berlin Science Week with over 200 events from November 1-10, 2021. Since its first annual gathering on November 9, 2009, the 20th anniversary of the peaceful fall of the Berlin Wall, Falling Walls has steadily grown into a leading global forum for science. The event brings together the most important researchers and thinkers of our time to discuss scientific breakthroughs with global leaders in science, politics, business, and media, and to answer the core question of the Falling Walls Science Summit: "What are the next walls to fall in science and society?"

About Falling Walls Engage

Falling Walls Engage is the global platform for Science Engagement, hosted by the Falling Walls Foundation in cooperation with the Robert Bosch Foundation. Its mission is to inspire and connect creative individuals and organizations who actively involve the public with science to generate mutual benefits for science and society all around the world.

The core vision of Falling Walls Engage is that a better understanding and public involvement in science can help tackle global societal challenges through fact-based decision-making, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of our society. Launched in 2018, its program provides visibility to Science Engagement projects involving the public in creative and impactful ways. Falling Walls Engage facilitates discourse and commitments in the field, and creates unique opportunities for exchange and collaboration among practitioners and institutions.

Tags:

- [Aquí Nos Cuidamos](#) ^[13]
- [covid19-cienciaboricua](#) ^[14]

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