Friends or Foes?
A Network Approach to the Relations among Women's Organizations in Turkey

Müge Özman
Institut Telecom, Telecom & Management SudParis,
Department of Management, Marketing and Strategy, Evry,
France

Derya Fındık
Middle East Technical University, Science and Technology
Policy Research Center
Ankara, Turkey

Friends or Foes?

A Network Approach to the Relations among Women's Organizations in Turkey

Müge Özman[*] and Derya Findik[**]

*Institut Telecom, Telecom & Management SudParis, Department of Management, Marketing
and Strategy,
Evry, France*

Tel: +33 160 76 47 85

e-mail: Muge.Ozman@it-sudparis.eu

**Middle East Technical University, Science and Technology Policy Research Center*
Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: dfindik@metu.edu.tr

Abstract

In this paper we investigate the state of networks among women's organizations in the capital
city of Turkey. There is a considerably widespread opinion among Turkish policy makers,
scholars and public that networks among NGOs should be strengthened for increased
effectiveness, and that currently these networks are not strong enough. The starting point of this
research has been the question of whether this view of networks can be demonstrated empirically.
Our study is composed of detailed interviews with 28 active women's organizations concerning
their ties with other organizations. We analyse the physical architecture of their networks. We
investigate how inter-organizational networks emerge, what barriers exist for their effectiveness,
and what benefits do organizations achieve from them. Our results reveal that while people
working in various organizations are intensively involved in personal linkages, resulting in a very
dense network of informal relations between organizations, these are hardly transformed into
collaborative actions in the context of formal projects where parties commit their resources for
longer periods. We investigate the reasons underlying this phenomenon.

---

[*] Corresponding author.

1. Civil Society Organizations and the Network Approach

During the last three decades adopting a network view has played an important role in understanding civil society. In the network view, the aim is to investigate the impact of the relationships among actors on the performance of them individually or on the network itself. Today it is widely accepted that networks of NGOs can be more effective than individual and isolated organizations. For example networks may expand the individual capacities of organizations by providing increased social capital and building synergy among disconnected NGOs (Liebler and Ferri, 2004). Networking facilitates exchange of information, experiences and resources, provides reciprocal support among organizations, and facilitates the development of a common identity and a feeling of belonging which strengthens institutionalism (Ranaboldo and Pinzas, 2003). Networks facilitate coordination so that duplication of work is reduced and through networks, parties can find support for the identification and solution of critical problems (Starkey, 1998), have access to financial resources (Ashman et al., 1998) and increase their capacity for learning (van Zee and Engel, 2004). In addition networking improves trust between organizations which reduces opportunistic intentions. Trust also enables members of the network to understand the goals of action and develop a common language (Achrol, 1996) and sense of belonging to the network.

Despite all these potential benefits of networks among organizations, not all NGO networks have been a success story. The synergy achieved through networking largely depends on external and internal conditions (Lasker et al., 2001) and on the match between the goals of the network and actions of partners. What makes a NGO network successful? According to Taschereau and Bolger (2007), effective networking among organizations depends on the external environment characterized by an open political space, availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and existence of donors and funds. Effective networking also depends on network capabilities, informal leadership, collective identity and legitimacy, technical expertise, participation, and needs of participants. For the network to function effectively, network participants need to be open, willing and able to learn form each other (Engel 1993), which requires a high degree of trust among participants of the network. Members should have the capacity to contribute in terms of skills access, time and money available. Participants should be committed to networking activities.

Recently a number of studies have been conducted especially in developing countries to analyse and assess networks of NGOs in different fields. As far as NGO networks are considered it is important to distinguish between two types of networks according to their formation. Firstly most NGO networks are intentionally formed under the guidance of a national or international umbrella organization, which aims to link independent NGOs.[1] For example in Turkey, Civil Society Development Center (STGM) is an example of this type of organization one of whose aims is to "establish communication networks, support efforts to create national NGO platforms and to encourage all forms of exchange of information and experience among NGOs".[2]

In the second case, networks among NGOs are self organizing in which there is no organizing formal authority but the decisions of collaboration of the individual NGOs is the main mechanism which forms the network. Research in the latter field is limited mainly because of data collection difficulties on networks.[3] Because networks are formed without any central mechanism to coordinate the behaviour of members, such networks can induce significant reduction in transaction costs of establishing communication, coordination and control. But whether this is the case depends on their effectiveness. For the case of Turkey, there is a common belief among the public and professionals that the networking activities among organizations are not effective, and they should be strengthened. [4] This paper is concerned with such self-organized NGO networks and addresses the following questions for the case of Turkish networks of organizations working on women's issues: How do these organizations self-organize into networks without any external coordination mechanism? Are networks perceived to be effective by members, and what are the obstacles to effective networking? This paper aims to answer these questions in the context of a developing country example. Our case study is composed of the detailed interviews with 28 women's organizations concerning their external relations in Turkey, capital city of Ankara. Ankara was chosen as a location because of its strategic importance for the country. Firstly it is the geographically close to the public institutions, government offices and research centres which makes it a fruitful region as far as networking activities among organizations are concerned. Secondly, Ankara has the highest number of women's NGOs per capita in Turkey.

---

[1] For example, see Abelson (2003)

[2] http://www.stgm.org.tr

[3] See for example, Rodríguez et al. (2004) for a study of links between NGOs in Spain.

[4] See for example STEP (2006), which is the Civil Society Index Project (www.step.org.tr)

The paper proceeds as follows. In the second section we make an overview of NGO activities in Turkey, providing some descriptive statistics, summarizing some problems they face and giving brief information on their networking activities. In this section we also discuss whether networks can be a remedy to the problems Turkish women's organizations are faced with. In the third section we present our data and method and provide some descriptive results of the surveys. Fourth section is devoted to the results of our network analysis and discussion of the results. Some concluding remarks follow.

2. The case of Turkey: NGOs and their relations

The recent decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the number of NGOs in Turkey. Research centers on civil societies in general and those which focus on woman studies are becoming increasingly widespread, which are specialized in carrying out research regarding the activities of NGOs and promoting linkages among them. [5] Figure 1 demonstrates the number of NGOs in selected fields. According to this table, especially environment, education, women, and health seem to be main interests in the society.
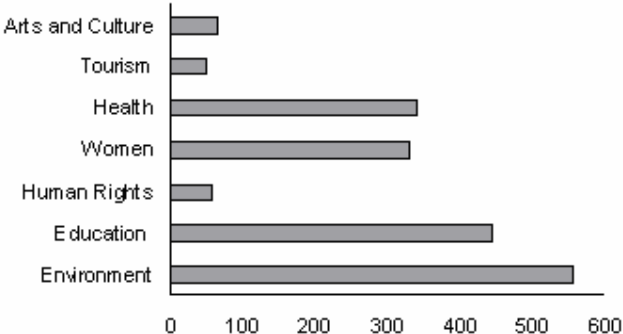

Figure 1 Number of NGOs according to subject
Source: Civil Society Development Center

The distribution of women's organizations in Turkey is uneven in terms of geography. A considerable amount of women's organizations is located in western part of the country. Activities carried out by most of these women's organizations are on education of women, violence against women, health of women and family, labour participation, or promoting the

[5] Some well known centers are, Bilgi University NGO Training and Research Center, and the women's studies departments in Middle East Technical University, Ankara University and Hacettepe University.

welfare of women belonging to a particular group (i.e. Kurdish women, Muslim women, lesbian women, etc.)

Although increasing number of organizations on women's issues seems promising to develop civil society culture in the country, organizations in Turkey are confronted with many problems and limitations. Barriers to the development of them stem both from their internal environment and external environment. Considering the potential advantages of networks as explained above, most of these problems can be overcome by building effective networks among organizations and creating an environment to sustain networking. Next we summarise the main problems faced by civil society organizations in Turkey and potential benefits of networks.

2.1. Some Problems facing women NGOs in Turkey

The main problems facing women NGOs in Turkey can be grouped under two headings. The first one is related with funding difficulties, and the second one is related with a limited willingness to participate in civil society activities in Turkey.

Kentel (2002) states as one of the most important problems organizations' not sharing knowledge and experiences with others after implementation of projects. This increases the gap between different NGOs in terms of their fund raising performance, and some NGOs suffer significantly from lack of experience, knowledge and skills to apply to funding sources for their projects.

Another problem is related with the fact that in searching for external funds NGOs can underestimate their organizational priorities and fields of specialization for the sake of accessing financial resources and sustaining themselves (Kentel, 2002). This produces inefficiencies in allocation of resources. For example funds available for a certain target are not necessarily allocated to those specialized NGOs, but they are more likely to be obtained by publicly recognized organizations.

Strikingly, one of the most important reasons underlying inadequate funding is not the lack of funds, but rather, the lack of connection with other organizations that provide resources, underlining the importance of key actors like public institutions who have the information about what resources are available. Those NGOs having strong linkages with these institutions may be more advantageous than the other organizations that do not have access to such networks. In addition the age of the organization and public recognition may also be the other impediments to

obtain resources. For example relatively young and in most cases very dynamic organizations have difficulty in accessing funds since they are not recognized by other sources of funding.

Internal or international donors are an important funding mechanism for NGOs. However, according to STEP (2006), donors are usually in the form of direct aid from individuals to individuals. This is because of the fact that NGOs are not widely recognized by the public as intermediaries who organize the flow of resources between parties. One of the funding mechanisms is applying to project calls from international organizations. Nevertheless, many organizations declare that they lack the relevant knowledge and experience to compete with other powerful organizations in applying to such projects.

The second important problem facing NGOs is that membership to NGOs or voluntary participation is weak due to lack of resources and interest among people. Studies which focus on NGO membership in Turkey indicate that high levels of participation to NGOs exist in culture, art, and education whereas women's organizations membership had the lowest level in the same study (STEP, 2006).

2.2 Networks as Remedy to Access to Funds, Experience and Skills

Cardenas (2000) argues that capability of the organization determines the level of network participation. She underlines the importance of civil participation to NGO activities, and suggests that promoting participation to NGOs in the society, and encouraging memberships will provide suitable conditions for the development of networks between NGOs in Turkey.

One of the most important barriers to networking in Turkey has been mentioned to be the low level of trust among people in Turkey. According to World Values Research (2001), only 18.6 percent stated that most people can be trusted. Cardenas (2000) emphasizes that building partnerships based on trust and mutual respect should be compatible to local realities like the openness of the policy environment, the levels of experience and sophistication of the network, and the technical, human and financial resources available to the network.

As mentioned before, links with international organizations play a crucial role for domestic NGOs. According to Stark et al. (2005), problems which stem from lack of assertiveness can be overcome through new local and transnational ties that will give these organizations the power for the joint action. Nonetheless, in Turkey links to international organizations are very limited

and existing linkages and networking for joint access to funds is at low level (STEP, 2006).Problems of sustainability play a crucial role in networking between organizations. Organizations need both financial resources and human capital. However, organizations cannot sustain themselves because of absence of skilled staff and technical infrastructure (Ünsal, 2006). Knowledge flow may become possible with skilled personnel in the organizations since skilled members may have extant networks.

To our knowledge there has been no empirical analysis of NGO networks in Turkey up to now, despite a very high growth in the number of NGOs in the last ten years. Moreover, several umbrella organizations to promote networks among NGOs have been founded recently[6], and both scholars and policy makers have been emphasizing the importance of NGO networks during the last decade. The increased emphasis on networking among NGOs has also been evident from various activities at public level, like the foundation of the so called 'open radio' and the launching of a newspaper called "bizim gazete' which both emphasize increasing communication among NGOs as one of their aims.

Seemingly there are some barriers to effective networking in Turkey. Here the term effective should be underlined because rather than lack of networking, there seems to be problems in terms of openness of NGOs in their external relations. Existing relations are mostly based on friendships and mutual visits. Seemingly in these informal networks members collect information on "who does what" rather than collaborating for joint action following a specific target. Indeed it has been shown that there is a general reluctance to collaborate among NGOs in the context of joint action (STEP, 2006). Although umbrella organizations have an important role in influencing political processes by networking, the rate of networking under an umbrella organization is also low in Turkey (STEP, 2006).

In this study, our first aim is to understand the patterns of networking among NGOs. By patterns of networking we mean analyzing how organizations perceive networking from different aspects. Secondly, we aim to unravel whether networks are indeed perceived to be ineffective by organizations themselves as most studies reveal. If this is so, our third aim is to unravel the reasons behind ineffectiveness of networks. In doing so, we make use of social network theory and by representing their network physically; we investigate the characteristics of these networks.

---

[6] Some examples are STGM and Bilgi University NGO Training and Research Center.

As mentioned above, this study is different from other research in that we focus on self-organized networks rather than intentional networking activities under an umbrella organization. In addition to addressing these questions, we provide some descriptive information on women NGOs in general and their communication patterns.

3. Data and Method

In this study, we analyse the networks of women's organizations in Ankara.[7] For this purpose, face to face interviews lasting approximately 1.5 hours were made with 28 women's organizations. Ankara was chosen as the location because of its strategic importance for the country. Firstly, it is the capital city of Turkey and geographically close to the public institutions, government offices and research centres. Consequently, Ankara has the highest number of women's organizations per capita in Turkey. [8] In selection of the sample, several sources were combined so as to confirm that most active organizations are included. [9] Surveys are composed of five parts and some descriptive results are given in Table 1.

3.1 Profile of the organizations:

Organizations are examined in terms of type, age, target audience, funding sources, technical infrastructure, and the aim of activities, educational level of members and age distribution of members.[10]

In addition, we asked the respondents to describe the goals of the organization, and the main activities they carry out to achieve these goals. In doing so, we also presented the interviewees with a range of activities, and asked them to rate the importance of each activity for the organizational targets on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 corresponds to the least important, and 5 corresponds to the most important). The results of this part are given under questions P1 and P2 in Table 1.

---

[7] Because our sample includes also some research centres within universities, we prefer to use the more general term "organizations" rather than NGOs in referring to our sample.

[8] In Ankara, population of the city per women's organizations is about 63,450 whereas the population of Istanbul per women's organizations is about 83,672.

[9] We used the following databases: NGO database of STGM (2006), Flying Broom NGO Database (2002), and British Council NGO Database (2003). After preparation of a preliminary list composed of 25 NGOs in Ankara pilot surveys were conducted with 5 organizations. To confirm that all non-dormant NGOs were included, we showed the list to pilot survey respondents. In this way the list was extended to include 29 organizations of which we were able to interview 28.

[10] See Appendix for descriptive results of this part.

3.2 Networks of the organizations:

This part of the interview is composed of two parts. In the first part, the aim was to understand how organizations perceive collaborations with other organizations. More specifically, the questions in this part address how organizations select partners and what they gain from networks. (Questions N1-N4 in Table 1). The answers to these questions are provided on a scale from 1 to 5.

The second part is concerned with constructing a network of organizations physically. This part is composed of forming a friendship network (i.e. who is friends with who), and a formal network (i.e. who signs what types of agreements with who).[11] For the first question, the interviewees were asked to identify women's organizations with whom they have an acquaintance with. For this purpose, they were shown the list of women's organizations in Turkey, from which they ticked the organizations they meet and know informally.[12] The friendship network is a directed network, and it is shown in Figure 3.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to consider all the projects, campaigns and medium to large scale activities they have carried out during the last 5 years. They were asked to provide the name of project partners, as well as the name and content of the project. We term this network as the formal network, and it is shown in Figure 4. Obviously because project partners maybe different types of organizations the members of the formal network are not confined to women organizations.

---

[11] During the pilot interviews, the interviewees had difficulty in understanding what is referred to by a "link" with another organization. We understood that the design of this question required more clarification. For example interviewees in organization Y stated that they have many friends in organization X, but they don't necessarily carry out projects and campaigns together, although they are fully informed about what the other organization is doing. This is why we redesigned the questionnaire to take into account two types of relations. The first is "who knows who", and the second is "who works with whom". Consequently, two networks were obtained.

[12] Collecting network data in this way has some difficulties. To ensure that the responses were as objective as possible, the question was asked in the following way: "Among the list of organizations, please tick those to whom we (as interviewers) can go with your reference and when we do so, you feel confident that we will be regarded in an agreable way".

In this way we constructed two networks, one of which is the friendship network, and the other is the network of formal projects. The results of this part of the survey are given below in the networks section.

3.3. The use of ICTs and Means of Communication between organizations

The aim of this part of the survey is to unravel what tools organizations use commonly for communication. These questions are given in questions C1-C4 in Table 1.

4. Results

4.1 What do they do, and how do they do it?

Table 1 provides the results of the survey. According to the interviews, majority of the NGOs in Ankara are concerned with education of women in Turkey. This is in correspondence with the overall pattern in Turkey about NGOs, as shown in Figure 1, where education has a very important role. Question P2 reveals that the mostly common activity is organizing seminars and conferences, training services, and broadcasting knowledge to the public. Indeed, most of the women's organizations stated that they know each other from mostly conferences, seminars, training sessions and meetings.

4.2. How do they perceive networks?

In this part, the first question is concerned with identifying the types of organizations the interviewed organizations collaborate most with. According to the results, other women organizations are most common partners. This is because organizations contact other women organizations mostly through seminars, conferences, meetings and platforms, which are among the most common activities that they perform. From the interviews, it was also understood that university research centres play an important role among partners. This is hardly surprising where education plays an important role in activities. Thirdly, linkages with international organizations are common. Indeed, during the last decade many projects with the UN has been carried out which involves Turkish women organizations. [13]

---

[13] In addition, the internationalization of NGOs have also been strengthened by the inclusion of Turkey in the sixth framework programme of the EU, which resulted in increased partnerships between Turkish NGOs and their foreign counterparts.

Question N2 is concerned with partner selection. In other words, what criteria do organizations use in selecting their partners? It is seen that the most important criteria in partner selection is to have a "common goal and ideology". A second important criterion is to make use of "complementarities in knowledge, experience and resources".

Question N3 addresses the benefits that networks yield to organizations. According to the results, the most common benefit that organizations gain from networks is to "increase their power and legitimacy". Secondly, organizations use their networks to have access to information about other organizations and new opportunities.

Final question in the network section addresses what types of barriers organizations face in carrying out activities with others. Two responses turned out to be very significant. The first one is conflicts because of ideological differences, and the second one is lack of trust, because the partner did not meet its responsibilities.

4.3. Use of ICTs

The questions in this part of the questionnaire address the importance of various communication means to: get formation from outside (C1); diffuse knowledge about their activities to the public (C2) and diffuse information about their activities to their members (C3). We also asked their opinion on the efficiency of various communication methods. The results reveal that personal conversations and telephone are the most commonly used means of communication.

New technologies may change the structure of communication, but in the case of Turkey this does not seem to be the case. Use of e-mail lists, while a preferred mode of communication is much better substituted by personal communications through telephone, or face to face contacts. One of the reasons is that they don't have access to ICTs, but more importantly, as revealed in our interviews, the use of it is not yet habit.

Table 1

|	Mean	Std Dev	Mean spread
P1 Field of Activity			
Women's rights	4,0417	1,3345	3,0287
Education	4,3750	1,0135	4,3167
Health	3,2083	1,5317	2,0947
Labour force participation	3,5833	1,5299	2,3422
Political participation	3,2500	1,7754	1,8305
Violence	3,9583	1,6806	2,3554
Arts and culture	3,2083	1,5598	2,0569
Others	1,8333	1,5511	1,1820
P2 Activities			
Physical support (money and other tangible means)	2,5417	1,3507	1,8818
Consultancy	3,2083	1,5874	2,0211
Training	3,8750	1,2270	3,1582
Seminars / Conferences / Meetings	4,3333	0,7614	5,6914
Broadcasting knowledge	3,5000	1,4446	2,4228
Arts and culture activities	2,9167	1,2129	2,4048
Organizing	3,2917	1,6011	2,0559
Others	1,5417	1,2504	1,2330
N1 With which types of organizations do you participate in activities?			
Other women's organizations	3,6250	1,4390	2,5192
Government agencies	2,4167	1,1001	2,1968
NGOs other than women's	2,6250	1,0555	2,4869
Private companies	1,7083	0,9546	1,7896
Universities / research centres	2,9167	1,4116	2,0661
Municipalities	2,6667	1,4039	1,8994
International organizations	3,0000	1,4744	2,0347
Media	2,6667	1,5511	1,7193
Unions	2,1250	1,3290	1,5989
Chambers of commerce	2,2500	1,3593	1,6552
Political parties	1,8750	1,3613	1,3773
Others	1,1667	0,8165	1,4289
N2 What are the importance of each of the following factors in selecting partners?			
Personal acquintances	3,1667	1,4646	2,1622
Previous collaboration experience	3,8333	1,4346	2,6721
Common goal and ideology	4,2083	0,9771	4,3070
References by commonly known parties	2,9167	1,3486	2,1627
Access to physical assets	2,6667	1,3726	1,9428
Access to complementary knowledge /experience	4,1250	1,1539	3,5748
Access to human capital	3,2917	1,4885	2,2114
Access to a certain audience	3,7917	1,3181	2,8767
Strategic choice	2,6667	1,4646	1,8208
N3 Effect of partnerships: how do you rate the importance of each factor below?			
Facilitate learning	3,8333	1,3077	2,9313
Facilitates access to information on new projects and activities	3,8333	1,2740	3,0088
Facilitates access to information on organizations and people	3,9583	1,2676	3,1226
Increases our power and legitimacy	4,2174	0,9980	4,2258
Experience in applying and carrying out projects	3,3750	1,5269	2,2103
Facilitates access to physical assets	2,5000	1,3188	1,8957
Others	1,2500	0,8969	1,3938

	Mean	Std	Mean spread
N4 What are the type of barriers faced in carrying out projects with others?			
Ideological differences	2,5417	1,0400	2,2270
Different goals	1,6250	0,9237	1,7592
Poor partner selection	1,6250	0,9696	1,6759
Environmental uncertainties	1,6667	0,9631	1,7305
The other party did not meet the responsibilities	2,5000	1,2854	1,9450
Difficulties in meeting	2,2083	1,2847	1,7190
Communicaiton gaps	1,6250	0,8754	1,8563
Others	1,1667	0,4815	2,4228
C1 How do you get informed about the activities of other woman NGOs ?			
Personal links	4,0417	0,6903	5,8553
E-mail lists	4,2500	1,1132	3,8180
Media	2,9167	1,4421	2,0225
General meetings	3,7500	1,2938	2,8984
Others	1,5833	1,3486	1,1740
C2 Which means do you use to diffuse knowledge to the public?			
Media	2,5417	1,4738	1,7246
Seminars	2,7917	1,5598	1,7898
E-mail lists	2,9917	1,6011	2,0559
Brochures	3,0000	1,4446	2,0767
Web site	2,2083	1,6146	1,3677
TV	2,5833	1,2482	2,0697
Personal links	3,7083	1,0826	3,4253
SMS	1,9583	1,4289	1,3705
Newspaper	2,9583	1,4590	2,0277
Other	1,4583	1,1413	1,2778
C3 How do you inform your members about your activities?			
Meetings	3,6250	1,5829	2,2902
E-mails	2,9583	1,8992	1,5577
Brochures	2,7917	1,7932	1,5568
Web site	1,8750	1,4540	1,2895
SMS	2,2500	1,5673	1,4356
Telephone	4,0417	1,1971	3,3763
Other means	1,7917	1,5030	1,1920
C4 What are the effectiveness of following means of communication?			
Telephone	4,1667	1,1672	3,5698
E-mails	3,8750	1,4836	2,6119
SMS	1,9167	1,3486	1,4212
O1 What are the critical factors for the success of projects?			
Funding	4,2917	1,0826	3,9641
Organizing	4,4167	0,9286	4,7562
Creativity	4,1667	1,3406	3,1082
Cultural Barriers	4,1250	1,1910	3,4635
Legal Barriers	2,9583	1,7062	1,7338
Spreading information about what we do to others	4,2917	1,1971	3,5851
Predicting future conditions	3,9583	1,3345	2,9662
Finding partners	3,8750	1,2959	2,9902
Finding skilled human capital	4,3750	1,1726	3,7310
Experience	4,2917	1,0826	3,9641
Others	1,3333	1,1293	1,1807
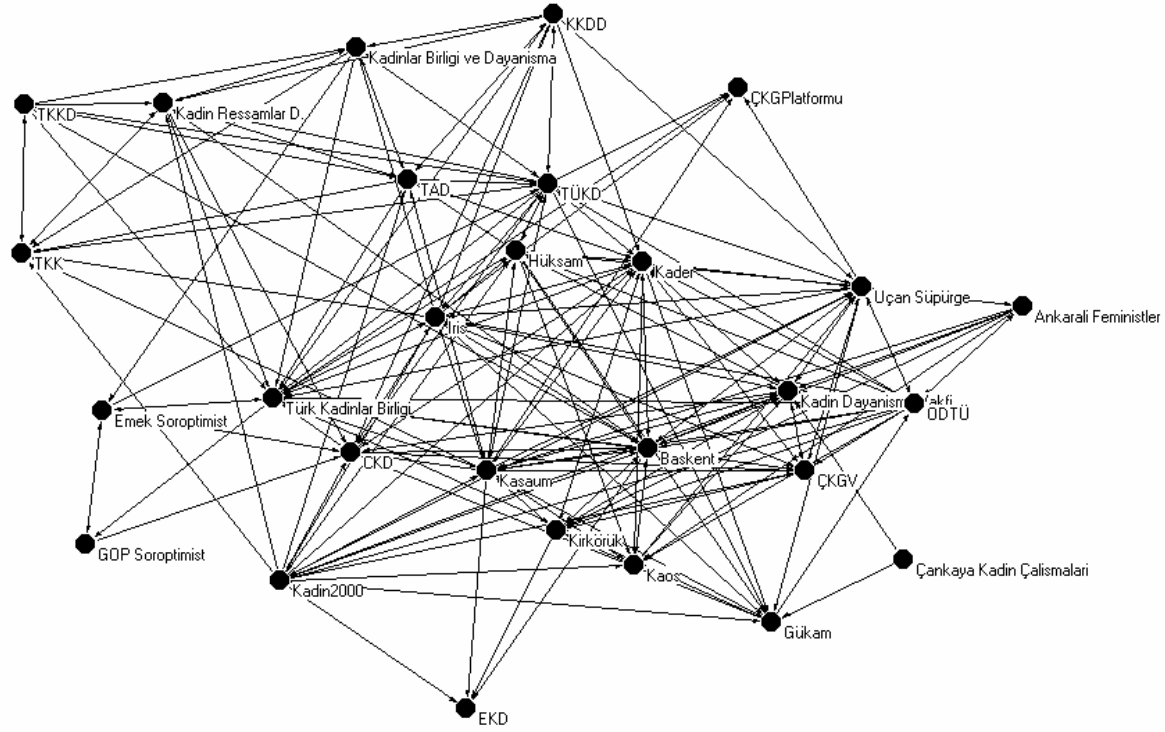
Figure 2 Informal network among women's organizations

Figure 3 Formal network among all organizations (*See Appendix for a list of organization names in English*)
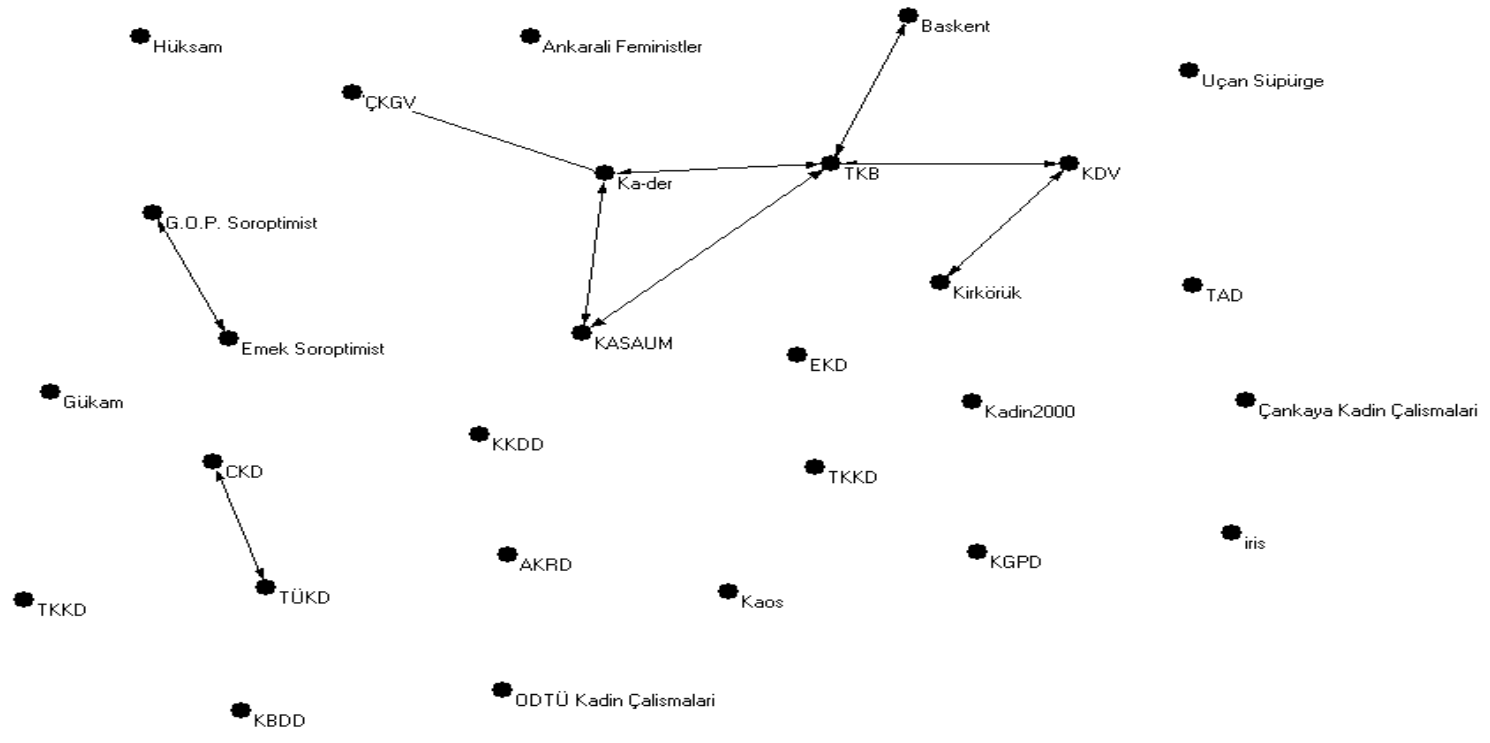
Figure 4 Formal Network among women's organizations

3.5. Networks

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show three networks that were constructed using the interview results. Figure 2 shows the informal network, showing who is friends who. The nodes in this network are confined to the woman's organizations in Ankara. Figure 3 shows the network of arms length relations, as indicated by the projects and campaigns of contracts more than 1 year. In this network, other organizations are included, like governmental organizations, other NGOs, universities, private companies, international organizations and the media. Finally Figure 4 shows a modified version of Figure 3, in which the links between women's organizations and all other types of organizations are deleted. Figure 4 demonstrates only the formal relations among women's organizations themselves.

When networks in Figures 2 and 4 are compared, it is seen that although women organizations are very intensively involved in informal relations and personal contacts, they hardly meet in the context of more formal and long term projects. This implies that friendships do not channel organizations to collaborate in the context of long term projects, which are more formal and dominated by arms length relations in nature. But more important than this mere observation is to analyse why do we observe such a pattern? After all, the theory on social networks reveal that, informal networks among people and organizations is the basis for established and long term relations which generate a certain value and effectiveness. In the pages that follow we discuss these results.

4. DISCUSSION

Two observations that can be made regarding the networks that were constructed from the interviews. The first observation is that, women's organizations seem to have sparse formal networks, and the second is that their informal networks are very dense. Below we explore these observations in depth and offer some explanations.

4.1. Why are there sparse formal networks among women's organizations?

One way to unravel why women's organizations prefer to form partnerships with external organizations is to look closely at how they select their partners, and what criterion is critical in this choice. As revealed by the responses given to question N2 above, the most important criterion in partner selection are knowledge and experience of the partner (complementarities)

and having common goals and similar ideologies with the partner. Two observations can be made based on the interviews. Firstly, women's organizations seem to exploit complementary knowledge and experiences in a better way through collaborations with non-women's organizations. Secondly, perceived differences in goals and ideologies might be a barrier to collaboration among women's organizations themselves. We explore each factor in turn.

4.1.1. The importance of Ideological Differences

During the interviews, most of the interviewees stated either explicitly or implicitly that having a common ideology is very important in forming partnerships with other women's organizations. According to the discussions with interviewees, we observed that it is possible to distinguish between 4 groups of organizations according to their ideological positioning. The first group is composed of the organizations whose standing is more nationalist relative to others. For these organizations, being a supporter of Kemalist ideology is stated as a priority as far as their external relations are concerned. The second group is composed of organizations that mostly identify themselves with leftist premises, which are hesitant about forming collaborations with the first group. Thirdly, some organizations are moderately liberal and do not fall into any of these extreme cases and who are relatively flexible in their choice of partners, focusing primarily on functional targets, like promoting the economic state of women in general. Fourth group is a composite group who might fall into any of the above, but who explicitly target a certain group, as the Muslim women, Kurdish women or lesbians. A more elaborate discussion of particular tensions between these groups is out of the scope of this study. Here our aim is to emphasize the importance of perceived ideological differences in shaping relationships among women's organizations. The importance of perceived ideological differences is indeed confirmed in another survey question N4, which reveals that the most important barrier to collaboration is perceived ideological differences.

4.1.2 Complementarities among women's organizations

According to Oliver (1991), one of the motives underlying inter-organizational collaboration is complementarities in knowledge, experience and skills. Measuring complementarities among women's organizations is not an easy task, because one needs to determine the basis upon which complementarities can be assessed. In our sample one way in which complementarities in terms of knowledge can be measured is to look closer at the specialization fields of the organizations

(P1 and P2 in Table 1). The interviewees were asked to grade how important each field of activity in the mission statement of the organization is. The fields of activity are: 1. Women rights 2. Education 3. Political rights 4. Violence 5. Health 6. Labour force participation 7. Arts and culture.

In a world where an organization is perfectly specialized, we would expect one field to get the highest score, and others the lowest score. In a world in which the organization is the least specialized, it would give similar importance to all fields. We utilized these scores to calculate an index of similarity between the activities of any two organizations (See Appendix for the derivation of this index). A score of one means that the two organizations are identical to each other, and a score of zero means that they are completely different.

In Figure 5, it can be seen that majority of the organizations are highly similar to each other in terms of their activity fields. Such a similarity is not only observed for the fields in which they give importance, but also in the tools they use to achieve their goals, as seen in Table 1, question P2.
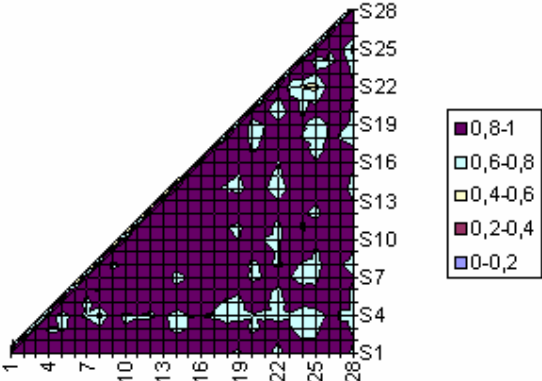

Figure 5 Similarities among women's organizations

One of the reasons that organizations are all very similar to each other, with few exceptions, is that most of them diversify into many different fields within the organization, and thus they avoid becoming a specialist on a certain dimension of woman issues in the country. One of the reasons underlying this pattern is that, in some cases an organization can undermine its targets to have access to funds or other benefits that would augment its reputation. Consequently organizations become more similar to each other, which may reduce complementarities that can be leveraged through external relations.

According to Yanacopulos (2005) another reason that organizations diversify their activities is the fear of being dependent to other organizations. One way to explain the sparse formal networks among women's organizations is to consider the fear of lack of autonomy and increased dependence on other women's organizations.

Following Oliver (1991) in the context of inter-organizational relations, Figure 6 demonstrates types of activities arranged in terms of those which require less intensity and high autonomy, and others which necessitate high intensity and loss of autonomy. In personal meetings, organizations have high level of autonomy. However, loss of autonomy starts with exchange of resources. In the Turkish case, dense informal networks are those in which relations are composed of personal meetings, and which are of low intensity and high autonomy. On the other extreme are formal relations where organization starts losing autonomy and increases its dependence to others. When the benefits from accessing complementary resources outweigh the costs in terms of losing organizational autonomy organizations can have more tendency to be involved in formal exchanges with other organizations. In our case, majority of organizations deal with similar issues, and in terms of their specialization, organizations do not complement each other too much. In this case losing autonomy can be a significant cost since organizations can perceive that there are little benefits to be achieved from formal exchanges.

.

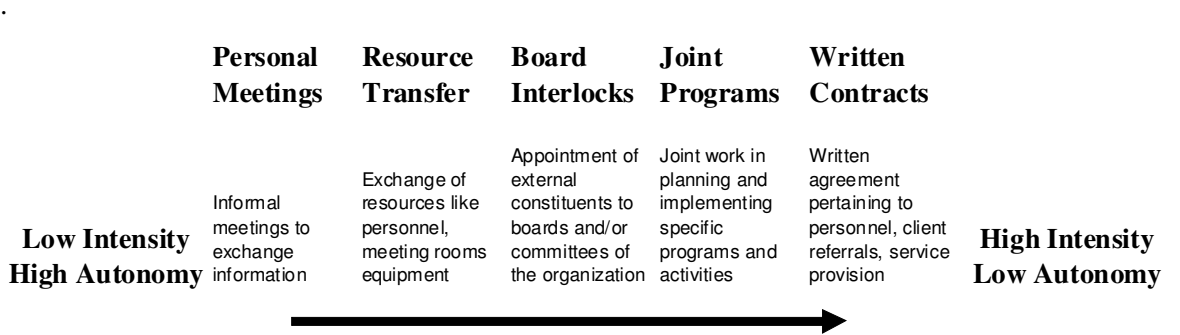|	Personal Meetings	Resource Transfer	Board Interlocks	Joint Programs	Written Contracts	
Low Intensity High Autonomy	Informal meetings to exchange information	Exchange of resources like personnel, meeting rooms equipment	Appointment of external constituents to boards and/or committees of the organization	Joint work in planning and implementing specific programs and activities	Written agreement pertaining to personnel, client referrals, service provision	**High Intensity Low Autonomy**

Figure 6 Scale of inter-organizational intensity and autonomy loss.
Source: Adopted from Oliver, C. (1991)

4. 2. Why dense informal networks?

Having identified the possible reasons underlying sparse formal networks among women's organizations, the question that we address next is concerned with the density of their informal networks. According to our interviews, the most important benefit they achieve from carrying out activities together is to increase their power and legitimacy (see question N4). If women's organizations have dense informal relations and sparse formal relations with each other, this might mean that to gain legitimacy and power, they use their informal relations with women's organizations, and formal relations with other organizations. This is understandable once we consider the importance of ideological differences in carrying out projects together as explained above. Having different ideologies is not a potential barrier for organizations to meet each other in campaigns, meetings, or other informal means of communication, because these activities are short term and do not carry any commitments. Moreover such short term activities are useful in terms of meeting new people, increasing people's linkages and widening their network while they do not carry the risk of being perceived as collaboration with an ideological opponent. For example, the NGO of "Muslim women" has a very central position in the informal network, despite the current tension in Turkey between secular and religious "sects" of the society. The sphere in which ideological differences manifest themselves most is not the informal relations, but rather the activity of signing a contract in the context of a publicly known project.

To summarise, based on our interviews three points can be underlined to explain why women's organizations in the Turkish case have a dense informal network and a sparse formal network:

1. They network informally because the perceived ideological differences which can be important barriers in formal relations do not impede having informal relations.

2. Dense informal network increases their legitimacy and popularity, without having to incur the costs of commitment to long term relations.

3. In partner selection for carrying out projects, complementarities in knowledge are important. Women's organizations might have little to contribute to each other, because most of them are diversified, and deal with similar issues. When this is the case, complementarities are exploited through partnerships with organizations other than Women's organizations.

5. Concluding Remarks

There is a considerably widespread opinion among Turkish policy makers, scholars and public that networks among NGOs should be strengthened for increased effectiveness, and that currently

these networks are not strong enough. The starting point of this research has been the question of whether this view of networks is can be demonstrated empirically, or is it simply the result of the increased popularity of the concept of networks in both academic and policy circles? Indeed, very little, if any empirical research exists in Turkey to demonstrate the effects, emergence, and problems that inter-organizational networks are faced with. In this regard, this study examines the results obtained from face to face interviews conducted with the active women's organizations in Ankara. During the interviews, we collected information on their external relations, and in particular information on whom they know and who they work with, what are the barriers to collaboration they face, what are the means of their communication. The results reveal that, in Turkey women's organizations have a very dense informal network. Nevertheless the inter-organizational friendships are not transmitted to collaboration in the context of formal projects. Instead, most women's organizations prefer collaboration with those organizations other then women's. Possible explanations for this observation have been put forward. For example, perceived ideological differences act as an important barrier for different parties to commit resources within a project. Also, it was observed that most women organizations have similar specialties in terms of their knowledge base, which might make it difficult to leverage their complementarities fully.

References

Abelson, A. (2003) "NGO NETWORKS: Strength in Numbers?" Unpublished Paper, Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation.

Achrol, R.S. (1996) 'Changes in the Theory of Interorganizational Relations in Marketing: Toward a Network Paradigm', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25, pp.56-71.

Cardenas,S. and S. Richiedei (2000) Participatory Policy Processes in Turkey: A Case Study on the NGO Advocacy Network fo Women (KIDOG), 1995-1999. Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development and Policy Project.

Ashman, D. , L.D. Brown and E. Zwick (1998) "The Strength of Strong and Weak Ties Building Social Capital for the Formation and Governance of Civil Society Resource Organizations", *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, vol. 9, no. 2.

Engel, P. (1993) *"Daring to share: Networking Among Non-Government Organizations"* in C.Alders,B.Harverkort and L.van Veldhuizen, Linking with Farmers: Networking for Low-External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture*.* Intermediate Technology Publications, London-England.

Kentel, F. (2003) "Projeler, Projecilik ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları", XII. Symposium of Civil Society Organizations, Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.

Lasker Roz D., E.S. Weiss and R. Miller (2001) "Partnership Strategy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage", *The Milbank Quarterly*, 792. 179.

Liebler, C. and M. Ferri (2004) "NGO Networks: Building Capacity in a Changing World" Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, U.S. Agency for International Development.

Oliver, C. (1991) "Network Relations and Loss of Organizational Autonomy", *Human Relations*, 44, pp.943-961.

Ranaboldo, C. and T. Pinzas (2003) *United We Stand…? A Study about Networks Involved in Sustainable Development*, Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation ICCO.

Rodríguez, J.A., F. Mérida, and J.L.C. Bosch (2004) "Creating Society: Networks of Organized Civil Society in Spain" XXIV International Sunbelt Social Network Conference, Portorož, Slovenia, May 12 - 16, 2004

Stark, D., B. Vedres and L. Bruszt (2005) "Global links, Local Roots: Varieties of Transnationalization and Forms of Civic Integration*"*, *Center for Organizational Innovation Working Paper*, pp. 1-32.

Starkey, P. (1998) "Networks for Development." The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development IFRID. London-England.

STEP (2006) *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum: Bir Değişim Süreci Uluslararası Sivil Toplum Endeksi Projesi Türkiye Ülke Raporu*, Tüsev Yayınları, No 39.

Taschereau, S. and J. Bolger (2007) "Networks and Capacity", *European Center for Development Policy Management*, Discussion Paper No 58C.

Yanacopulos, H. (2005) "The Strategies that Bind: NGO Coalitions and Their Influence", *Global Networks*, 5, pp.93-110.

APPENDIX

We measure relatedness among two NGOs by the cosine index. More specifically, the cosine index between two organizations n and m is given by;

$$\cos(mn) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} \gamma^{ni} \gamma^{mi}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{K} \gamma^{ni^2}} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{K} \gamma^{mi^2}}}$$

Where γ^{ij} denotes the weight of activity j within the activities that organization i is involved in. Obviously, if two NGOs are interested in the same fields equally, cosine index would be one, and if there is no common interest between the two NGOs, cos(mn)=0. Other cases fall in between the two extremes. Therefore, high cosine values indicate increased relatedness between two NGOs, in terms of similarity in their fields.

List of Acronyms and Names of Institutions Shown as Nodes in Networks

Acronym and / or Original Name of Organization	Organization Name in English	Type of Organization
27 Mayıs Derneği	27 May Association	NGO
A.D.D.- Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği	Association of Ataturk's Thought	NGO
AB	EU	International
Adalet Bakanlığı	Ministry of Justice	Public Institution
AKRD- Ankara Kadın Ressamlar Derneği	The Association of Women Artists	Woman NGO
Amnesty International	Amnesty International	International
Ankara Belediyesi	Municipality of Ankara	Public Institution
Ankara Martı Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezi	Ankara Marti Education and Rehabilitation Center	NGO
Ankara Universitesi	Ankara University	University
Ankara Valiliği	Mayor of Ankara	Public Institution
Ankaralı Feministler- Ankaralı Feministler	Ankara Feminist Group	Woman NGO
Arçelik	Private Business	Private Business
Arı Hareketi	Private Education Group	Private Business
Ataçağ Oluşumu	Private Education Group	Private Business
ATO - Ankara Ticaret Odasi	Ankara Chamber of Commerce	Public Institution
Avrupa Kadın Lobisi	European Woman Lobby	International
Balkan Network	Balkan Network	International
Başkent- Başkent Kadın Platformu Derneği	The Women Platform of the Capital	Woman NGO
Beypazarı Belediyesi	Municipality of Beypazarı	Public Institution
Bilkent Üniversitesi	Bilkent University	University
Bizimköy Vakfı	Bizimkoy Foundation	NGO
BM- Birleşmiş Milletler	United Nations	International
BM Nüfus Fonu-	United Nations Population Fund	International
BPW-Uluslar arası İş ve Meslek Sahibi Kadınlar Derneği	Business and Proffesional Woman	International
Çankaya Belediyesi	Municipality of Cankaya	Public Institution
Çankaya Kadın Çalışmaları	Cankaya University Women Studies	Research Center
ÇESAV- Çevre Eğitim Sağlık ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı	CESAV Environment, Education, Health and Social Support	NGO
CKD- Cumhuriyet Kadınları Derneği-	Association of Republican Women	Woman NGO
ÇKGV- Çağdaş Kadın ve Gençlik Vakfı Toplum Merkezi-	Contemporary Women and Youth Federation	Woman NGO
CVME-	Research and Support Center for Victims of Maltreatment	International
ÇYDD- Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği	Association of Support of Contemporary Living	NGO
Danimarka Elçiliği	Embassy of Denmark	International
Deleware Univ- Deleware University	Delaware University	University
Dışişleri Bakanlığı	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Public Institution
Doğa Derneği	Doga Dernegi	NGO
Doğal Yaşam Derneği	Association of Natural Life	NGO
DSİ- Devlet Su İşleri	General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works	Public Institution
Dünya Bankası- World Bank	World Bank	International

Acronym and / or Original Name of Organization	Organization Name in English	Type of Organization
DYKDD- Doğal Yaşamı Koruma Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği	Association for Protecting Nature	NGO
ECICW	European Centre of the International Council of Women	International
Eczacıbaşı	Private Business	Private Business
EKD- Emekçi Kadınlar Derneği-	The Federation of Woman Workers	Woman NGO
Elçilikler	Consulates	International
G.O.P. soroptimist- GaziOsman Paşa Soroptimistleri Derneği-	G.O.P. Federation of Soroptimist Clubs	Woman NGO
GAP- Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi	South-Eastern Anatolian Project	Public Institution
Gazi Üniversitesi	Gazi University	University
Global Fund for Women	Global Fund for Women	International
Gükam- Gazi Üniversitesi Kadın Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama	Gazi University Women's Stufies Research Center	Research Center
H.Ü. Hacettepe Üniversitesi	Hacettepe University	University
Hong- Kong University	Hong Kong University	University
Hüksam- Hacettepe Üniversitesi Kadın Sorunları Araştırma ve	Hacettepe University Women Studies Research Center	Research Center
Hürriyet Gazetesi	Hurriyet Newspaper	Media
Hydra	Private Business	Private Business
İçişleri Bakanlığı	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Public Institution
ICW- Uluslar arası Kadın Konseyi	International Council of Women	International
İl Milli Eğtiim Müdürlüğü	Local Directorate of National Education	Public Institution
İl Sağlık Müdürlüğü	Local Directorate of Health	Public Institution
ILO-	International Labor Organization	International
İngiliz Kültür Derneği	The Turco British Association	International
IOM-	International Organization for Migration	International
İris- İris Eşitlik Gözlem Grubu-	IRIS	Woman NGO
İstanbul Lions Kulübü	Instanbul Lions	NGO
Ka-der- Kadın Adayları Destekleme ve Eğitme Derneği-	KADER	Woman NGO
Kadın2000-	Woman 2000	Woman NGO
KAOS- Kaos GL Kültürel Araştırmalar ve Dayanışma Derneği-	Kaos GL Association	Woman NGO
KASAUM-	Ankara University Women's Studies Research Center	Research Center
KBDD- Kadınlar Birliği ve Dayanışma Derneği-	Association for Union and Solidarity of Women	Woman NGO
KDV- Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı-	Foundation for Women's Solidarity	Woman NGO
Keçiören Belediyesi	Municipality of Kecioren	Public Institution
KGPD- Kadın ve Gençlik Platformu Derneği-	The Association of Women and Youth Platform	Woman NGO
Kırkörük-	Kirkoruk	Woman NGO
KKDD- Kadınları Koruma ve Dayanışma Derneği-	Association for the Protection of Women	Woman NGO
Kocaeli Belediyesi	Municipality of Kocaeli	Public Institution
Kocaeli Üniversitesi	Kocaeli University	University
Kocaeli Valiliği	Kocaeli Mayor	Public Institution
Körler Federasyonu	Federation of the Blind	NGO

Acronym and / or Original Name of Organization	Organization Name in English	Type of Organization
Körler Federasyonu	Federation of the Blind	NGO
KSGM- Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü	General Dırectorate for the Status of Woman	Public Institution
Kültür Bk- Kültür Bakanlığı	Ministry of Culture	Public Institution
Küresel Fon- Sağlık Bakanlığı Küresel Fon Uygulama Projesi Birimi	Ministry of Health, Global Funds Projects	Public Institution
Lösev- Lösemili Çocuklar Vakfı	Foundation for Children with Leukemia	NGO
M.E.B.- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı	Ministry of Education	Public Institution
Mahalli İdareler Genel Müdürlüğü	General Directorate for Local Authorities	Public Institution
Mama Cash- Women's Funding Network	Mama Cash- Women's Funding Network	International
Manchester Toucan Ltd.	Manchester Toucan Ltd.	Private Business
Matra- Hollanda Sosyal Dönüşüm Programı	Matra Social Transformation Programme Netherlands Embassy	International
Meteksan	Meteksan	Private Business
METU	Middle East Technical University	University
Michigan University	Michigan University	University
Nivea	Nivea	Private Business
ODTÜ Kadin Calismalari	METU Women's Studies	Research Center
Potenza Gençlik Merkezi	Potenza Center of Youth	NGO
Sağlık Bakanlığı	Ministry of Health	Public Institution
SBD- Sosyal Bilimler Derneği	Social Sciences Institute	Public Institution
SHÇEK- Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu	Organization for Social Services and Protection of Children	Public Institution
Sweden- Sweden Association for Sexuality Education	Sweden Association for Sexuality Education	International
SYV- Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı	Foundation for Social Support	Public Institution
TAD- Türk Anneler Derneği-	Turkish Mothers' Association	Woman NGO
TKB- Türk Kadınlar Birliği-	The Turkish Women's Foundation	Woman NGO
TKKD- Türk Kadınları Kültür Derneği-	The Cultural Association of Turkish Women	Woman NGO
TMK- Toplum Merkezleri	Shelters	Public Institution
TOBB- Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey	Public Institution
TransAct-	The Dutch Center for Gender Issues in Health Care and the Preventi	International
TRT- Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyonu	Turkish Radio and TV	Media
TÜKD- Türk Üniversiteli Kadınlar Derneği-	Turkish University Women's Association	Woman NGO
TV 8	Private Channel TV	Media
Uçan Süpürge-	Flying Broom	Woman NGO
Ulusal Eğitim Derneği	National Education Association	NGO
Ulusal Eğitim- Ulusal Eğitime Destek Kampanyası	Campaign for Educational Support	National Campaign
UN Ortak Programı- Birleşmiş Milletler Ortak Programı	UN Joint Programme	International
UNDP-	United Nations Development Programme	International
UNFPA-	United Nations Population Fund	International
Üniversiteli Genç Kadınlar Grubu	Group of University Women	Woman NGO
WHO- Dünya Sağlık Örgütü	World Health Organization	International