

Chapter 15

Library and Information Science Collaborations in the Philippines and Beyond

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ABSTRACT

The development of library cooperation in the Philippines, particularly among academic, school, and special libraries, started in the early 1930s and was known under different names (Ladlad, 2003), such as resource sharing, partnership, consortium, linkage, library cooperation, and networking. Libraries usually come together in the form of consortia to supplement existing resources by providing access to information available in other libraries. Through cooperation, libraries are able to withstand the skyrocketing prices of information resources as well as budget cuts by means of consortium/cooperative purchasing. Likewise, library cooperation has proven to be an effective way of presenting smart solutions to common library problems/concerns through communities of practice. This chapter provides an overview of major library consortia in the Philippines. The compiled list is as exhaustive as possible. However, due to scarcity of sources, some active consortia may not have been included in the list. The information provided in this chapter was gathered mostly from published Websites. A comparative study, in terms of aims/objectives and activities being carried out by the different consortia, was also included and can be found at the end of this chapter.

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ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIA

According to a study made by a Filipino scholar, Dr. Nora Agustero (2009), “academic libraries purportedly collaborate to solve their problems on scarcity through the formulation of resource dependency strategies with other members of library consortia. Moreover, academic libraries collaborate with partners whose institutions or individual representatives they trust.” This is specifically true to academic library consortia in the Philippines where members are usually bound geographically making it easy for them to work together as a group. Some of the most active academic library consortia in the Philippines are as follows:

Academic Libraries Book Acquisitions Systems Association, Inc. (ALBASA)

ALBASA (originally known as ALBASC or Academic Libraries Book Acquisition Services Cooperative) was conceived during an academic librarians’ conference for the Visayas and Mindanao which was sponsored by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) and was held on February 24-25, 1972 in Cagayan de Oro City. The thirteen head librarians from 12 different academic institutions (namely, Ateneo de Davao, Central Philippine University, Holy Cross College of Digos, Notre Dame of Jolo College, Notre Dame University, St. Paul College of Dumaguete, St. Theresa’s College of Cebu, San Nicolas College, Silliman University, University of San Agustin, University of San Carlos and Xavier University) who were in attendance thought of establishing a library cooperative in view of finding solutions to common library problems (Academic Libraries BooksAcquisition Systems, Inc., 2008).

During the second PAASCU conference for academic librarians held on September 14-15, 1972, the same group of librarians drew up the outline of the cooperative venture and named it

as Academic Libraries Book Acquisition Services Cooperative (ALBASC), whose main purpose would be group acquisition of books, both locally and abroad, with the intention of minimizing expense and maximizing results.

On July 16, 1973, ALBASC started its operation and was ran by a part-time manager, with their office temporarily based in Manila as they were awaiting for the approval of application to obtain legal status. However, since the laws at that time did not allow for a group of schools to form a cooperative, they were advised to form a corporation instead. As a corporation, initial capitalization was needed hence they decided to add two more members--the Divine Word University-Tacloban and De La Salle University. As a corporation, they also adopted the name ALBASA or Academic Libraries Book Acquisitions Systems Association, Inc.

ALBASA was officially recognized by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as a corporation on November 20, 1973. Its initial operational expenses was raised through a grant from the Asia Foundation amounting to Php8,647.00.

The Association’s membership has now grown to about a hundred libraries all based in the Visayas and in Mindanao. Member libraries extend help to one another through assistance in the build-up of collections; exchange of publications; centralized book selection which helps minimize duplication of expensive bibliographic tools; cataloging assistance; provision of consultancy service; and, staff training.

ALBASA currently takes the following as its mission:

1. To engage in a joint, coordinated program of library book purchasing both locally and abroad to avail of volume discounts and other technical advantages.
2. To provide a clearinghouse for various cooperative activities among member libraries.
3. To conduct workshops and seminars for professional growth of librarians.

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