

# JOINING FORCES: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF DATA AMBASSADORS ACROSS UNIVERSITIES IN BRUSSELS-WALLONIA FEDERATION (BELGIUM)



FÉDÉRATION  
WALLONIE-BRUXELLES

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## NEW WORKING HABITS

Research datasets are becoming larger, more open and more digital  
> Increasing **pressure** on researchers to apply the **FAIR principles** and to integrate better Research Data Management (RDM) working habits

## INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Research support staff, like librarians or Research Data Officers (RDOs), can provide a **solid base** of assistance but **lack the discipline-specific expertise** to translate general recommendations into actionable items

## CAPITALIZING ON PEER SUPPORT

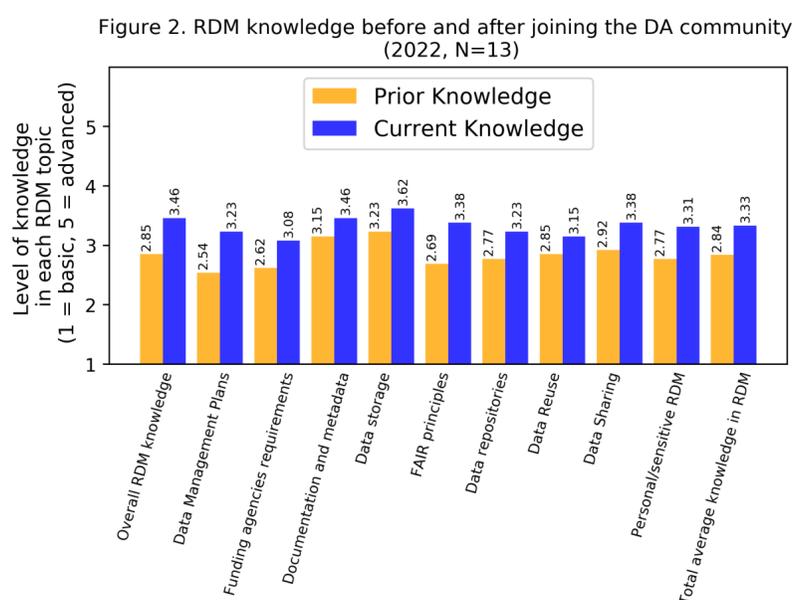
Data Ambassadors (DAs) are **volunteering** as local experts who enable **peer-to-peer support** and bring awareness to data management best practice in their immediate work environment, with a **disciplinary point of view**.

## INTRODUCTION

- Launched in December 2021, over 60 members enrolled over the first couple of weeks
- Over **70 members** today
- Although inspired by other institutions, this network presents the **specificity** of being a bottom-up initiative, without any other existing catalyzing interuniversity structure, thus facing the challenge of building its own tools **from the ground up**
- The six RDOs involved in the management of that community have launched a **survey** to better understand the DA's motivations, expectations, and incentives. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time such an interdisciplinary, interuniversity data management network is being evaluated from the members' point of view.

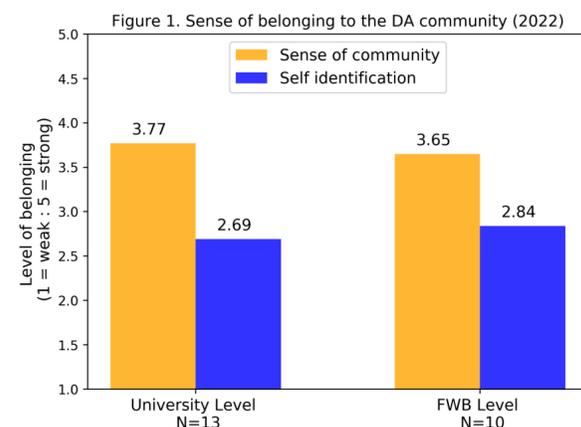
## JOINING FORCES

Inspired by Cambridge and TUDelft, the 6 french-speaking Belgian (FWB) Universities teamed up to launch **an interuniversity community of Data Ambassadors (DAs)**



## RESULTS

- In both FWB and university communities, we observe a higher level of sense of **belonging to the network**, compared to the self-identification as a data ambassador (Figure 1).
- DAs biggest motivations to join: their willingness to **acquire new skills**, as well as to **improve their colleagues' skills**
- Increase of 1.5 points in the **self-evaluated level of knowledge** for every topic, reaching the point of a "moderately good knowledge" after 6 months of enrolment (Figure 2).



## OBJECTIVE

Evaluate the progress of the project at this stage (+/- 6 months after the launching).

## HYPOTHESIS

RDM **skills** of the Data Ambassadors and involvement in the network have **increased** (comparing RDM knowledge prior to project and today)

## SAMPLE

13 participants, from 4 out of the 6 universities. 10 participants had a phd, 6 were from the Social and Humanities sector, 2 from the Medical sector, 5 from the Science and Applied Science. 3 were women.

## METHOD

An online survey was shared among the Data Ambassadors and evaluated, via self-assessment scales, their RDM knowledge, the extent of their investment in the network and their sense of belonging to the DA community, at both the university and the inter-university level (through two scales: sense of community, and self-identification)

## CONCLUSION

These results are promising considering the **small amount of time** dedicated to this activity (7% of their monthly activities).

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Follow-up** study
- Focus on **increasing skills** and **motivation** through networking, CV upgrading, and recognition

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