A Success Story of an Academic Library Consortium: ANKOS

Ertugrul Cimen
MEF University, Turkey
cimene@mef.edu.tr

Tuba Akbayturk Canak
Koc University, Turkey
takbayturk@ku.edu.tr

Sami Cukadar
Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey
sami.cukadar@bilgi.edu.tr

ANKOS has been very successful in linking academic institutions in Turkey to an effective and efficient organisation of consortial activities. This is illustrated by figures provided on its expansion over eighteen years. The paper takes a historical and descriptive approach to the Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS). It aims to describe the goals, fields of activity, organizational structure, functioning and the benefits it provides to Turkish academic libraries. . The authors believe that this paper is useful for all academic librarians concerned with consortium systems, cost sharing, e-resource management, open access (OA), collaboration on national and international scales, and staff exchange, especially in the developing world.

Keywords: library consortia, ANKOS, Turkey

Background

The first library associations started to collaborate more than 100 years ago with the provincial cataloging projects conducted by the Library of Congress in the USA in the 1880s being examples of this early work. (Kopp, 1998). Among the first examples of library collaboration in Europe are the establishment of the nine regional library systems in the 1930s for the purpose of borrowing and union cataloging in the UK.

In the 1960s and 1970s, these cooperation initiatives, which started to take the form of consortia, were based on resource sharing and automation studies (Akbaytürk, 2003). Consortia were established as purchasing clubs for the first time and have expanded their field of activity and created new areas of work due to different needs.

The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), established in 1996 in the US, also held its first meeting in the United States. The ICOLC meetings held

twice a year were initially held only in the US, but in line with the rapid growth of the group, it was decided that one of the meetings would be held in North America and the other in Europe. With its dynamic and independent structure, ICOLC is among the most valuable formations in the world of librarianship.

Over the course of the 1990s, Turkish academic libraries were also affected by the development of consortia activities all over the world. Late in the 1990s Turkish academic libraries focused on creating new cooperation models for subscriptions to electronic resources. The first step for the establishment of Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (known by its Turkish acronym ANKOS) took place in 1999 with the signing of a license agreement with EBSCO in three foundations and one state university (Cukadar, Tuglu, & Gurdal, 2013). In 2000, this formation included seven state universities and the Turkish Academic Network & Information Center (ULAKBİM), while new agreements were signed with Academic Press for IDEAL and MathSciNet (Erdoǧan & Karasozen, 2006). Formation activities include a period of several years so that ANKOS's establishment date is accepted as 2000. After its establishment, ANKOS rapidly increased dealings with publishers and vendors (Table 1).
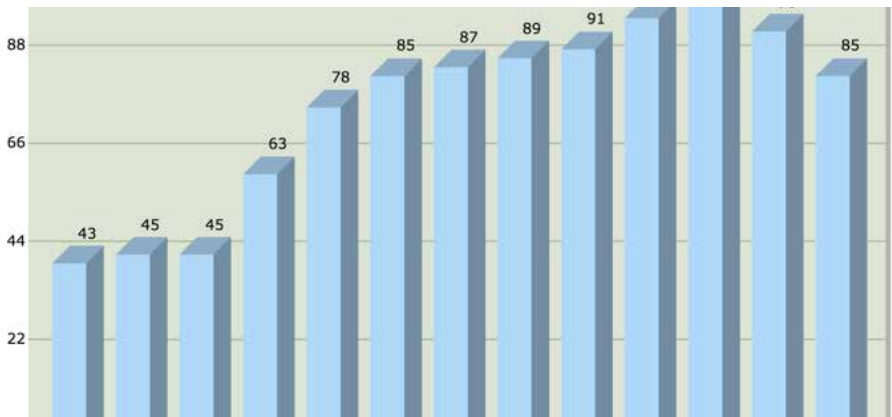

Table 1 Subscribed databases by years and has diversified its activities in line with the demands and suggestions of its members
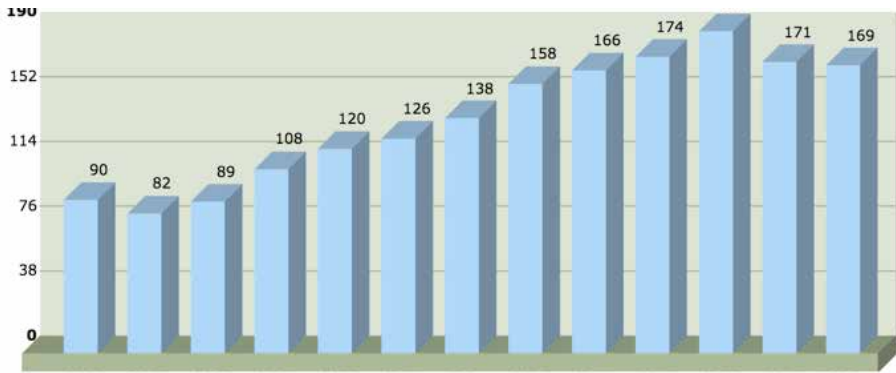
Table 2 Number of members of ANKOS by year

Legal Issues

The purpose of ANKOS, which was formed in the early 2000s, was to get the most affordable price for university and research libraries for e-resource access and to ensure, economies of scale. This would allow academicians and students to have the highest level of access to the global information network in Turkey. ANKOS also wished to train and conduct joint studies to support library research (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium, 2018).

In the beginning there was no bylaw for ANKOS which was formed for common interest and cooperation between academic libraries. During that time required funds needed for ANKOS activities such as annual meetings, workshops, training programs, and participation in national and international events were kept in an account of the university affiliated by the ANKOS President. Expenditures were made only with the approval of the concerned institution. In this period all the sponsorship revenues of ANKOS were collected in an academic institution independently. This situation caused a number of problems, especially in the planning of activities. From time to time the institutions that owned the account used the funds for other purposes and their own activities. However, some members and some of the other stakeholders considered the absence of a legal basis to be a significant shortcoming and even a risk for ANKOS. Starting in 2009, studies have been carried out in order to convert ANKOS into a legal identity; investigations and initiatives were also made to establish a foundation or an association. In the light of these investigations, it was preferred to re-establish ANKOS as an Association with the decision taken at a meeting of all members in late 2011. The ANKOS Association was established with a conventional structure in February 2012. The most important achievements stemming from this new identity are: administrative and financial independence; a transparent organizational structure; and sustainability. ANKOS is now managed by a board of directors consisting of seven library directors selected as a result of an election held

every two years, according to the bylaws, since 2012. ANKOS association officially registers its financial processes by informing the related state departments about the income and expenditures that are generated as a result of its activities. Being an association was welcomed both by the ANKOS members, by the companies and by the other shareholders. This has been perceived as the most important achievement of ANKOS.

Organization Structure

ANKOS is managed by a board of seven academic library directors, elected every two years. The key tasks of the board include:

a) Preparation and maintenance of common policies for the rational utilization of electronic resources that also include concerns for the educational and research needs of member institutions.

b) Development of the strategic plan; preparation of the annual budget and the annual report; management of the staff and the budget.

c) Leading negotiation of subscriptions to databases and e-resources with publishers and

d) vendors.

e) Assuring that license agreements are compatible with Turkish National Site License.

f) Developing and delivering training programmes for ANKOS volunteers related to their personal and professional development.

g) Representing ANKOS nationally and and internationally.

h) Developing projects to support the research activities of Turkish academicians.

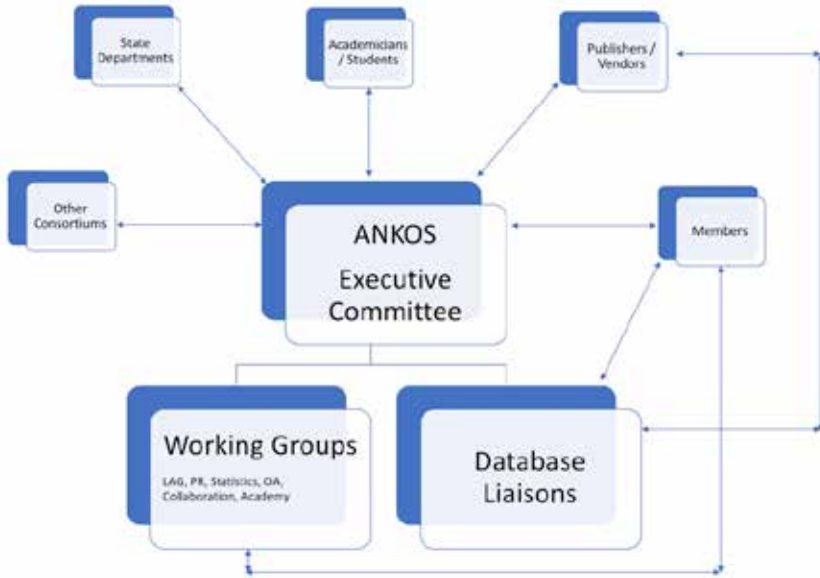The current organizational structure of ANKOS is given in figure 1.

Figure 1 Organization and Interaction Structure of ANKOS

Beside negotiations and agreements with publishers on behalf of member institutions in order to provide price advantage in line with the purpose of the consortium, ANKOS also focuses on many other issues in the field of academic librarianship. ANKOS forms permanent and temporary research and working groups to conduct studies in these fields. Permanent working groups represent ANKOS at national and international scientific events and at different platforms, beside the work they carry out. Permanent working groups are:

- License Agreements Group
- Public Relations Group
- Statistics Group
- Open Access & Institutional Repositories Group
- Collaboration Group
- ANKOS Academy Group

License Agreements Group

The purpose of the License Agreement Group is to make the licensing agreements of the electronic information resources that ANKOS members plan to subscribe to in accordance with the Turkish National Site License (TRNSL) and to follow the

developments related to license agreements in the world and use them for the benefit of ANKOS members.

The mission of the Group is to ensure that ANKOS members enjoy the most effective use of electronic resources by acquiring rights on the best terms possible and at the same time to ensure that ANKOS members maintain an equal partnership with those who provide information, and to raise awareness among the ANKOS members about copyright matters.

Methodology of the Group studies:

License agreements are examined in three stages:

- **Examination of the firm's license agreement and comparison with TRNSL**: The contract of the firm marketing the product to be concluded is examined and compared with the TRNSL.

- **Initiate the negotiation / negotiation process**: As a result of the comparison of both license agreements, important points, deficiencies, limitations and questions that ANKOS wants to have in the license agreements are prepared and sent to the publisher / vendor.

- **Acceptance and signing of the license agreement:** After the correspondence has been concluded in regard to the license agreement, the License Agreement Group (LAG) informs the Executive Board of the ANKOS that the license agreement can be accepted and a license agreement can be signed for the establishment of the consortium.

Generally, when establishing a consortium of new products for the first time, the license agreement is signed for one year. If the consortium membership continues, a three-year agreement is made. In the consortiums established for three years, each member institution participates in the consortium knowing in advance the figure they will pay for the three years.

LAG especially focuses on getting improvements to avoid automatic payments in case of subscriptions that institutions are not planned to renew, and flexible payment terms for possible delayed payment, and that during the subscription term improper usage of any member will not affect the other members.

A change is being made in order to apply to the Turkish courts instead of the courts of the provider's country and to seek consensus before resorting to the court in case of a dispute.

Licensed products can be added to printed / electronic reserve collections to support lessons in academic research without infringing copyrights; can be used as training material; and they are also available for in-house training programs, academic meetings, and provision of library documents. Generally, these rights

apply to journal articles, but it is not the same for e-books and there are still problems with this issue.

Copyrights in License Agreements:

The issues that needs to be taken care of is the protection of copyrights and cancellation to the database because of improper usage may be summarized as follows:

- A certain number of printed or electronic copies can be taken, systematic copying is not allowed using robots or similar programs.

- Databases can be used for personal and academic needs only, commercial use or distribution is not allowed.

- It should be indicated from which source the information used comes from.

- Copies from databases can only be shared between authorized users (students, academic and administrative staff and researchers).

- It is forbidden to change, delete, and so on the information contained in the databases, the copyright notices of the publisher and the author.

- External users can access e-resources only from the physical location of the library.

- The content of the databases can be used as training and electronic reserve material in the courses.

- Permission terms for interlibrary loans may change.

- When improper or suspicious usage is noticed, the publisher / vendor must be notified and necessary measures must be taken.

Although international norms are becoming increasingly widespread, the rules may be different for databases provided by the publisher directly or those which include content from various publishers; these may have specific conditions attached. LAG encourages, on every occasion, the importance of paying attention to the license agreements of the subscribed databases, the announcement of matters which end users need to know about and the observance of the rules.

Public Relations Group

"ANKOS Public Relations Group" is established to organize the meetings needed to ensure recognition of the Anatolian University Libraries Consortium in Turkey and abroad. In line with the requirements of the evolving structure of ANKOS, it continues its mission under the name of "Public Relations" with its principle of self-renewal starting from June 1, 2009. This principle promotes a two-way communication process with existing and potential targets.

Goal:

To inform people about ANKOS and to create a positive and strong image of the institution.

Target Groups:

<u>**Internal Target Group:**</u> ANKOS volunteers.

<u>**External Target Group:**</u> ANKOS member institutions, existing and potential firms, all domestic and international universities, and libraries interested in electronic information resources, and similar consortia and organizations operating in the same field.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- To determine the promotion policy of ANKOS,
- To handle relations between ANKOS and internal and external target groups,
- To monitor the awareness, views, attitudes and behaviors of internal and external target groups,
- To analyze the effect of ANKOS studies on internal and external target groups,
- To create and maintain two-way communication between ANKOS and internal and external target groups,
- To provide unique changes in awareness, ideas, attitudes and behaviors in internal and external target groups,
- To establish new relationships between ANKOS and internal and external target groups and / or to try to preserve existing relationships,
- Planning and organizing of ANKOS annual meetings and social activities.

Statistics Group

Statistics on the use of electronic information resources are a highly controversial topic all over the world, but international standards have begun to emerge. The Usage Statistics Working Group was formed in 2003 from the need for evaluation that emerged with the establishment of ANKOS. Results of the studies are presented to the ANKOS Executive Board when needed by the group. In addition, these activities are announced to the members during the annual ANKOS meeting and are included in the annual activity report. There are three members of the User Statistics Group.

Mission: To collect usage data related to numerical data and subscriber databases related to ANKOS member institutions; to make benefit / cost analyzes based on this information, so that ANKOS can act using the right information while making its studies and setting its objectives.

Goal: To determine the standard data types according to the database type, to collect data related to the member institutions, to update and ensure that subscriptions are made in a correct information-based format and are evaluated properly, to make cost analyzes by comparing use with total cost, and to make the right decisions by looking at these analyzes when members are making innovations, to provide accurate data for the consortium planning of ANKOS.

Duties:

1. For members:

- Budget,
- Number of FTE (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students and teaching staff),
- Total population,
- The number of subscribed databases of member institutions throughout ANKOS,
- Number and list of members' subscriptions for subscription-based models,
- Total number and list of publications in each database,
- The amount each member pays for each database,
- Collecting data about the usage of each database,

2. For ANKOS;

- To present the collected and edited data to ANKOS Executive Board

Open Access & Institutional Repositories Group

The Open Access and Corporate Archives Working Group was established in 2006.

The Group's mission is to create awareness among information professionals in Turkey, to facilitate cooperation between ANKOS, information professionals, and researchers, both domestic and foreign.

Goal:

- To inform all the ANKOS members about OA activities around the world as well as in Turkey,

- To ensure that member institutions have access to and use of the Open Access movement on the Consortium level,

- To create opportunities for dissemination and implementation of recent news and developments about OA within the member institutions, to show methods to establish relevant archives for the institutions,

- To cooperate for the sustainability of the work in coordination,

- To keep instructions and training documents on the ANKOS website and to ensure that they are up-to-date and reliable.

The "Open Access Conference" (Open Access Conference, 2018) is held on the same dates as the open access week, which is celebrated annually all over the world since 2012 with the contributions of the ANKOS OA Group. At the same time, ANKOS OA Group also provides leadership to the universities for institutional open archives building activities in Turkey and offers advice and recommendations to the institutions in this regard. DSpace software is used by ANKOS OA Group as the open institutional archive and institutional repository infrastructure. As of today, out of more than 190 Turkish universities, 143 have selected DSpace infrastructure to establish their institutional open archives, and 61 of them are actively using the institutional repository system. On the other hand, ANKOS OA Group serves as referees for Turkish journals listed in DOAJ.

There are several international projects like OpenAire, Pasteur4OA, and MedoaNet supported by ANKOS OA Group

Collaboration Group

ANKOS Collaboration Group formed in 2006 to operate in the following areas:

- Preparing ANKOS Staff Exchange Program,

- Preparing National Resource Sharing Instructions,

- Developing an Online Resource Sharing Software.

Staff Exchange Program (2018) and the Resource Sharing Instruction (2018) created and organized by the Collaboration Group are the first national applications in these fields in Turkey.

Interlibrary Loan Tracking System (KITS)

Interlibrary Loan Tracking System (KITS), which aims to track the resource sharing processes between libraries / information centers of higher education institutions online; provides a more systematic and easy way to provide loaned publications / documents between academic institutions. The system has been developed for the use of ANKOS member institutions and is completely free. The Interlibrary

Loan Tracking System, commonly known as KITS, is a multi-user and online access-based application, also it is the first online resource sharing application in Turkey. KITS is a platform that eliminates traditional inter-library loan requests in print media, for example, as multiple copies by mail or fax as it conducts transactions online. KITS is open source and is a platform developed under the GNU license.

Achievements:

- all the document supply operations and processes have been centralized;
- standardization of document supply procedures;
- detailed statistics are collected nationally;
- production of data for the acquisition policies of individual libraries;
- written & declared ILL policies;
- there are more interactions between ILL librarians;
- Turkish ILL staff have become more familiar within the international arena;
- as ILL staff we are sharing more than resources.

Since the project has started KITS presented at several conferences and meetings:

- New approaches for interlibrary loan operations in Turkey: KITS (Interlibrary Loan Tracking System). Ertugrul Cimen, Ayhan Tuglu, Mehmet Manyas, Sema Celikbas, Zeki Celikbas.
- World Library and Information Congress: 75th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, Theme: "Libraries create futures: building on cultural heritage" Milan, Italy, August 23–27, 2009
- New Opportunities for Resource Sharing in Turkey. Ertugrul Cimen
- ALIA Access 2010 Conference, Brisbane, Australia, September 01–03, 2010
- Future of Resource Sharing in Turkey: Can Open-Access be an Alternative?
- Ertugrul Cimen
- 12th Interlending & Document Supply Conference, Chicago, USA, September 19–21, 2011
- New Module for Secure Electronic Resource Sharing in Turkey Ertuğrul Çimen, Sema Çelikbaş, Zeki Çelikbaş, Ayhan Tuğlu
- "Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Section" IFLA 2014 Conference Lyon, France, 16–22 August 2014
- How Turkish Academic Libraries Share E-resources; Infrastructure, Rights and Restrictions. Ertuğrul Çimen

- 6es Journées professionnelles du CTLes Bulac Library (University Library on Languages and Civilizations) Paris, France, 17–18 June 2015

Staff Exchange Program

ANKOS Staff Exchange Program started in 2012. For the first staff exchange program, there were three university libraries as host institutions and six participants from six different academic libraries. Over the years fourteen different academic libraries hosted the program, and more than 40 library professionals participated in the program. When the program started, it was national, but in 2015 the program became international and eight international participants from Azerbaijan, Kosovo, North Cyprus Turkish Republic, and Bosnia-Herzegovina attended to program in the last three years.

ANKOS Academy Group

The ANKOS Academy group was established in 2015 to provide continuing education programs for librarians and information services professionals. The program aims to enable library professionals to develop their skills in order to achieve a better position in today's competitive environment both nationally and internationally. The objectives of the ANKOS Academy for professionalism are: development of practical skills focusing on professional specialization and engaging competence. The ANKOS Academy has developed a number of training programs tailored to the needs of today's changing librarian environment. It has been decided that these programs should be presented online through virtual classes. After reviewing existing platforms, GoToMeeting was chosen as the delivery environment due to its performance advantages. As of today, ANKOS Academy has organized several online webinars, with more than 450 library professionals participating.

Annual Meeting (ANKOSLink)

Upon its establishment, ANKOS started organizing annual meetings to bring its members together with publishers and agencies in order to discuss electronic publishing in all aspects. Until 2011, the annual meetings were hosted by different ANKOS member institutions. Starting from 2012 these meetings have been named ANKOSLink, and the organization has been moved to a congress center in Antalya. With this change, the organization reached a size of 500+ people, ranging from Turkish member institutions, publishers, agencies, and information professionals from the Middle East, Balkans, and former Soviet Union Republics. ANKOSLink is more than a regular library conference with its large exhibition where several products of interest to information professionals are exhibited. (ANKOSLink, 2018). (www.ankoslink.org.tr)

National Collaboration & Internationalization

ANKOS supports national the ULAKBİM EKUAL project which provides e-archiving solutions for subscribed content for nationwide permanent access. ANKOS considers e-archiving as a major area of action for ULAKBİM with the assumption that a medium size library has access to 20,000 e-journals so that in case of international crisis, loss of access to e-content can cause chaos in the country.

ANKOS has favored collaboration with other consortia in other countries since its establishment. In 2001, ANKOS joined SELL-Southern European Libraries Link as a founder country along with Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Greece. ANKOS hosted 3 out 18 annual SELL meetings in Turkey.

SPARC-The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition aims at breaking the monopoly of commercial publishers, promoting competition in the sector and avoiding unfair price increases of scientific journals. Three year after its establishment in North America, SPARC opened a branch in Europe in 2002. ANKOS joined this initiative the same year. SPARC's main discussion points were open access and open archives. These are still vital discussions for library and publishing communities.

ANKOS is also a member of ICOLC–International Coalition of Library Consortia and COUNTER-Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources. (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium, 2018).

ANKOS is not only involved with international collaborations at the consortium level, but also at any perspective that falls under librarianship and information services. In this respect, ANKOS is in close contact with IFLA. In 2014, with IFLA president Sinikka Sipila's participation, a conference was held in İstanbul in 2014 and the theme was "Strong Associations, Strong Societies". A year later, the IFLA Presidential meeting titled "The Art of Transforming Libraries" was organized, again by ANKOS in İstanbul (IFLA President's Meeting, 2018).

Success

Established in 2000, ANKOS has achieved continuous growth over the past 18 years and has become a respected and recognized organization both at national and international levels. As of today, ANKOS is the largest consortium in Europe and one of the largest consortia in the world. Through the past 18 years, according to its goal, ANKOS had successfully negotiated with publishers and vendors to get the lowest price for access to e-resources on behalf of its members. Today, ANKOS is a national authority following international best practices on e-resource deals. All members accept the bargaining costs incurred by ANKOS. All members accept these prices as standard through inspection mechanisms at the national level, and ANKOS is considered as the national authority.

In addition to its main objective, ANKOS is the only single and leading organization on the national level in the field of open access, resource sharing, training programs, and staff exchange practices. The most important feature that distinguishes ANKOS from other consortia is that all librarians involved in this organization voluntarily support their work. Until now, ANKOS has never paid a fee to any volunteer. Volunteer employees of ANKOS are its greatest power and privilege.

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