

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

ROUND TABLE “INTEGRATING ETHICS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INTO SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY”

As we seek groundbreaking science to benefit humanity while minimising risks, the need for interdisciplinary scientific collaboration and public engagement is increasingly important. The experts in this Falling Walls Circle discuss how to break down barriers between science and the public, propose new ways to engage the public more proactively, and call for a cultural shift within academia and research institutions.

Panelists: [Lomax Boyd](#) (Johns Hopkins University, US), [Jodi Halpern](#) (University of California, Berkeley, US), [Anna Middleton](#) (University of Cambridge, UK), and moderator [Vivienne Parry](#) (Science Writer and Broadcaster, UK).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Establish long-term relationships with communities and the public.** There is a pressing need to break down the wall between science and the public, especially given the rapid advancement of technologies and their potential ethical implications. As most of the population is directly or indirectly affected by scientific developments, the experts call for more inclusive and diverse research communities to address ethical concerns collaboratively. Scientists and academics need to be more trustworthy and assuring than ever, as the public wants to hear what science means for their life and if they can trust it (or if they risk being exploited for financial reasons).
- 2. There is an urgency to establish a dialogue between scientists and ethicists.** Given the wealth and speed of scientific advances, it is crucial for scientists to collaborate with ethicists, and to foster dynamic conversations on ethical considerations as soon as possible. As Anna Middleton puts it: "Once we have got to the application part of science, it is already too late. The conversation has to happen much earlier". This dialogue must be ongoing, structured, and held in a safe and respectful environment.
- 3. Increase institutional support and science communication to foster cultural shifts.** Institutional support is essential to ensure that ethical considerations will be incorporated into research from the outset, and scientists need to be given more opportunities to engage with communities to foster trustworthiness and actively seek input from other fields. Additionally, recognising the expertise of professionals in science communication and public dialogue can further support this cultural shift. Referring to a successful cohort model at Berkeley, Jodi Halpern stresses the need for novel institutional approaches: "If we can learn to think together across our differences, it will not only help science, but it may help create peace".

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