



**Connie Clare**  
Community Manager  
4TU.ResearchData

► RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT  
► OPEN SCIENCE  
► UNIVERSITY-BASED

“If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” This proverb has resonated with me since I made my career transition from researcher to community manager. ”

## COULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO OUR READERS? TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND THE COMMUNITY YOU MANAGE.

Hi! I'm Connie, the community manager at [4TU.ResearchData](https://www.4tu.nl): an international data repository. I started this role remotely in October 2020, during the pandemic, which was challenging at times. However, I've thoroughly enjoyed building a global online Open Science initiative comprised of more than 170 researchers and data support professionals. Our members connect and exchange knowledge about the best practices for creating and reusing [FAIR data](https://www.fair4research.org/).

## WHAT WAS YOUR PATH TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT? WERE YOU TRAINED AS A SCIENTIST OR DID YOU COME BY ANOTHER ROUTE?

My journey started during my PhD in Developmental Biology. My original plan was to stay the course in academia and become a postdoc. This changed when I travelled to the Netherlands in 2019 to undertake an internship working with [Data Champions](https://www.datachampions.nl/) at Delft University of Technology.

I spent three months interviewing researchers and publishing [written articles](#) about their motivations to become Open Science advocates. This experience made me realize that I wanted my career to combine my passion for research with my desire to communicate and connect people.

When I read the job description for 4TU.ResearchData's Community Manager, it seemed like the perfect match for my skills and interests. I decided to apply for the position, and I never looked back!

## CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR ROLE? HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY SPEND YOUR TIME?

My responsibilities are centred around providing support for community members and raising awareness about the data repository. My daily tasks and activities include:

- **Recruiting and onboarding new members**, knowledge brokering and connecting members with common interests.
- **Creating and updating scaffolding documentation** to make community goals and objectives clear.
- **Planning, creating, curating, editing and publishing** community content (e.g., news, events, opportunities, FAIR datasets) on our [website](#) and sharing via Slack, [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and our [monthly newsletter](#).
- **Facilitating online meetings** and coordinating monthly working groups.
- **Co-organizing training workshops and webinars** about research data management and Open Science.
- **Collaboratively writing grant proposals** to secure funding for community projects.
- **Surveying and consulting members** about community initiatives, plus evaluating and reporting to ensure the community is meeting goals and objectives (e.g., [annual report](#)).
- **Higher level operational planning and management** to align community operations with organizational mission/vision.

## LOOKING BACK ON THE LAST YEAR, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PROJECT YOU'VE WORKED ON?

I have many favorite projects! They include:

- Awarding grants from 4TU.ResearchData's [FAIR Data Fund](#) that helps researchers make their data FAIR.
- [JupyterFAIR](#): a team science project that integrates the virtual research environment JupyterLab with the 4TU.ResearchData repository.
- An [internship program](#) for students, early career researchers, and professionals seeking further experience in research data management, open science, and science communication.



#### KEY

- INTERPERSONAL
- PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- COMMUNICATION
- TECHNICAL



#### CONNIE'S SKILLS WHEEL SIGNATURE

The CSCCE skills wheel is composed of five core competencies, with nine skills within each competency. Skills wheels are a common way of visualizing and curating information about skills that also allow for the creation of a job "signature" or "fingerprint" based on the particular skills in use. This wheel is representative of the skills Connie used over the last 12 months.

► For more information, see [the CSCCE skills wheel](#).

## DO YOU SHARE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT DUTIES WITH ANYONE ELSE? WHERE DOES YOUR POSITION FIT WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Whilst I'm the sole community manager at 4TU.ResearchData, I work closely with [motivated, multidisciplinary teammates](#). I have regular meetings with all team members to coordinate and align community tasks and activities with the higher-level organizational strategy. As the community has grown and evolved over the past year, it has been a pleasure to witness the emergence of community leaders (or champions) who have adopted various roles to support the community.

4TU.ResearchData is run by a consortium of Dutch technical universities: Delft University of Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology, the University of Twente, and Wageningen University & Research. Consortium partners and members provide funding for the organization while datasets are locally stored on Delft University of Technology servers. The technology underpinning 4TU.ResearchData is provided by [figshare](#).

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

Everything! I've had the freedom to craft my role, which boosts my energy and enthusiasm for my work. I like that my tasks are highly varied; no two days are the same, which brings excitement to each day.

In particular, I like the social aspect of being a community manager. I feel a great sense of accomplishment when the networking opportunities that I create engender collaborations that lead to new ideas. I also enjoy serving as a point of contact to help members, whether by providing personal assistance or connecting them to the relevant personnel.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS A SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGER? ARE THERE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR ROLE COULD BE MADE EASIER – SUCH AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES OR SOMETHING ELSE?

The biggest challenge was starting the community from scratch during the pandemic when making connections and building trust was limited to an online setting. This was exacerbated by the fact that I had no prior experience as a community manager, so I had to learn on the job. But with consistency, resilience and determination, my team and I built a small network of data stewards into a vibrant online community.

CSCCE's [Scientific Community Engagement Fundamentals](#) and [Nurturing and Stewarding Engaged Online Communities](#) courses provided me with valuable theoretical and practical knowledge, plus time to reflect on the community's aims and my role within it. Now that I'm more established in my role, my newest challenge is time management!

## AND ZOOMING OUT A LITTLE, WHY DO YOU THINK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT TO SCIENCE? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN ACTIVE MANAGEMENT IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY?

"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." This proverb has resonated with me since I made my career transition from researcher to community manager. When I was a researcher, I often found my work lonely, isolating and stressful. Knowledge was retained within a silo for competitive advantage rather than being openly shared to advance science, and my way of working was inefficient and rushed... I felt like I was going fast, but going alone. As a community manager, I'm part of a flourishing support network that goes further together. Community management is the catalyst for open and collaborative team science where multidisciplinary experts willingly exchange knowledge and work transparently to overcome scientific challenges. I believe that community managers are the glue that binds the community, bringing people together to drive scientific progress forward.

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This case study is part of a series created by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement.

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