Transnational Advocacy for Education for All
The Philippines’ Case

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Abstract

In the current time of globalization, where governance appears to be ‘going global’, civil society is also increasingly organising itself beyond national borders. In order to gain a more powerful voice, civil society actors are ever more linking up and working together, which results in transnational civil society coalitions such as the Global Campaign for Education. The focus of this thesis is E-Net, the Philippine Civil Society Coalition for Education Reforms affiliated with the Global Campaign for Education. As transnational advocacy coalitions are a relatively new phenomenon, there is not yet much understanding of how they ‘work’. This research aims to contribute to a better understanding of how social movements and advocacy coalitions matter, by analysing what has been the impact of E-Net and which factors, and critical reflexivity over these factors, contribute to or limit their internal and external success. Factors of both structure and agency were taken into account, considering the political and educational context, strategic collective action, power relations and scalar interaction.
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<tr>
<td>ABI</td>
<td>Alternative Budget Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Alliance of Concerned Teachers</td>
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>AER</td>
<td>Action for Economic Reforms</td>
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<td>ALS</td>
<td>Alternative Learning Systems</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASPBAE</td>
<td>Asian South Pacific Bureau of Basic and Adult Education</td>
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<td>BALS</td>
<td>Bureau of Alternative Learning System</td>
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<tr>
<td>BESRA</td>
<td>Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda</td>
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<td>CHED</td>
<td>Commission on Higher Education</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>DepEd</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>ECCD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Development</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td>Education International</td>
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<td>ELF</td>
<td>Education for Life Foundation</td>
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<td>E-Net</td>
<td>Education Network Philippines</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>Education Reform Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESKAN</td>
<td>Eskwelahan Sang Katawhan Negros</td>
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<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLEMMMS</td>
<td>Functional Literacy Education Mass Media Survey</td>
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<td>GAW</td>
<td>Global Action Week</td>
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<td>GCAP</td>
<td>Global Call to Action Against Poverty</td>
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<td>GCE</td>
<td>Global Campaign for Education</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GMR</td>
<td>Global Monitoring Report</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBIC</td>
<td>Japan Bank for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>LCC</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinating Council</td>
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<td>LGU</td>
<td>Local Government Unit</td>
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<td>LSB</td>
<td>Local School Board</td>
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<td>MDA</td>
<td>Mid Decade Assessment</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NCEFA</td>
<td>National Committee on Education for All</td>
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<td>NEC</td>
<td>National EFA Committee</td>
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<td>NEDA</td>
<td>National Economic Development Authority</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<td>OFWs</td>
<td>Overseas Filipino Workers</td>
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<td>OSY</td>
<td>Out-of-School Youth</td>
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<td>OXFAM GB</td>
<td>Oxfam Great Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBEd</td>
<td>Philippine Business for Education</td>
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<td>PEPE</td>
<td>Popular Education for People’s Empowerment</td>
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<td>RWS</td>
<td>Real World Strategies</td>
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<td>SAMEO</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Ministers of Education</td>
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<td>SFI</td>
<td>School First Initiative</td>
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<td>SBM</td>
<td>School Based Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>Teachers Dignity Coalition</td>
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<td>TESDA</td>
<td>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOPPS</td>
<td>Teacher Organization for Philippine Public Schools Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UP</td>
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1. Introduction

This research is part of a broader research project on civil society advocacy for public education. The research project aims to examine the histories, networks, strategies, progress, and effects of six national coalitions involved in the Global Campaign for Education (Brazil, Ecuador, India, the Philippines, Ghana and Zambia). This thesis describes the case study of the Philippines’ coalition, based on fieldwork carried out from March 2009 until June 2009. My aim is to evaluate the coalition’s success and/or impact and explore factors that contribute to or hinder these effects.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) was established in the late 1990s in response to the failure to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals, agreed upon in the World Education Forum in Jomtien, 1990. Several INGOs (Oxfam, Action Aid, and Global March against Child Labour) together with Education International (EI – the global federation of Teachers’ Unions) sought to strengthen the role of civil society advocacy movements working on the defence of public education, and to pressure national governments, international donors as well as international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank to honour political and financial agreements to deliver good quality public education for all (Jomtien 1990; Dakar Commitments 2000, MDGs). The GCE’s aim was to ensure that the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 would result in concrete commitments and viable policies to implement Education for All goals. As stated on their website the GCE is an alliance of diverse independent and voluntary organisations (NGOs, community-based organisations, trade union federations, faith-based groups, etc.) each having their own members. It unites civil society in the common pursuit of the right to quality basic education for all, with an emphasis on publicly-funded education. Today, the GCE has about 70 national coalitions registered as members, and there are 110 national coalitions active in the international Global Action Week.¹

This global alliance fits well in the current globalization era, where governance appears to be ‘going global’, and civil society is also increasingly organising itself beyond national borders. In order to gain a more powerful voice, civil society actors are ever

¹ As stated by Owain James, GCE Global Coordinator, at the GCE Northern Coalition Meeting, Madrid, 9 September 2009.
more linking up and working together, which results in transnational civil society coalitions like the Global Campaign for Education. These types of ‘transnational advocacy’ networks are considered as crucial actors in the processes of social and policy change, but there is not much research on how this is done. This research aims to contribute to a better understanding of how social movements and advocacy coalitions matter and what factors contribute or limit their success.

The focus point of my research is the Philippines’ national GCE coalition, Education Network Philippines - or short E-Net. E-Net is made up of about 160 civil society actors and besides being a member of the GCE, E-Net is also a member of the regional organisation Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBae). E-Net has grown intensively over the ten years of existence, and is considered to be a good example for other national civil society advocacy coalitions in the region (Interview ASPBrep, 2009).

Furthermore, the Philippines is a very interesting case study for this research, as it has a rich history of civil society action, and is known for its ‘People Power’. The Philippines is often mentioned in literature on democratic transitions and democratic governance. The ‘People Power’ revolution of 1986 is an example of a non-violent, popularly based, overthrow of authoritarianism. In this revolution, massive democratic opposition was mobilized to put a stop to President Marcos and his corrupt regime. In addition, the Philippines is seen as a country that successfully re-established democratic institutions under the leadership of Corazon Aquino. However, Southeast Asian specialists are sceptical as to whether the reestablishment of constitutional government represents anything more than formal, as opposed to substantive, democracy (Silliman & Garner Noble 1998: 281). Furthermore, in the Philippines education is considered very important and is seen as a way to reduce poverty and create equal opportunities for all Filipinos. Therefore it is to be expected that education is regarded as an important and popular topic for civil society advocacy.

When analysing E-Net Philippines, I looked at more than just the network, as how they work and who they work with is also dependent on the context in which they operate.
The research is theoretically informed by different approaches to social movements’ success considering aspects of both structure and agency. The political climate, political structure, the power relations and the prevalent educational discourse are all structural factors that influence the coalition’s strategies, goals, outcomes and success. However, it is the actors themselves who decide how to address these structural factors, and therefore I will also be looking at agency of the coalition and its members. The members also learn from their previous experiences, and therefore strategic learning and critical reflexivity are also important concepts of my research. This and other concepts used for the research, such as strategic collective action, power relations, scalar interaction, and political opportunities will be explained in the research framework.

This central question of this research is:

*What has been the impact of E-Net on Philippine education and which internal and external factors, and critical reflexivity over these factors, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?*

In order to answer the research question and based on the expected factors, I have formulated four sub-questions:

- How does strategic collective action, and the critical reflexivity over this aspect, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- How do internal and external power relations, and the critical reflexivity over these aspects, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- How do scalar interaction and the functioning in a transnational advocacy network, and the critical reflexivity over this aspect, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- Which political opportunities that are available for E-Net on different levels of scale, and the critical reflexivity over these aspects, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
For this research I have taken a critical constructivist approach, arguing that there is no one objective truth and that meaning and reality are socially constructed through the actors’ interactions with the social world (Crotty 1998). It is therefore expected that civil society activism and success differ greatly in the global North and South. The theoretical perspective that guided me through the research was the interpretive stand and more specific social interactionism as I analysed the perceptions and values of the people I researched. Furthermore I have used the cultural political economy approach and included semiotics in the structure and agency debate.

I used documentary analysis, participatory observation and semi-structured interviews in which I explored the opinions and stories of about twenty insiders and outsiders of the coalition. I think in this way the Southern civil society actors can be seen as ‘active agents’.

There are some constraints to my research. First of all, it is difficult to find a causal linkage between E-Net’s actions and changes in policies or educational climate in the Philippines. A large proportion of advocacy work is long term, while policy change is often incremental and slow. Furthermore results of advocacy work are often achieved through a mix of strategies, making it difficult to attribute and assess impact. To be more sure if the outcomes are caused by the coalitions’ activities, I tried to ask counterfactual questions like what might have happened in absence of the coalition.

Furthermore, the limited time I had to research the activities of a national coalition that is spread out over a 7000 island archipelago, can be considered another constrain. The timing of my visit had both benefits and limitations. My fieldwork was carried out from March 2009 until June 2009, a time in which E-Net is involved in many activities. During my stay in the Philippines it was also Global Action Week, the international week of campaigning for education. In the Philippines there are many activities for the Global Action Week, which in reality turns out to be more a Global Action Month. The benefit was that I was able to observe many activities and to get an idea of how E-Net carries out their strategies and campaigns (‘E-Net in action’). On the other hand, it was a limitation as both the staff of the coalition and other external education experts were very busy with the many activities and advocacies that were carried out during that time. Also during most of my stay, schools were closed for
summer vacation causing that some people were too busy or unavailable for interviews. The staff of E-Net secretariat has been extremely helpful throughout the research, however arranging interviews with different stakeholders proved more difficult than expected. I would have liked to have interviewed more outsiders such as academics, policy makers and donors. Most of the people I interviewed are in one way or the other linked to the coalition.

Despite these challenges I am confident that this research can make a good contribution to social movement research.

The thesis is structured into two parts, subdivided into 12 chapters. In the first part, the research set up will be addressed. The concepts used for the research will be explained in chapter 2. In chapter 3, the different theories used for the thesis will be explained. The theories cover both structure and agency, and as they all have some limitations, the combined use complements the individual theories.

Chapter 4 will address the research approach, and includes a schematic overview of the linkages of the concepts and questions used for the research. In chapter 5, the methodology, research techniques and methods of the research will be explained. This part of the thesis concludes with an introduction of the political and educational background of the Philippines (chapter 6). Part two will address my case study of E-Net Philippines. I will explore the origin, evolution, structure and strategies of the coalition in chapter 7. The political context and opportunities will be discussed in chapter 8. Chapter 9 will look into the benefits of working together, and the internal success the coalition has had so far. In chapter 10 the external impact will be discussed. The challenges facing the coalition will be addressed in chapter 11. My conclusions will be presented in chapter 12, where I will answer my research question and formulate recommendations for further research.
2. Defining the concepts

In this section I will introduce the concepts that serve the design and analysis of the research. I will first define the different actors that are considered part of civil society. Although the terms NGOs, social movements, grassroots organizations and unions are often used randomly, there are differences between these actors and for the purpose of the research it is important to define and clarify this. I will then go on to the concepts of civil society and global civil society and look at the significance of scale and scalar interaction, before explaining the concept of civil society coalitions. Finally I will look into the concepts of impact and success and try to define the factors that can contribute to or limit the success of civil society coalitions.

2.1. NGOs, social movements, grassroots organizations, and teacher unions

E-Net Philippines consists of 156 members, which vary from individuals, grassroots organizations to large international NGOs. As many different actors can be part of a civil society coalition, it is important to have a closer look at the differences and commonalities between them. This is essential as the various members may bring different backgrounds and strategies to the table. These differences can influence the success opportunities of the coalition.

A lot of E-Net’s members are (members of) NGOs. The term NGOs refers to private, non-profit organizations that are organised around specific social issues. Although the name suggests that they operate without any form of government support, in some cases NGOs are partly funded by national or foreign governments (or both). The structures and scale of NGOs vary considerably. They can operate from local to international level, they can be more or less hierarchal, and they can address a single issue or work as an umbrella under which other organisations can operate. NGOs are so diverse that it is difficult to give a closed definition (Silliman & Garner Noble 1998). When analysing an NGO it is important to look at how the organisation is funded as donors could influence the agenda or structure of the NGO. NGOs are considered significant bolsterers of civil society because of their participatory and democratic approach. They play a key role in donor-, government- and even World
Bank-funded development projects, as agents of democratization (Mercer 2002:6). According to Silliman & Noble (1998:306) NGOs ‘enhance democracy by expanding the number and range of voices addressing government’. In the Philippines, NGOs have contributed to the fight for and transition to democracy. They are considered to have emerged to fill the institutional vacuum caused by the weakness of political parties and trade unions in the Philippines (Clarke 1998a).

The Philippines has the largest number of NGOs per capita in Asia. The Securities and Exchange Commission in Manila estimates that there are about 60,000 non-profit organisations in the Philippines, even though many groups have never registered with a government agency. Though, this number includes private schools and hospitals, and other private non-profit organisations (Wurfel 2003:215).

NGOs differ from grassroots organizations, also called People’s Organisations or Community Based Organisations, as the latter are generally smaller, often membership-based organizations. These organisations are structures through which individuals arrive at common solutions to their problems. They are operating without a paid staff, but often dependent upon donor or NGO support, which tend to be issue-based and therefore possibly ephemeral. NGOs and grass-roots organizations differ not only in organizational terms, but they have different ways they act in, and are affected by, the politics of development (Mercer 2002:6). NGOs can work together with grassroots organisations, which often consist of poor and marginalised groups.

Social movements have been described as a network of collective actors composed of individuals who share common interests and identify with each other, at least to some extent. They are mainly concerned with defending or changing at least some aspect of society and rely on mass mobilization, or the threat of it, as their main political power (Stammers, 1999:394). Social movements challenge existing power structures and are considered key collective actors in claiming the realisation of human rights (ibid).

In contrast with NGOs, social movements are generally less formally organised and are often membership- and issue-based (Clarke 1998a:50).

Although there are differences between the above mentioned actors, these differences shouldn’t be overrated as NGOs can be partially social movements, and social movements can eventually become NGOs. Furthermore, social movements shouldn’t be generalised, as they can vary in scale, size, and many other ways.
Other important members of civil society coalitions are trade unions. In the education field these are the teachers’ unions. This civil society actor differs from the others as it is membership based and has adopted democratic structures. Trade unions are generally democratic organisations in which members have a sense of ownership and citizenship. NGOs on the other hand, often have a self-appointed and co-opted leadership, they tend to be not always accountable to anyone else than the public opinion and their funders, and they often have no clear monitoring and evaluation procedures (Gallin 2000:27). Trade unions and NGOs have in common that they have specific agendas for the improvement of society, and that they can rightfully claim to be serving the interests of society in general. As unions and other civil society actors generally have different backgrounds, aims and set ups, tensions between them are often fact. However, nowadays collaboration seems to be more common, based on the common ground mentioned above. Furthermore, what also should be mentioned is that there is often a cross-over between the civil society groups. One person can be involved in multiple groups at once.

2.2 Defining civil society
Civil society is a term frequently used in this research, but it is not a very closed defined topic. Therefore it is important to explore what civil society is and who is part of it. The term civil society refers to a wide range of actors, including development NGOs, trade unions, community based organisations, think tanks, etc. These actors can differ extensively in ambitions, resources, action and meaning, making the concept of civil society a very diverse domain (Robertson et al, 2006). Civil society can be described as a public sphere where autonomous groups and individuals interact with each other on matters of collective concern. It shouldn’t be seen as one actor, but it is very diverse in terms of membership, constituencies, organisational forms, capacity levels, tactics and objectives (Scholte 1999: 5-7). Civil society is considered to play a key role in the consolidation of democracy, in checking abuses of state power, preventing the resumption of power by authoritarian governments, and encouraging wider citizen participation and public scrutiny of the state (Mercer 2002:7). Civil society tries to influence policies, values, norms, social processes and structures, without wanting to take over government. It is the politically active popular sector of
society. It is a domain largely independent of the state, although it seeks benefits, policy changes, or accountability from the state. Civil society is used to obtain greater accountability from governments and moreover in this time and era, from global governance organizations (Scholte 2004). Nevertheless, civil society can also be co-opted by the state (or private capital). Therefore it should be seen more as a site of struggle, instead of a certain player. Based on the Gramscian notion of civil society as relation of forces, Cox argues civil society is a field of power relations; and forces in civil society relate, in support or opposition, to powers in state and market (Cox 1999:25)

2.3 Rescaling: Civil society coalitions – crossing borders
Civil society actors are increasingly creating coalitions, demanding that their voices are heard in national and international political forums. Although these networks may follow a similar goal, they bring together actors of different sizes, organizational form, capacity levels, tactics and meaning repertoires, and with different relations to the education sector and the state. Some actors within the coalition might be highly organized and influential, while other might be less organized and not represented at all (Scholte 1999).

Organizations can benefit from working in a coalition as they create mutual learning processes and they strengthen their position in the public domain. Working in coalitions however can also bring difficulties, as the coalitions exist of many different members with different views and strategies. In order to achieve their common goal, the coalition members therefore need to negotiate and have to give up some of their autonomy to the collective goal. The different members have to agree upon priorities, identities, aims and cultures of the coalition, which could create tensions. The functioning of a coalition is depending on the ability to construct and maintain a ‘collective identity’. According to Melucci (1992) actors produce an interactive and shared definition of the goals of their action and the terrain on which it is to take place. In this research I considered aspects of internal cohesion and internal power relations and collective identity, as this could be influencing the success or impact of the coalition.
In parallel with the recent developments in global governance, the idea of a ‘global civil society’ has developed. It is a reaction to the need for a new social, economic and political deal at the global level (Keane 2003:2). Global civil society is believed to challenge traditional state sovereignty, as due to globalisation, political activity and political problems are becoming multi-scalar and less place-specific. While the state remains the main locus of power, a reaction to globalization and global governance requires multi-scale oppositions at the national and local level. The main argument is that as global control is shifting from nation states to transnational institutions, civil society should be transnational rather than national as well. The rise of new technologies, the increasing pressure on nongovernmental actors to fill the social service gap left by the state and the intensifying models and spaces for global collective action, have created an opportunity for new efficient forms of transnational NGO activity (Mundy & Murphy 2001:89). However, the rise of a ‘global civil society’ does not mean civil society is entirely globalized, as the national, regional and local levels are still vital for mobilization.

The grouping of different NGOs and/or advocacy networks can be seen as transnational social movements or transnational advocacy networks. Keck and Sikkink (1999) describe transnational advocacy networks as networks that ‘include those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services’ (1999:89). These networks address global issues and institutions, while they try to use their global visibility to create changes at the national level, and try to influence and democratize the structure of national and global politics (Mundy & Murphy 2001:86). Often civil society networks that appear to be transnational are actually nationally rooted movements whose activities are generally coordinated transnationally, but whose main focus is the struggle against national power structures (Keck & Sikkink 1998).

The shift in scale from the local, regional or national to the global that is embedded in the rise of a global civil society, can be analysed as a strategy for civil society coalitions, such as E-Net. Scalar interaction entails networking, knowledge sharing, strategic action, and can create the so called ‘boomerang effect’. This boomerang effect is created when national coalitions that can’t access decision makers at their state level, internationalise their demands through international
networks, key foreign states or international organisations as a way of opening political opportunities at the domestic level (Tarrow 2001). This way, coalitions like E-Net, can be successful at the state level through the projection of their activity to the global scale.

The Global Campaign for Education is a transnational global civil society network with global, regional, national and local demands. It includes an international board and secretariat, regional partners in Asia, Africa and Latin America, national coalitions which advocate for quality public education worldwide and in specific within their country, and their local members, which all participate in multi-scalar activities. The internationally agreed EFA goals count as the framework or global issue that needs to be achieved. The main task for the coalitions is to advocate within different scales of governance to achieve the common goal of Education for All. While roles and responsibilities seem to be divided up, power is not necessarily vertically organised. As part of a transnational advocacy network, E-Net can use scalar interaction to create linkages and multiply opportunities for their advocacy. The linking up of organisations into civil society coalitions and the scalar interaction of transnational civil society coalitions will be analyzed with regards to E-Net.

2.4 Defining Impact & Success
As the aim of this research is to see if E-Net is successful and what factors contribute to or hinder the success, it is important to give a clear definition of social movement ‘success’. However, defining success is controversial (and subjective), as what some may consider a success, others might consider a failure.

As Gramson (1990) describes the easiest way to determine success is to see to what extent the political program is achieved. However this doesn’t take other objectives into account that might not be officially stated, but could be equally important. It may be possible for a network to fail to achieve the stated program, but still have an effect in the public sphere (Armenta & Young 1999:25).

Gramsion (1990) thinks of movement success as a set of outcomes, which fall into two basic clusters regarding acceptance and new advantages. The acceptance cluster focuses on the acceptance of a challenging group by its antagonists as a valid
spokesman for a legitimate set of interests. The second cluster focuses on the new advantages gained by the movement’s actions,

Defining success of social movements however remains controversial. According to Giugni (1999) one needs to be aware of the dangers of looking into movement success. First of all, it assumes that social movements are homogenous entities and therefore the success or failure is credited to the entire movement. This of course is not always accurate. Second, he mentions the problem of subjectivity. The success of a movement is mainly subjectively assessed. Movement participants and outside observers may have different perceptions of the success of a certain action. And some participants may find an outcome successful, while others judge it as a failure. Third, Giugni mentions focusing on success overemphasizes the intentions of the participants, while often outcomes are often unintended and not always related to their demands (Giugni 1999: xx-xxi).

Another difficulty in looking at social movement success is the causal relation between the movement’s activities and the outcome. To determine the impact of a movement, you have to find out what might have happened in absence of the movement (Armenta & Young 1999:36). In this research I addressed this by asking contra-factual questions. To be more sure if the outcomes are caused by the movement’s activities and not by other actors, it is important to gather data on the other actors, such as rulers, political parties, interest groups, the media and counter movements when they exist (Giugni 1999:xxiv).

2.4.1 Internal and external success
According to Burnstein (1999) the success or impact of non-state actors is a multidimensional concept. It can be differentiated into internal and external impact. Although there has not much research been done on the internal impact, this certainly has to be taken into account as internal effects are related to the potential external effects of the movement. For the internal impact I looked at how the size and available resources of the coalition have changed over the years as well as the organisation, collective identity and increase in membership and network. Furthermore I considered the internal cohesion, networking skills, and power relations within the network, and I
looked at the strategic learning of the coalition members as I believe this can influence the potential external success.

For the external dimension impact Burstein (1999) composed three sub-dimensions, known as political, procedural and symbolic impact. Political impact refers to the specific impact of the movement in observable policy outcomes. Therefore, I looked at to what extent E-Net has been able to influence changes in education policies. The procedural impact refers to implicit changes in the decision making procedures of policy makers that recognizes the civil society movement as a legitimate actor. For this dimension of impact, I looked if E-Net is recognised by the government and Department of Education in specific, in policy making procedures. The symbolic impact refers to changes at the public opinion level and to transformations in belief systems and ideologies. Here I looked in what ways E-Net has been able to influence the public and how they use the media for this.

Furthermore, power relations are also important to take into account when looking at internal and external impact or success. The power relations within the coalition, but also the relations with the international GCE, and with the regional organisation can influence internal and external impact.

The above mentioned concepts form the base of my research. I have described how civil society is not a clear defined topic, but can be seen as a field of struggle and it consists of many various actors. In order to gain a stronger voice, these actors link up in coalitions. Parallel with the development of globalization, transnational advocacy groups emerge, which can use the different scales strategically for the purpose of their advocacy. Therefore I have looked at the multiscalar action of E-Net as part of the transnational advocacy network the ‘Global Campaign for Education’.

In the next chapter I will explain which theories I have used, their strengths and limitations, and explain why I have used them combined.
3 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will portray the theoretical framework defining the research before moving on to the research approach. I have used the strategic relational approach as an approach to incorporate other theories. This approach focuses on both structure and agency and tries to understand the complex nature of social reality. This approach allows for different theories to be used, that emphasis different aspects of the topic studied. The theories I have used are: the Political Opportunity Framework, Advocacy Coalition’s Framework and Frame Analysis. As all the theories have some limitations, the combined use of these theories can contribute to a more complete picture and better understanding of how civil society coalitions ‘work’. Furthermore, to include semiotics into the structure and agency debate, I’ve also considered the Cultural Political Economy Approach. A comment that needs to be made is that these theories are mainly focused on the global North and applying them to the global South is somewhat challenging. I will first describe the theories briefly, before explaining how I’ve combined them for this research.

3.1 Strategic Relational Approach

The strategic relational approach focuses on the role of ideas, knowledge and discourse in the relationship between agents and the context in which they operate. According to Hay (2002a:381) social, political and economic contexts are solidly constructed and greatly contoured. These contexts are strategically selective, both facilitating and constraining the ability of actors to the realisation of their strategic actions and intentions. In order to obtain access to the context, actors reflect upon the structures in which they operate. Therefore, the success of actors lies in the capacity to transform aspects of their context and to formulate strategies (ibid. 382). This approach incorporates an understanding of the complex nature of social reality and it can be seen as an umbrella framework, in which Frame Analysis and the Political Opportunity Approach can be integrated, emphasising different features of the research topic.
3.1.1 Political Opportunity Framework
This structural and relational approach tries to see how the political context influences the development and political impact of social movements. Social movements do not exist in a vacuum, but are influenced by the political context in which they operate and where strategies, tactics and goals are tuned to. The political opportunities framework focuses on the political variables of the environment in which the coalition acts. As Dellaporta & Diani (1998:195) describe, social movements are strongly dependent on external variables.

The authors distinguish variables that can influence the opportunities of social movements, namely: political institutions, political cultures, and the strategies of their opponents and allies (ibid. 196). For example the level of openness of the political system, and level of decentralisation can influence the success of the social movement. A system is considered more open the more political decisions are dispersed. In addition, it is also important to look at the political history of the country. According to Dellaporta & Diani (1998:197), the greater the number of actors who share in political power, the greater the chance social movements can gain access to the system. Also relational factors can influence the political context, such as the relationships between political elites, or the relationships between the elites and the movements themselves. The political opportunity framework takes all these factors into account.

As in the political opportunity perspective activists’ opportunities are context-dependent, much attention is given to the world outside the social movement, considering external factors influence prospects for (a) mobilising, (b) advancing particular claims rather than others, (c) cultivating some alliances rather than others, (d) employing particular political strategies and tactics rather than others, and (e) affecting mainstream institutional policy and politics (Meyer 2004:126). Some scholars argue that it promises to explain too much and is effectively neglecting the importance of activist agency (ibid. 126). Therefore, a combined use with other, more agency focused theories is recommended.

For this research I have analysed the political context in which the Philippines’ coalition operates and I looked at the here mentioned variables and I tried to see how this influences the success factors of the coalition.
3.1.2 Frame Analysis
Frame theories focus on the intentional ways in which movement activists seek to construct their self-presentations in order to draw support from other points to critical processes in social movements (Oliver & Johnston 2000:1). This agency approach argues that constructing meaning frames are key activities of social movements. Goffman has described frames as “schemata of interpretation” that enable individuals “to locate, perceive, identify and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Dellaporta & Diani 1998:69).

Collective action frames are action-orientated sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation. Snow and Benford (2000:615-618) define different kinds of core framing tasks, namely: the explanation of the problems, the proposal of alternatives to the problems, and the motivation of people to contribute to solve them.

An important condition determining the success of a social movement is whether frame alignment has taken place between movement activists and the people they intend to mobilize, which can be both public opinion and political parties. In other words, the aim is to create a linkage between the individual and social movement interpretative orientations, so that some sets of individual interests, values and beliefs are matching and complementing the social movement organisation’s activities, goals and ideology. Frame alignment can take place through frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation (Dellaporta & Diani 1998:74-75). In part two of this thesis I explain how the E-Net uses frames in order to mobilize people and reach their goals.

3.1.3 Advocacy Coalition Framework
The advocacy coalition framework developed by Sabatier (1988) is one of the leading frameworks that explains the stability and change of policies. It has a focus on coalitions that share a set of normative and causal beliefs, and understands policy changes as the consequences of coalitions’ competition to translate their ideas into actions. Advocacy coalitions try to translate their belief system into public policy by mobilizing political resources. They adapt their strategies to the political context and the response of the government. The framework argues that policy change can be
seen as fluctuations in the dominant belief system within a given policy subsystem over time (Sabatier 1988: 158).

However, according to Schlager (1995:244) the framework has limitations. Schlager pleads to incorporate collective action within the advocacy coalition framework, as he sees policy change results from actions by individuals seeking to improve their circumstances. The advocacy coalition framework doesn’t explain why actors with similar beliefs collectively press their policy goals, or how coalitions uphold themselves over time, or which strategies they adopt to influence policy changes. By integrating collective action into the advocacy coalition framework, coalitions become active players in influencing and maybe creating and implementing policies (ibid. 265).

Drawing upon Hay (2002b) who pleads for combined use of structure and agency in political analysis, the combined use of the above mentioned theories will cover both structure and agency aspects related to the influence or success of the coalition. This way both the context and the actors’ behaviour will be taken into account. I have taken the political context and the educational discourse into account as contextual factors. And for agency I have looked into the strategic collective action, the motivation and the critical reflexivity of the coalition and its members.

3.2 Cultural Political Economy
While both structure and agency are important to consider in this research, another dimension should be added. Jessop (2004) makes the case that the constitutive role of semiosis in economic and political activities, economic and political institutions, and social order more generally, should be explored as well. Semiosis, which Jessop uses for the inter-subjective production of meaning, refers to a variety of approaches oriented to argumentation, narrativity, rhetoric, hermeneutics, identity, reflexivity, historicity, and discourse (Jessop 2004:161). This is reflected in what he calls Cultural Political Economy (CPE). This post-disciplinary approach adopts the ‘cultural turn’ in economic and political inquiry, without neglecting the articulation of semiosis with the interconnected materialities of economics and politics within wider social formations (Ibid. 159). Discourse (culture) in considered embedded in materialist (political economy), thus factors do not construct meaning ad hoc, but are embedded in a social
world that structures that reality. It is therefore important to look at the semiosis used in the Philippines case as well, as this can generate variation, have selective effects, and contribute to the differential retention, and/or institutionalisation of reaching Education for All.

Another aspect that is important for this research and is incorporated in all the above mentioned theories is *power*, as this plays a role in every social contact. Power relations can influence behaviour and it can be used in order to book success. I analysed the power relations within E-Net, between the E-Net and the government, between E-Net and the regional organisation ASPBAE, and also between the coalition and the international GCE office. The characteristics of these power relations and how they are addressed are interesting for analysing impact and success factors of the coalition. The existing power structures could be contributing to or limiting the success of the coalition. If the government, for example, sees the coalition as a legitimate stakeholder of power, it is more likely to be able influence policies, and could therefore be seen as more successful. The power relations with the international GCE office can also address contributing or limiting success factors.

To sum up, the combined use of the above mentioned theories, allows me to get a better understanding of the complex reality of advocacy coalitions. The political opportunity framework focuses on the political variables of the environment where the coalition acts and how these structures influence the success of the coalition. Frame analysis on the other hand looks at the agency of the coalition. The emphasis in this approach is on the meaning frames created by the coalition and the framing process itself. The advocacy coalition framework combines the influence of structural and agency factors on the success of the coalition. Furthermore, the cultural political economy approach allows me to include semiosis as an additional approach. Through the combined use of these approaches I hope to get a more comprehensive analysis of the advocacy network of the Philippines. In the next chapter I will portray the research approach and explain how the concepts and theories have resulted in a research question and sub-questions.
4. Research approach

In this chapter I will clarify the research approach by explaining my research question and sub-questions and I will illustrate the expected relations between the earlier mentioned concepts and theories in several schemes.

Considering the theories discussed in the previous chapter, this research examines both internal and external factors that contribute or limit the success of the coalition, and considers the reflexivity of the members over these issues. This has led to the formulation of the following research question:

*What has been the impact of E-Net on Philippine education and which internal and external factors, and critical reflexivity over these factors, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?*

Based on the assumption that contextual factors, as well as factors considering agency and critical reflexivity here over are crucial to answer the above mentioned question, I have formulated four sub-questions. The sub-questions address the factors of strategic collective action, power relations, scalar interaction and political opportunities, as I assume that these factors influence the success/impact of E-Net.

- How does strategic collective action, and the critical reflexivity over this aspect, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- How do internal and external power relations, and the critical reflexivity over these aspects, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- How do scalar interaction and the functioning in a transnational advocacy network, and the critical reflexivity over this aspect, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
- Which political opportunities that are available for E-Net on different levels of scale, and the critical reflexivity over these aspects, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?
The research question and sub-questions cover the concepts and theories used in this research. The expected relations between the different concepts can be seen in the schemes below. The first scheme shows the expected relations of context and action and the reflexivity over this and demonstrates how this can influence the external impact/success. The second scheme illustrates the expected relations of the reflexivity over pluri-scalar coalitions. And the third scheme shows both the internal and the external factors that might contribute or hinder the success of the coalition.

The success or impact of the coalitions is the dependant variable of the research. The independent variables are political opportunity structures, educational frames, strategic collective action, strategically selective external context, internal and external power relations, and critical reflexivity.

As can be seen in the schemes, the different independent variables are interlinked with each other, and therefore don’t interact only directly with the dependent variable impact/success.

Scheme 1. Reflexivity about context and action
Scheme 2. Reflexivity about pluri-scalar coalitions

Perceptions of work in coalitions
- Difficulties of internal cohesion
- Opportunities/limits of scalar interaction

REFLEXIVITY over potentialities and limits of pluri-scalar coalitions

REFLEXIVITY over context and its selectivity

Strategic selective internal context
- Internal cohesion
- Embeddedness within the GCE

Partial transformation of the internal context

Internal impact / success

Scheme 3. Internal and external factors influencing success of coalition

Organisational structure of coalition

Power
- Internal
- External

Strategic collective action
- Action repertoires
- Resource mobilization
- Networks / Alliances

Strategic learning / reflexivity

Internal Success

External Success
- Political
- Procedimental
- Symbolic

Strategically selective external context:
- Political opportunities (national & international)
- Educational discourse
- Global civil society engagement
- Media
5. Methodology
Now that the research concepts, theories, questions and variables have been defined, the next step is to explain how the research is carried out. In this chapter I will first describe the methodology, methods and techniques used for this research. Then, I will explain the unit of analysis before moving on to the research limitations and constrains. Finally, I will describe the ways in which I've analysed my data.

5.1 Methodology
My research is grounded in the epistemological stand of constructivism. From this perspective, there is considered to be no objective truth as meaning and reality are socially constructed through the actors’ interactions with the social world (Crotty 1998). As a theoretical perspective the research is guided by the interpretive stand and more specific by social interactionism, as I analysed the perceptions and values of the people I researched. Furthermore Cultural Political Economy allowed me to include semiosis as an additional approach The research is a theoretically informed and empirically driven case study of the Philippines’ national GCE coalition. Snow and Trom (2002) define guiding principles for the social movement case study. A case study seeks to generate a richly detailed and “thick” elaboration of the movement and the context in which it operates. Furthermore it is recommended to use triangulation and multiple methods that include but are not limited to qualitative techniques (Snow & Trom 2002:147).

5.2 Research techniques and methods
With the above mentioned guidelines in mind, I used different qualitative techniques to collect my data. By using different techniques and methods I was able to find many different insights. Qualitative methods seemed more appropriate to this research, as it is more sensible to the social context and is better used to provide a thick description (Bryman, 2004).

Throughout the whole fieldwork, but especially during the first weeks, I had many informal interviews with coalition members, outsiders, youth, and neighbours to get a better understanding of what the education situation and issues were. This was very helpful as it confirmed and gave additional information to the theoretical
preparation I had before the fieldwork. It gave me more insight in the situation and helped me to ask the right questions in the semi-structured interviews I conducted.

I have used semi-structured interviews with coalition members, key figures, policy makers and media contacts. This way I had a guiding set of questions to ask the different informants, but there was also space to elaborate on issues that were addressed in the interview. In preparation of every interview I made myself familiar with the areas of interest and focus of the informant and his/her relation to the coalition. This way I was able to respond to the information given in the interview. All interviews have been recorded, during the interviews I made notes and I transcribed them as soon as possible after the meetings, to obtain as much information as possible.

I interviewed E-Net secretariat staff, board members, executive council members, local members, NGOs, teacher organisations, grassroots organisations and research affiliates. In order to increase the reliability and validity of the research, I also had to ask ‘the other’ and I conducted interviews with government officials, policy researchers, and media contacts. To get a better understanding of the work and the impact of E-Net, it was important to compare the views of both insiders and outsiders. The people in the secretariat helped me organising interviews, but I also used snowball sampling, by asking my interviewees who they thought could be interesting to speak to. Before I went on fieldwork, I also interviewed a member of the GCE international board in London to also include the global perspective to my research.

I used participant observation when working in E-Net’s office, to see how the coalition members carry out their daily tasks and how they interact with outsiders and each other. This also informed me about the organisation and the hierarchy or power relations within the coalition. As my fieldwork was at the same time as the Global Action Week (GAW), I was able to attend/participate in the many activities carried out during the in the Philippines’ case month of action. This action week is globally organised, and it was interesting to see how the national coalition addressed this week and what kind of activities they organised around it. This demonstrated features of the relations with the global GCE, who are the initiators of the Global Action Week. As the international set dates of the GAW are during the Philippine school holidays, E-Net
stretches the activities out over a longer period that starts before the school year is over.

I attended many meetings, workshops, media launches, conferences, festivities, rallies and other events during my stay. It was very easy to attend -and sometimes participate- as the national secretariat always invited me along or made sure I was invited for events they considered interesting for me, sometimes even as ‘guest of honour’. I also visited member organizations in the different regions to make sure I didn’t get a Manila-dominated perspective. These trips were very valuable as they gave me a better insight in what the members of E-Net are doing on a daily basis in different regions of the country and how the relationship is between the regional members and the national secretariat who are mainly based in Manila.

I conducted a focus group discussion with teachers, Local School Board- and PTCA-representatives that are working with E-Net’s member ESKAN in central Visayas. The issues raised during the focus group, were very good examples of the tensions, struggles, and also victories of people working on education reforms on the ground. Besides, it also exposed some of the education problems in the Philippines.

Furthermore, I have used qualitative document analysis to analyse texts and documents from the coalition, the government and the media to obtain information on the goals, strategies and effects of the coalition. I looked at education policy documents and the changes in policy over the past years and compared these with the recommendations and documentation of the coalition. Using document analysis I could also learn which frames E-Net uses for their advocacy and if/how this is picked up by the government or media. During activities such as those for the Global Action Week or the ‘Out-of-School-rally’, it was interesting to see if and how the media portrayed the activities and, moreover, the coalition itself.

In the last week of my fieldwork, we organised a workshop to reflect on the work done by E-Net over the past ten years. The workshop was attended by my second supervisor Antoni Verger and about 45 different coalition members and ASPBAE representatives, who had very diverse backgrounds. We invited people from different regions, ages, duration of membership, organisations, positions, and thematic working groups, to discuss the development, and work done by E-Net over the years. The
workshop was used for critical reflexivity which is very important throughout the research. The workshop contained presentations, plenary sessions and group work and was divided in sessions on ‘political impact’, ‘working together as a network’ and ‘E-Net in the future’. Everything was recorded and outcomes of discussions or group work were collected on Manila paper. The discussions were transcribed and translated where necessary and together with the written output of the workgroup sessions, this formed the extensive ‘workshop documentation’. It was very interesting to have the different members together and to have them critically reflect upon their own work, to learn from previous experience, and to share their thoughts on the different issues discussed. I used the workshop to cross-check my findings and get a more in-depth understanding of the coalition.

I believe the different ways of collecting data -or triangulation- have helped me to be able to draw a more complete picture of success factors of the coalition, and it helped me cross check my findings.

**5.3 Unit of Analysis**
The unit of analysis of my research is the Philippines’ national coalition of the Global Campaign for Education. As described earlier, the national coalition is called E-Net Philippines, who hold their office in Quezon City, Metro Manila. I started my research in the E-Net office, with the national secretary as a start focus point. E-Net Philippines counts over 150 members and due to time limits it was impossible to visit them all, but I did visit various member organisations on different levels in various regions. As a big part of the coalition members are located outside of Manila, I wanted to conduct my research partly in other areas as well. Although most of the national government and institutions are located in the capital, I wanted to talk to members of different organisations nationwide and try to compare their views on the internal cohesion, participation, and power relations of the coalition to the views of the Manila based organisations.
I also interviewed media contacts, policy makers and academics, to get a better understanding of how influential and well-known E-Net is. This way I could cross-check
my findings and come to a better understanding of the success (hindering) factors of the coalition.

5.4 Analysis
Upon return from the fieldwork, the data gathered through the different methods and techniques described above needed to be analysed in different ways.

All the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed as soon as possible after the meeting. During the interviews I made notes of significant things that were said and of notable aspects of the context of the interview. I marked the transcriptions on topics and concepts that guide the research. This way I could easily track what was said regarding a certain topic and I could compare the opinions and insights of the different respondents more easily. The transcriptions of these interviews were my main source of information for answering my research question.

During the participant observation, I wrote down a “thick description” (Bryman 2004) of the coalition, how it is organised, how the members carry out their work, how power relations are reflected though the daily tasks, how members interact and communicate amongst each other and with external actors. This method provided me information about the way of working of E-Net and existing power relations within E-Net.

I collected many materials of the coalition, media and government and used document analysis to study these documents. I read and summarised the documents and compared them with one another and see if I come across conflicting and/or coherent information relevant for my research. I studied education policies and the legal bases of education in the Philippines. The large amount of materials from many different stakeholders helped me to get a better understanding of the political context in which E-Net operates, the educational discourse, the work done by E-Net throughout the years, and some of E-Net’s accomplishments.

In the next chapter information is given on the Philippines, education in the Philippines and history, financing, governance, and problems of education in the Philippines. This information is important to understand the context in which E-Net is working.
6. Research location and research background

This research was conducted in the Philippines, and mostly in Manila where the national government, and most of the financial institutions and education stakeholders are based. However, in order to avoid a capital-dominated research, I visited members all over the country, both in urban and rural areas. The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7000 thousand islands, divided into three island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, which are divided into 17 regions. In 2007 the population was counted 87.96 million (UNESCO 2009).

The Philippines ranks 54th on the Human Poverty Index among the 135 countries for which the index has been calculated (HDR 2009). The Philippines is a knowledge exporting country facing a brain drain, as many skilled and education people are moving abroad in order to find employment. The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) is estimated at 2 million (NSO 2008). The country greatly relies on the remittances (partly) send by these OFWs, which in 2007 added up to a total of US$16,291 million (HDR 2009). In 2005 the total of received Official Development Assistance was US$562 million (UN Data).

The Philippines is a predominant Roman Catholic country, where more than 90% of the population are Christians. The remaining 10% account for the Muslims (mainly represented in the South), ethnic beliefs, and other religions. The official languages for education are English and Filipino, but in the country over 180 languages and dialects are used (Young 2002).

The Philippines has a turbulent past, as it has been occupied by the Spanish, the Americans, has been invaded by the Japanese, and endured a dictatorship from 1972 until 1986 when President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law. After the People Power revolution in 1986, the return of the democracy and government reforms were faced with issues such as national debt, government corruption, and coup attempts (Carino 1999).

On the southern island of Mindanao, rebels have been fighting for decades for a separate Islamic state. Despite a 2003 ceasefire, sporadic violence has continued.
The current president of the Philippines, Gloria Macapacal-Arroyo, has nearly finished her second three-year term, requiring her to step down for the newly elected president in the upcoming 2010 elections.

6.1 Politics in the Philippines
The Philippines is a democratic republic, where the president is head of the state and head of government within a multi-party system. For most part of the American colonial regime before the Second World War, the development of political parties was noted for its extremely elitist orientation. In response mass-based, radical parties were formed to challenge the dominant elite parties. In the post-war years, the formal pattern of a one-party system ended to be replaced by a two-party system. This indicated the inability of the elite to be united in a single party. The increasing intensity of the intra-elite rivalry resulted in regular political violence in order to resolve electoral issues. The violence and corruption rendered the system exposed to, and in danger of, systemic collapse. When Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, the illusion that a democratic electoral system ever existed as a Philippine political tradition was destroyed. The authoritarian tradition of party politics reconstituted itself through the Martial Law regime (Gealogo 2007). At the same time, the Philippines saw a revival of nationalism and a strong cultural propaganda movement particularly among youth, workers and peasants. By the mid 1980s, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) had emerged at the forefront of the most powerful revolutionary movement in Southeast Asia. For the 1986 elections, the mainstream traditional opposition parties supported Marcos’ opposition candidate Corazon Aquino. The Left, on the other hand, decided to boycott the elections and effectively launch a civil disobedience movement against the government and the business firms identified with Marcos and his companions (ibid. 18).

The non-violent overthrow of the authoritarian regime of Marcos would be known as the ‘People Power revolution’. This revolution marked the powerful, but short-lived coalition of various organised groups, dissatisfied military forces, as well as many unorganised individuals, who joined to oust Marcos. However, due to the extreme variance of political interests which have their base in centuries-old inequity, the fragile political coalition soon dissolved. According to Canieso-Doronila (1997) one
of the most important consequences of the People Power revolution, is ‘the passage from a ‘parochial and subject’ political orientation to a participant orientation’ (Canieso-Doronila 1997:101). This involved an awareness of decisional political processes and outputs, and a belief that citizens have the right to participate.

Although no major electoral reforms have been legislated to change the composition of the elite-led Congress, the issues and demands raised by various groups have been included in the 1987 Constitution and legislation (ibid. 101). Furthermore, derived from the 1987 Constitutional mandates, several laws and policies have been created that are important for nation-building. These include, agrarian land reform law, Local Government Code, Philippine education reform, language policy, human rights education, and others. These examples can be seen as attempts by the government to accommodate the social demands articulated by the social movement. Nonetheless, as the mandates are clear, according to the social movement the elite-led government didn’t consider all the demands, and they have failed to address the historical roots of the problems (ibid. 103). Furthermore, for the majority of the population, the lack of information and knowledge about the Constitution and laws, the insufficient knowledge of the legal language (which is English) and the general lack of participation in national decision-making processes, results in remaining outside the mainstream of public opinion making. Therefore, as no broad social consensus has been reached on the issues proposed in the legislation, civil society continues their struggle for reform and change (ibid. 103).

The post-martial law Congress up to the current can be characterised by the restoration of elite democracy. As the former two dominant parties were weakened by martial law, this implied the creation of a multi-party system that is still valid today. However, what passes for political parties are actually coalitions of political clans, meaning certain elite families are in fact the building bocks of political parties (Simbulan 2007:35).

At first glance, the Philippines holds a democratic promise: the media are free and vocal, there is an active civil society, the educated middle class is a significant political force, political structures and institutions are –generally- respected, and there is a high awareness of basic human rights. However, things are not as democratic as it seems (Rogers 2004:114). The Philippines politics is facing problems like corruption,
favouritism and election fraud. The inability of the Philippine democracy to produce sound governance is often blamed on the weak party system that is elite-led (Rogers 2004:114). Furthermore, the lack of equal justice is considered a barrier to further democratic progress.

As the Philippines is a predominant Catholic country, the church is influential in everyday life as well as in politics. Furthermore, civic and political organisations have a long record of participation in Philippine politics. I will elaborate on civil society engagement in chapter 8, when looking at the political opportunities structures for E-Net.

6.2 History of Philippine education

Education in the Philippines dates back to unrecorded history. Much of earliest education was of the primitive or informal type that every people of the world more or less experienced. The existence of ancient writings, Philippine alphabets and historical relics are proof of the existence of an old Filipino culture. However, with the coming of the Spanish around 1565, much of this pre-Spanish culture was destroyed. The Spanish, who came with a high sense of superiority, carried out the work of helping ‘civilise’ the Filipinos. In this regard, Catholic influences played a part in the education of the Filipino people (Gregorio 1976:14).

During the Spanish regime, formal education was carried out in a sporadic and unorganised manner in the 16th century. And although the Spanish did start setting up a formal sort of education, this was not carried out until late 19th century and began from the top, with the realisation of several universities, and worked downward. Education in this period was aimed at the elite, and only few people could benefit from the institutions.

When the Americans took over the Philippines from the Spanish in the late 19th century, one of the first things that was established under the military regime were public schools that were not essentially different from those in the United States. Guided by democratic principles, the Americans established a system of free public education for the Filipinos by virtue of Act No. 74. The first primary schools were established in 1901, the intermediate schools in 1904, and in 1908 the University of the Philippines was established. Professionally trained American teachers, also known
as ‘Thomasites’ were the teachers during this time and English was the language of instruction (Zulueta & Maglaya 2007:154).

When the Japanese occupied the Philippines during World War II, emphasis in education was placed on vocational education and the dignity of manual labour. The Japanese wanted to replace English with the Japanese language. In 1943, under Japanese occupation the Ministry of Education was created (Ibid.).

According to Guzman (2003), the impact of the three colonizers is still reflected on the current education system’s thinking and practices. The Spaniards were successful in propagating Christianity, and making the Philippines the only Asian country practicing the Catholic religion. The Americans laid down the foundation of a democratic system of education. And with a focus on English language and literature, the American influence made the Philippines the third largest English speaking nation in the world. Furthermore, the exposure to the Japanese made the Filipinos aware of their position as an Asian country with great possibilities to develop (Guzman 2003:40).

After independence in 1946 several educational reforms have been implemented. These reforms aimed to realize some of the development goals of the Philippines: to achieve and maintain an accelerated rate of economic development and social progress, to assure the maximum participation of all people in the attainment and enjoyment of the benefits of such growth, and to achieve and strengthen national unity and consciousness and preserve, develop and promote desirable cultural, moral and spiritual values in a changing world (Nolledo 1995).

In the 1960s the Philippines experienced a period of economic growth, making it one of the wealthiest countries in Asia. Education during this period was considered high quality. When President Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, this affected the education system. Many students protested against the Marcos administration, and demanded ending in the ‘occupation’ of the President’s office of the universities. Students played a big role in the People Power revolution, eventually overthrowing the President.

After Marcos was overthrown, a new Constitution was drafted. The Constitution of 1987, which is still in effect today, contains the fundamental aims of education in the Philippines. One of these aims is the right of all citizens to quality
education. As not all Filipino’s could exercise this right, there was an urgent need for government to provide for at least basic education. The period 1990-2000 was declared the decade of Education for All (EFA), and a National Committee was created to prepare a National Plan of Action and to manage the EFA structure. However, the committee proved to be short-lived as after 1993, it was never again convened (Raya & Mabunga 2003:14). Along with EFA, the Philippines also committed itself to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs and EFA goals remain the leading frameworks for education policy and reform (Bauzon 2007:19).

When by the end of the first EFA decade many problems with access and/or quality of education had not been solved, a second EFA decade was launched. A new EFA plan was drafted and it was not until 2006 that this new National Action Plan for Education for All 2015 (EFA 2015) was signed. The new action plan aims at creating functionally literate Filipino’s, and emphasizes the need to provide basic education for all and add, including youth and adults. E-Net was involved in the creation of the Plan of Action and as a member of the National EFA committee keeps track of the progress made towards the EFA goals.

6.3 Governance of education in the Philippines
As in most other countries, education is a core responsibility of the government. The 1987 Philippine Constitution states:

‘The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

[...] Establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels. Without limiting the national right of parents to rear their children, elementary education is compulsory for all children of school age’ (Phil. Constitution 1987)

Since 1994 the Philippines education system is trifocalised. The Department of Education (DepEd) is responsible for the management of basic education. The post-secondary technical-vocational education and training is managed by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is responsible for the management of higher education.

The Philippine education system has experienced many reforms, including decentralization, improved financial management, and strengthening the involvement of all partners in basic education. One of the major policy reforms after the Dakar
agreement is the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. This act aims to provide the delivery of public basic education through a more decentralized governance framework. Based on the premise that decision-making at the lowest level will result in greater efficiency, accountability and manageability, this framework supports decentralization by empowering schools to take a more active role in initiating and undertaking cost-effective innovations at the local level (Manasan et al. 1999).

The DepEd launched the School First Initiative (SFI) 2005-2010, which supports the implementation of the Governance of Basic Education Act. This initiative outlines areas of cooperation and synergy among different stakeholders, and is based on a school based management (SBM) approach. The SBM approach in the Philippines entails ‘reducing bureaucratic restrictions so that the schools are able to deliver results while shifting higher-level offices to supportive, facilitative and technical assistance functions’ (Caoli-Rodriguez 2008:395).

This decentralization framework has led to different tasks for different governmental levels of education. The divisional education offices focus on resources, authority and information management, while the regional offices handle the enforcement of standards and quality assurance among divisions. The central education office focuses on policy, strategic direction, national standards and outcome specification (Caoli-Rodriguez 2008:395).

The School First Initiative is part of The Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), which is the DepEd’s policy framework to enable the attainment of EFA. The objectives of this framework are:

1. Universal coverage of out-of-school youth and adults in the provision of basic learning needs,
2. Universal school participation and elimination of drop-outs and repetition in the first three grades,
3. Universal completion of the full cycle of basic education schooling with satisfactory achievement levels by all at every grade or year,
4. Total community commitment to attainment of basic education competencies for all (BESRA 2006)

This framework consists of five working groups, or key result thrusts, in which E-Net is engaged in: on Building Better Schools, Teacher Development, Teaching and Learning
Strategies, Public-Private-Partnerships, and Changing Culture and Governance. The BESRA program is made possible through a 1 million dollar loan of the World Bank. All education policies of the DepEd should be in line with the BESRA (Interview Gov, 2009).

6.4 Education government and involvement of non-state actors in the Philippines

The Philippines has a long history of stressing the importance of improving basic education, both as a means to and an indicator of national development (Caoli-Rodriques 2008:393). After the first EFA decade 1990-2000, an EFA assessment process was initiated and the Philippines joined the global EFA 2000 evaluation. The outcome of the assessment was a report that acknowledged both the gains and shortcomings of the EFA program. One of the recommendations of the report was to promote greater intersectoral coordination to widen the participation of civil society and other non-government stakeholders (Raya & Mabunga 2003:14).

The EFA assessment process was criticized by CSOs as there was lack of consultations with and accommodation of NGOs in the process. It seemed that even government agencies outside of the Department of Education declared that they had not been involved, but were asked to participate in the presentation of the report when it was finished (ibid.)

Only in the later phase of the EFA assessment process interactions between government and CSOs were channelled through Oxfam GB. Meetings between DepEd and CSOs were facilitated by Oxfam GB, where education officials presented the government’s EFA assessment. The assessment admitted the government’s failure to put in place a ‘grand alliance’ with the different education stakeholders. Many CSOs perceived their participation in validating the assessment as merely cosmetic as they had not been consulted and their inputs were never considered (ibid 22). Nevertheless, the engagement with the government on the EFA assessment made CSOs conscious of the need for a broader network for education reform. This is when E-Net came into existence.

In 2001 the DepEd convened a meeting with CSOs, where an update was given on the preparations for the new EFA plan, and where civil society groups could define their participation in the exercise. The ‘grand alliance’ was reconstructed and was
called the National Committee on Education for All (NCEFA). Civil Society representatives were to co-chair the committee, to sit in the National EFA Technical Secretariat, to sit in working committees, and to participate in Regional Technical Planning Committees.

An Interim Steering Committee was formed to work out a Civil Society Education Reform Agenda, and several activities and roundtable discussions were organised. The action points that emerged from these discussions formed the basis of E-Net’s Education Reform Agenda (Raya & Mabunga 2003:24).

The increasing importance of civil society is recognised by many global governance actors. The World Bank, for instance, has argued that civil society movements need to be developed and strengthened in order to address the unequal social, economic and political relationships (World Bank, 2006). The United Nations has created a ‘Panel of Eminent Persons’ to review relations between the United Nations and civil society. Civil society is seen as a vital driver for change and democratisation of global decision-making (UN, 2004). The increasing involvement of civil society in the Philippines thus fits the international framework/agenda. However, the question remains how real this involvement is, and if civil society is really accepted. I will look into the relation of E-Net with the government, and the nature of this relation, in the second part of the thesis.

6.5 Financing Philippine education
Although the government claims that the biggest part of the budget goes to education, this is still not enough. Critics claim that the biggest part of the budget is going to debt relief and that education suffers from that (Interview RA, E-EC, E-Sec 2009).

In 2009 the public expenditure on education was 2.3% of the GNP (GMR 2009, RO 19). This falls far behind the international urged percentage of 6% (UNESCO). The 2005-2006 annual total aid to basic education counted for US$ 29 million. The DepEd’s budget in 2006 was P121.6 billion (website DepEd). About 90% of the DepEd budget goes to salaries and personnel services, while 4% goes to school buildings and the rest covers recurrent costs such as operating and maintenance expenses as in-service teacher training and instructional aids. Innovative projects and programs are mainly funded through extra budget or by Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the
donor community (Caoli-Rodriguez 2008:394). In line with the government’s priority, most of the ODA is used on basic education. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) have supported decentralisation programs through the provision of loans. Furthermore, grants are another source of assistance. In Mindanao for example, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) has created the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) (Interview Gov, 2009).

While the government claims that education is a priority and that it receives the biggest budget, budgetary constraints are one of the major hurdles facing DepEd every year. Funding allocations don’t match the annual growth in student population and therefore the delivery of quality education is restricted. Schools are experiencing shortages of classrooms, teachers, desks, textbooks, and other crucial resources.

The limited budget of the DepEd results in the debate of the decision makers within the department on prioritising access over quality and vice versa. It is recognised that improving quality learning outcomes in schools requires a enormous investment, let alone to address the problems of the out-of-school youth.

6.6 The education system
With only 6 years of compulsory education, the Philippines has one of the shortest compulsory education systems in the world. The formal basic education system consists of six years at the primary level (age 6-12), which is compulsory and free in public schools, and four years at the secondary level, which is not compulsory but also free in public schools. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is provided for children aged 3-5 years. Non-formal education is provided to out-of-school youth (OSY) and adults, who fail to gain access to or complete basic education.

English and Filipino are the official national languages and languages of education. Indigenous languages are rarely used in schools, sometimes as ‘transitional’ languages of instruction in the first years of primary education to explain the curriculum. Minority languages are more widely used in non-formal education. The Bilingual Education policy of the Philippines puts a strong emphasis on nation building by using Filipino as a linguistic symbol of national unity and identity, and focuses on
international competence by the use of English as a language of wider communication (Young 2002:221).

The central goal of the ‘National Action Plan to achieve Education for All by Year 2015’ is ‘basic competencies for all that will bring about functional literacy for all’ (National Action Plan 2005:1). Functional Literacy is described as ‘having the complete range of skills and competencies – cognitive, affective and behavioural which enables individuals to: live and work as human persons; develop their potentials; make critical and informed decisions; and function effectively in society within the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national and global) in order to improve the quality of their lives and that of the society’ (National Action Plan 2005:2). Therefore the concept of quality in basic education shall be related to the level of achievement of functional literacy.

Looking at gender parity, in the Philippines girls perform better than boys. The participation rate is higher among females and they tend to survive longer in school compared to males. More males are dropping out of school due to employment related concerns. The gender disparities in Philippine education can be seen in the table below, taken from the Education Watch study 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Disparities in Education</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Age Population (6-24 year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending School</td>
<td>70.32</td>
<td>74.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Attending School</td>
<td>29.68</td>
<td>25.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: EdWatch Local Survey)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Statistics in Primary Education (public schools ’05-’06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>72.87</td>
<td>74.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Enrolment Rate</td>
<td>89.84</td>
<td>87.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Survival Rate</td>
<td>58.20</td>
<td>67.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>56.35</td>
<td>66.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: Department of Education)</em></td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Attainment (6 years up)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Grade Completed</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>41.40</td>
<td>38.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>31.30</td>
<td>32.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Level or Higher</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>17.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: National Statistics Office)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean Duration of Schooling</td>
<td>7.1 years</td>
<td>7.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: EdWatch Local Survey)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged Children and Youth</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: EdWatch Local Survey)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Out of School among Primary School Aged Children</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>16.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Gender Disparities in Education (taken from Edwatch 2007:12)*

But even though there are more girls in school, there are still groups of girls missing out and females continue to be discriminated in and outside school.
Higher education in the Philippines is quite well developed, as higher education institutions are spread over most parts of the country. Most Filipino students attend private higher education as this counts for 75% of the higher education institutions in the country. The gross enrolment rate in tertiary education in 2007 was 26% (UNESCO 2009). In line with the international agreements, the Philippine Action Plan is based on basic (primary and secondary) education, and doesn’t include higher education.

6.7 What’s wrong with the system?
When looking at the state of Philippine education, questions are raised. On the one hand the Philippines has always been relatively high on the international standard list for education. Ever since the Americans put a formal school system in place, the Philippines is regarded as a country with relatively good education standards. However, times have changed. While the Philippines used to be high on the Asian education list, it seems countries like Thailand and Vietnam are now outperforming them. The quality of education has gone down over the years and the Philippines is experiencing a setback it its progress towards the EFA goals (Caoli-Rodriguez 2008: 93). Currently, the education system is facing challenges such as average student participation, poor performance of students in local and international standardized tests, persistent inequalities in basic learning resources and is prone to political and economical developments unfolding within and outside the country (Lapus 2008:2).

In 2007, the Mid-Decade Assessment of the Education for All was released. This report illustrated the trends in basic education, acknowledged that progress had been slow and uneven and that key targets will most likely be missed (Raya 2007:21). While in 2007 the Philippines ranked 75th on the EFA Development Index, in the 2009 GMR they ranked 86th, falling behind most Asian countries such as Indonesia, Myanmar, China and Malaysia (GMR 2009).

While the primary net enrolment rate on first sight looks promising (91%), the survival rate to the last grade shows a less optimistic picture (70%) (GMR 2009, RO. 17) This indicates a high dropout rate, especially in the grades where functional literacy is achieved.

The Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey 2003 states there are 11.6 million children and youth aged 6 to 24 out of school, most from the poorest
families. The main reasons for not attending school referred to poverty and related factors. Other factors were employment, housekeeping work, and the high cost of education (FLEMMS 2003). For these out-of-school children and youth there are limited options. The DepEd has set up a Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS) as the main governance agency to guide the evolution of the country’s alternative learning system. The BALS mandate is ‘to address the learning needs of marginalized learners, and to provide a systematic and flexible approach to reach all types of learners outside the school system’ (Guererro 2007:4). While their target population is at least 11.6 million, in 2007 ALS only received 0.17% of the budget of the DepEd (ibid. 6). Clearly, this is not enough. Therefore one of E-Net’s advocacies is to increase the BALS budget and to invest more in non-formal education.

The poor quality of education is also reflected by the consistently low scores obtained by pupils in achievement tests administered by the DepEd over the years. While 75 is the passing mark on the National Achievement Test, the average score of public elementary school students is 57. These numbers show the disturbing image of a reversed reality. ²

The goal of the National EFA Plan is to create a functional literate Filipino society. UNESCO states that 94% of the Philippines is literate, but the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS 2003) states only 84% is functionally literate. Considering that only functionally literate people can actively participate in society, the lower number shows that 16% of the population has limited chances to active citizenship and participation. So again, while on first sight the image looks quite optimistic, the reality is more disturbing.

A possible (part) explanation for the low performance and deteriorating quality of Philippine education is the huge and increasing resourcing gap. While enrolment in basic education has been growing at an average of 2.5% per year, the education budget on the other hand has grown at a slower rate of 2% annually. This results in a decline in per pupil expenditure (Raya 2007:26). The Philippines is among the lowest spenders on education in Asia, and the world. Although the government claims the biggest part of the budget is spent on education, the current level of expenditure is too

² The ‘57-75 movement’ is a private-sector led movement that aims to reverse the education crisis through focused interventions and school-community action, towards system-wide performance improvements. http://57-75.org/home/
low and falls short of the requirement for quality education and reaching the EFA goals. Debt service actually gets the biggest share of the budget, which effectively shifts much needed resources away from priority basic services (ibid 27). The education budget should be increased, as high population growth and a limiting fiscal situation contribute to poor education outcomes (Caoli-Rodrigues 2008:399).

There is an overall consensus among all education stakeholders that action needs to be taken to address the problems. The country has put in place major reforms and programs throughout the years to create a policy environment supportive of the EFA goals. Yet, limited progress in basic education outcomes has been achieved. Frequent changes in education leadership and lack of political consensus, among others, are likely to undermine progress in fiscal and public sector reforms (Interview Outsider, 2009). Since E-Net was formed, there have been six secretaries of education, each with new policies, new views and new networks.

There are also other constrains to positive outcomes of reforms. Bautista et al. (2008) identify several reasons why education reforms don’t transform. First, they claim it is because of a highly centralized system, which doesn’t give teachers and principals the freedom and responsibility to make the best schools for their children and communities. Then, they blame the projectized-approach to reform. Most reforms are project based, externally induced and once the project is over, the weak institutional systems aren’t capable of processing and scaling up successful reform innovations. Furthermore, reforms have focused on education inputs like school buildings, teacher training and textbooks, and have wrongly assumed that these will automatically result in better learning performances and outcomes. Also, reforms have failed to look into the matter of what students should be learning, how it becomes relevant, and in what ways learning can happen in diverse contexts (Bautista et. al. 2008).

Another problem of the Philippine education sector that should be mentioned is corruption. Corruption is prevalent in the Philippines and comes in many forms. The Department of Education is considered to be one of the most corrupt agencies in the Philippines (Reyes Jr. 2007:97). There are many stories about corruption in the education sector, varying from textbook delivery fraud, abuse of monopoly power of DepEd officials and local leaders, and the most recent ‘noodle scandal’ that calculated
noodles for a school feeding program for double the price/value (Interview Outsider 2009). Other scandals within the DepEd are illustrated in a book by Yvon Chua (1999) in which she analyses corruption within the department, and for some mysterious reason is now unavailable anywhere. According to Chua (1999:6) the department is ‘fertile ground for corruption because it’s oozing with money. […] There is so much money available that even those outside the DECS, especially politicians and other officials, demand a piece of the action’.

Concluding, this chapter aimed to provide an overview of the political and educational context of the Philippines. This is the structural context in which E-Net operates. All the above mentioned factors hinder the realisation of Education for All. These are the issues that are addressed by E-Net in their advocacy work. In the next chapter I will look into E-Net and give an overview of the history, evolution, vision, structure and strategies of this civil society network.
### Table 2: Indicators describing Philippines’ progress towards the EFA goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFA 2015 Goals</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Latest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expanding and improving early childhood care and education</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GER in ECCE: 17.86%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Grade 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with ECCE experience: 55.81%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GER in ECCE: 20.53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Grade 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With ECCE experience: 60.72%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality</td>
<td>SY 2000-2001 (%)</td>
<td>SY 2006-2007 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 53.39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 44.33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SY 2006-2007 (%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 54.66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 50.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to equitable learning and life skills programs</td>
<td>2000 (BLP-LSC only)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of learners: 58,360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of completers: 6,791</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005 (BLP-LSC only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of learners: 38,563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. completers: 32,754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(19% of 15yrs old and above availed of literacy and Life skills Training Programs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults</td>
<td>1994 FLEMMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simple Literacy: 93.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 93.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 94.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional Literacy: 83.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 81.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 84.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003 FLEMMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simple Literacy: 93.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 92.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 94.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional Literacy: 84.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 81.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 86.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender quality in education in 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education for good quality</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
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<td>Female: 1.18</td>
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<td>6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills</td>
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<td>Primary: 54.66%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Secondary: 44.33%</td>
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ECCE early childhood care and education; GER gross enrolment rate; CSR cohort survival rate; CR completion rate

* Basic Literacy Program – Literacy Service Contracting Scheme

Sources:
Caoli-Rodriquez (2008), p 397
Basic Education Information System (BEIS), DepEd
Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) DepEd
PART 2: The Philippine Civil Society Network for Education Reforms

7. Education Network Philippines - E-Net

The focus of this research is Education Network Philippines, or short E-Net, which is the Philippine civil society network for education reforms. It counts 156 members, varying from individuals, (I)NGOs, to academics and teachers’ unions. In this chapter I will describe what and who E-Net is. I will look at the origin, structure, vision and mission, financing and strategies of this civil society network.

7.1 Origin and history of E-Net

E-Net came into being in 1999. The perceived lack of civil society participation in the first Philippine Education for All (EFA) decade (1991-2000) led to the creation of the Civil Society Network for Education Reforms, also known as E-Net Philippines.

During the 1999 EFA 1 assessment, this lack of participation was seen as a missed opportunity to engage in setting the Philippine education agenda as mentioned in the first EFA plan. A network of civil society actors combined their concerns and decided to work together and adopted E-Net as their name. During a conference at the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Education in 2000, E-Net Philippines was formalized as an organisation. Working groups were created for the different education concerns: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), non-formal education, education financing, and formal education.

Most founding members were education oriented, but not necessarily. What they had in common is a background in activism and fighting injustice, which still influences E-Net today. Among the founding members were: Oxfam Great Britain (Oxfam GB), Action for Economic Reforms (AER), Education for Life Foundation (ELF), Popular Education for People’s Empowerment (PEPE), Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), and the Asian South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education (ASPBAE) (Raya & Mabunga 2003:24).

Several members of E-Net carried out research to clarify issues around education financing and alternative learning systems, and island wide consultations took place in 2001-2002 to identify issues for education reform and to bring out local stakeholders’ view and recommendations on the education situation.
No other civil society networks existed at that time that had a focus on advocacy for education. This influenced the power relations with the government, as there was no other ‘competition’. E-Net agreed to push for public education system overhaul, not revolution. As mentioned by some members, the call for mass-oriented, nationalist education was left to political groups, while E-Net decided to push for reforms within the public education system (Interview E-EC, 2009). The aim was to build partnerships with the Department of Education and other allies as E-Net believes that in order to obtain the best education for all, many different EFA constituencies and advocates are needed on many different levels (Interviews E-Sec, E-BM, E-EC 2009).

**7.2 Evolution of E-Net**

Since the formation of E-Net, their membership has greatly expanded to 156 members. Influenced by the mass-oriented political background of the founding members and based on the concept of ‘inclusiveness’, people’s organisations and local empowerment groups joined E-Net.

The island wide consultations were great opportunities to generate interest from civil society, get new members on board and broaden the constituency. Furthermore these events introduced E-Net to key government officials at the executive and legislative level. These consultations resulted in the creation of the E-Net Reform Agenda (E-Net ERA 2002). This document reflects the experience and analysis of the broad membership of E-Net and was guided by the principle of ‘inclusiveness’ (E-Net ERA 2002). The Education Reform Agenda contains an outline of the principles and strategies behind the reform agenda, its evolving framework on education, and cross-cutting and sectoral agendas.

Equity and access, participation, financing and quality were identified as cross-cutting agenda in the education sector. Specific changes sought in the different education sectors such as Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Formal Basic Education, Non-Formal Education/Alternative Learning System, and Higher Education were identified and these counted for the sectoral agenda. All the issues on the
agenda reflected the areas of work of E-Net’s members, with the majority involved in non-formal education.

With the reconstructed ‘grand alliance’ - the National Committee on EFA - and the Education Reform Agenda, E-Net had a structure to engage with the Department of Education. Although it was reported the Department of Education (DepEd) was not averse to civil society, it was still difficult for civil society organisations to engage in the planning process for the new EFA 2015 plan. DepEd continued to use the structures that were already in place (Raya & Mabunga 2003:24).

Yet, civil society organisations (CSOs) continued to engage with the government through media conferences. And to boost EFA efforts at different levels, E-Net joined the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). Alongside initiatives at the global level, CSOs organised a Philippine Action Week for EFA in 2002, and since then has participated in the Global Action Week (GAW), initiated by the Global Campaign for Education. Besides being a member of the GCE, the president of E-Net is also a board member of the international GCE board.

Furthermore, E-Net is also a member of the Asian South Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), which is the regional network of civil society members working on the realisation of Education for All. Through this membership, E-Net has been able to engage the sub-/regional platforms of advocacy and they have been a role model for other civil society coalitions for EFA in the Asian-Pacific region (Interview ASPBrep, 2009).

E-Net now officially co-chairs the National Education for All Committee (NEC) with the Department of Education (DepEd). This can be considered as a great opportunity to engage with the government and influence education policies, but it can be questioned if the relations are equal and how this is exercised.

7.3 Structure, vision and mission
During the founding meeting in 2000, the vision and mission of E-Net were drafted. The vision, as stated in the Education Reform Agenda and on their website is as follows: ‘E-Net Philippines envisions a Filipino society where quality education is a basic human right, and everyone has access to multi-cultural, gender-fair, liberating, life-long education’ (E-Net website).
In order to achieve this vision, the following mission was formulated: ‘E-Net Philippines commits to expand and strengthen civil society participation in reforming the Philippine education system and in developing alternative learning systems with special concern for marginalized, excluded and vulnerable sectors’ (E-Net website).

E-Net’s vision on education is much broader than most of the international education agreements, which tend to focus on only primary or basic education. E-Net has a more holistic view on education, including ECCD, life-long-learning, and Alternative Learning Systems (ALS). This has always been the framework as some of the founding members of E-Net are working on life-long-learning and ALS, such as ELF and PEPE. As the national coordinator clearly pointed out in the Manila workshop:

*Our work is not confined to schools; we also serve those who are out of school*

(Interview E-Sec, 2009)

Although some E-Net members also represent higher education within the network, this is not a main focus point for E-Net. This could be influenced by the international agreements, which focus on basic education.

During the first General Assembly in 2002 E-Net adopted its Constitution and By-Laws (Interview E-Sec, 2009). In this document the rules and regulations of the network are written down as well as the organisation structure and the rights and responsibilities of the members. The Constitution and By-Laws of 2002 are still valid, but up for revision in the 2010 General Assembly.

E-Net also identified four main goals, for which they identified specific activities:

- Establish, build and strengthen E-Net to sustain its initiatives in education reform,
- Ensure and institutionalise civil society’s active participation in the entire education process and in the pursuit of education reform,
- Pursue reforms that will improve the content and system of Philippine education,
- Strengthen international solidarity in order to redress existing disparities that prevent us from achieving the goals of Education for All (Raya & Mabunga 2003:26).
Guided by a rights-based approach, E-Net uses the international Education for All framework as a frame to mobilise people and carry out their advocacy.

*And EFA more or less was a good frame by which they can hold on, hold government accountable and rally a broad sector of society and international community into an advocacy* (interview E-Net M, 2009).

Impelled by the international agreements, the government also uses this framework to address education policies. This frame alignment could contribute to the success opportunities of E-Net.

### 7.4 Organisation structure

As mentioned earlier, E-Net currently counts 156 members, varying from individuals to large (I)NGOs. Membership is voluntary and open to all organized stakeholders in education from civil society such as students, teachers, parents, school administrators, personnel, secular and non-secular institutions, people’s organizations (POs), (I)NGOs, etc. For individuals who like to join E-Net, but who are not linked to an organisation, the Board of Trustees will decide upon their membership. All members are considered equal, however associate members have no voting power and cannot become officers (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

All member organisations have equal voting power and are considered equal no matter size or background. However, it seems that the members that are most active throughout the year have more influence on the network. Furthermore on a day to day base, the board and executive committee are the highest decision making components and the secretariat is the support unit of these ‘higher’ components. In reality however, the secretariat carries out most of the work for the network and is therefore considered quite powerful. The secretariat represent E-Net in many meetings and have...
contact with education officials and other important persons. Whenever they are not sure on an issue, standpoint or strategy they will inquire the board. The board then functions as a sound board (Interview E-Sec, 2009). However, the people in the secretariat are very much aware of and highly respect the democratic structure of the network and don’t misuse the power they (could) have. Scheme 4 illustrates the organisation structure and the hierarchical links between the different components of the network.

7.4.1 General Assembly
The General Assembly (GA) is the highest decision making body/sphere. This meeting is composed of representatives of E-Net national and regional members and/or chapters. Each member organisation has (at least) one representative to the GA. During the GA members deliberate and adopt E-Net’s general programs, campaigns, policies, services and projects. Furthermore, in this meeting the constitution and by-laws can be adopted and amended.

During the GA the fifteen members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) are elected by delegates of each national affiliate organisation. Only members of E-Net affiliates who are in ‘good standing’ for one year, are qualified to seek an elective position (Constitution, Article IX). People are elected by secret ballot and it will be decided by plurality of votes. Also during the GA, final decisions on controversial issues affecting E-Net will be made and appealed to (Ibid, Article VI).

The GA is held biennially. The first unofficial General Assembly was held in 2000, when education advocates gathered to talk about EFA. This forum was spearheaded by the E-Net Steering Committee and mobilised more than 100 participants from academics, NGOs, and POs, and can be considered a starting point for E-Net, even though it was not an official General Assembly. In 2002, the first official General Assembly was done during the Global Action Week. In this GA, the Constitution and By-Laws were agreed upon, the board was elected at large, and the Working Groups, functions and members were formalised. In the third official GA in 2006 INGOs became members of E-Net. In the next GA, which is scheduled for 2010, the Constitution and By-Laws will be up for revision, and most likely new board members will be elected. As the current president has been running for 3 out of 4
terms, it is probable that there will be a new president elected (Interviews E-EC, E-Sec, 2009).

7.4.2 Board of Trustees & Executive Committee
The Board of Trustees (BOT) consist of 15 people elected during the GA. In order to have nation-wide representation, ten members represent the various members of the different regions in the Philippines. The other five are the members of the National Executive Committee (EC), which are the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and auditor. The Executive Committee officers are elected during the general assembly from the members of the Board of Trustees. The president chairs all the meetings of the GA, the BOT and the EC, he or she speaks on behalf of E-Net on its stand on issues determined by the GA, BOT and EC, and represents E-Net in local to national and international assemblies. The current president has served three out of the four terms, and was first elected in absence (Interview E-EC, 2009). The Executive Committee exists out of people that are experienced and respected.

7.4.3 National Secretariat
The National Secretariat is responsible for the daily work and management of E-Net. At the time of my fieldwork there were four people working in the secretariat: a national coordinator, a deputy coordinator, an administrative/finance staff, and an advocacy and campaigns associate. They all have their own responsibilities, but due to the lack of human resources these seem to overlap and everyone seems to multitask. The national coordinator heads the secretariat and has the highest decision making power of the secretariat.

To work in the secretariat you don’t have to be an education specialist. The majority of the secretary staff actually has a different background in for example land reforms. However what seems more important is to have an activist background. In general, an activist background is illustrative for the identity of Philippine civil society.

*I come from the activist background, that’s really the kind of background that we have here. But it’s really difficult, I don’t know if this is relevant, but if you’re working with marginalised groups, it’s very important to have a framework that goes beyond education (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*
One of the functions of the secretariat is ‘to provide support services to the general assembly, the Board of Trustees, and the National Executive Committee in the performance of their functions’ (Constitution Art. VI).

When looking at the formal structures as stated in the constitution, the secretariat is described as a support unit. However, in reality it seems like the secretariat is doing more than only managing day to day office work and supporting the other components of E-Net. While most of the decisions should be made at the board and executive level, in reality the secretariat has decision making power as well, as this is needed when carrying out their day to day work of managing the network.

7.4.4 Regional Bodies & PIECE
The Philippines is divided in three regions: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. As E-Net is a nation-wide network, there are representatives of all regions in the board. The regional representatives are chains between the national secretariat, the board, and the regional members. They are responsible for the communication from the local (regional) level to the national, and vice versa. Although all regions are included in the network, most members can be found in and around the capital. Some members from other regions complain as they find most activities and advocacies are capital-based. Because of the distance and financial constrains, it is not always possible for these members to attend meetings and take part in other organised events. Fortunately for them, there is a strong push for localising EFA and EFA advocacy, making it more inclusive for local members as well.

A special program of E-Net is the Partners In Education for Community Empowerment (PIECE) program in Southern Mindanao. This program, which started in 2007, under the Aid to Uprooted People (ATUP) program of the European Commission focuses on strengthening schools and community structures as focal points for community reconstruction. The main implementer of this program is Oxfam GB (Cotabato City office) and E-Net serves as a project partner. For this, they have set up an office in Mindanao and they have three staff working there. The staff members in the local office are separate staff of the secretary, specially focussed on the PIECE project and
through this project they can advocate for the whole EFA agenda both at local level of Mindanao, and at the national level.

*This PIECE project is a comprehensive assistant for rural communities, covering many areas of assistance. We believe education is the best medium, an instrument in transforming the situation of peace and development in time, but maybe in a long period of time. And we do also believe that school is the best institution, best structure, for transforming this kind of education (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*

The region of Southern Mindanao is a conflict affected region, where hostilities have been taking place for decades between the government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Force (MILF), finally forcing the formation of an Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). This region has its own organization structure, which makes it even more difficult to advocate for policy reforms.

*The program has put education in these municipalities very complicated, as two of the municipalities is under the ARMM, which is an autonomous government, they have their own system of education governance, which is a little bit different from the central government (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*

Although the PIECE might be seen as a separate project, it is an important part of E-Net. Through the PIECE program they are advocating at the local level and reaching the conflict affected area of Mindanao, where the education situation is especially worrying. The fact that there is an E-Net office there has had a positive impact in terms of carrying out activities and advocacies in the province (Interview E-Sec, 2009). This shows the importance of physical presence in an area, and it could be a strategy for E-Net to expand their office to other localities as well.

**7.5 Financing E-Net / Money matters**

Although E-Net has several financial resources, the lack of funds is defined as a limiting factor by many coalition members. Money is needed to carry out the campaigns and advocacy work and E-Net tries their best to obtain resources from different actors.

The main financial support comes from Oxfam GB, which has been with E-Net from the start. They have provided E-Net with a grant to set up and run the civil society network for educational reforms. At the time of writing, this institutional fund was in its final stage, and E-Net has to look for other funding. Unfortunately the Philippines is not an Fast Track Initiative (FTI) country, and therefore it is also not possible for E-Net to receive the Civil Society Education Fund, which is linked to the FTI. This fund is for
many other national education coalitions linked to the GCE a great opportunity to continue and/or expand their work (Interview GCErep, 2009). Furthermore E-Net receives funds from the Global Campaign for Education for the activities in the Global Action Week.

Another source of funding is through the Real World Strategies (RWS), a capacity-building program for education advocacy in the region, set up by ASPBAE and the GCE. This program was designed as a ‘demand-driven, context based capacity-building effort, built on the “real world” campaign needs of education campaign coalitions to strengthen their abilities to achieve targeted, time-bound, concrete policy change objectives’ (ASPBAE website).

The PIECE project is funded by the European Commission with Oxfam GB Cotabato office as the main implementer. The campaigns and workshops E-Net organises are on voluntary basis. Members don’t receive money for their work, but might receive transport costs and/or food contributions.

For additional funding, E-Net carries out research, helps large INGOs with the evaluation of their programs, and hands in project proposals with large institutions such as the EU. Furthermore E-Net tries to engage other stakeholders such as corporations, to support them for example with the production of materials for the Global Action Week. However, as E-Net is registered as a non-profit organisation, it is difficult to engage with commercial activities. Another strategy to mobilise financial resources is through the members, the local government, or community for activities organised together. As a board member of E-Net described:

In our case because we are not funded, we gather resources among ourselves, and then we also get resources of the community, of the Local School Board, or through the local leaders, the barangay council, or through the development council, to take part in share in the provision of whatever materials that we need (Interview E-BM, 2009).

It should be mentioned that funding generally comes with a sort of dependency. Often donors in some ways influence the agenda, as they are in a more powerful position. As E-Net is not a coalition provided for by external funding, this kind of dependency is less of a problem. Furthermore, the smaller organisations are largely depending on funding from the secretariat for activities. By looking at local funds through official structures such as the local government, this makes them more independent.
Although the funds of E-Net are now restricted and this certainly limits the possibilities of their advocacy work, not all depends on money. Coalition members also recognise that still a lot can be done with limited funding. Some interviewees even claim that more money makes members less productive:

In the beginning there was very little money for the secretariat. The individual members were active and we were spending our own NGO resources. Then you get funded, although it is still small, it funded the secretariat. But there are also times when we are saying, maybe it resulted in some other saying ok, let the secretariat do the work, they are being paid. Or say, since there is money, give us some money. So, maybe in addition to encouraging, maybe we should not have too much money, or it should not be seen as oh E-Net has surplus there. So that people will have to say, when they really believe in advocacy in addition to service delivery and they want to do it within E-Net and therefore they contribute to it (Interview E-BM, 2009).

However, financial support would make things easier for E-Net. At the time of writing there were new plans for ‘additional renewal’, which includes new island wide consultations that look into what the members want and expect from E-Net, but also what they on their part can offer to the network.

7.6 Strategies
In their pursuit to reform the education system and realise EFA, E-Net uses different complementary strategies. On their website they state that they ‘shall initiate, pursue and support reforms in the Philippine education system towards achieving access to good quality education. E-Net focuses on:

- civil society participation and partnership with government and other development stakeholders in the process and system of education and education reform;
- strengthening of non-formal/alternative learning systems through policy reform;
- proposal of bills and amendment of existing laws pertinent to education’
- education financing; (E-Net website, 2009)

Furthermore, E-Net recognises the importance of partnerships with government and other stakeholders. Therefore, one of the main strategies identified is ‘to build a strong social movement on education that will not only give birth to education advocates but also start change processes at the community level – urging communities to take action on what they identify to be their problems on the ground’ (E-Net-ERA 2002).
However, while partnerships are pursued, E-Net makes sure they are maintaining independence and integrity to advocate on behalf of poor families and communities, the freedom to innovate, and the flexibility to adapt changes where necessary (E-Net ERA 2002). With these initial focus points in mind, E-Net’s makes use of different strategies to pursue their mission, including:

- Building legitimacy
- Social mobilisation
- Networking and communication
- Political pressure
- Evidence based advocacy
- Research and knowledge production
- Engaging the government
- Targeting education politicians and officials

By working with many different stakeholders, E-Net builds legitimacy. Furthermore, over the years the network has grown, every year the Global Action Week draws more people, and E-Net strategically uses social mobilisation for other activities such as press conferences, workshops and rallies. A notable strategy example of E-Net was to organise a workshop for Out-of School youth. For three days these youth learned about community work, education advocacy, media work, and public speaking. After the workshop they would speak in GAW-activities and with the DepEd in order to verbalise the problems of the many out-of-school youth in the Philippines. This way, E-Net builds a stronger constituency, including and mobilising the group they are advocating for, and let them do their own (evidence based) advocacy.

Evidence based advocacy is a way for E-Net to pressure policy makers. E-Net members conduct research on education financing, Indigenous People’s education, adult education, gender, and Alternative Learning initiatives and use the collected data for advocacy. A good example of this is the research on education financing, which led to the formation of an Alternative Budget initiative that had political impact within the Philippines. This initiative is further explained in chapter 10, on political impact.

Furthermore, to generate information, E-Net carried out island wide consultations that put emphasis on civil society perspectives on education issues.
Information is shared among the members, which strengthens their capacity. Another way for E-Net to generate information is through concrete engagement with key government agencies and officials and also with regional and international institutions, which facilitated civil society access to public information.

In terms of media strategy and influencing the public opinion, E-Net generates articles in print, interviews in radio programs, and television appearance. In addition, the activities for the Global Action Weeks also generate media interest. Moreover, E-Net disseminated policy briefs on indigenous education, youth and adult education, the status of education, on education in armed conflict areas and through the Education Watch paper, they disseminated policy positions in aid of legislative and executive actions (E-Net Report 2009).

Another important strategy for E-Net is to engage with education politicians and officials that they call ‘champions’. These are people within the government that have similar views on education and have great sympathy for E-Net and its advocacy work, and can be very supportive of the network. These champions are especially important for the sustainability of the relations with the DepEd as there is a high turnover in education secretaries, while these champions stay on. They are also important for information distribution, as although E-Net is recognised as co-chair it sometimes can be difficult to obtain information from the DepEd.

That is part of our engagement to work with different individuals and political groups with agencies of the government and definitely there are always positive opportunities for that processes, champions we can work with in the bureaucracy and in the administration (Interview RA, 2009).

Over the years, E-Net has also recognised the importance of local advocacy. As formal education in the Philippines is largely decentralised, the local authorities are also important education stakeholders. By engaging with Local Government Units (LGUs), there are more options for education improvement at the local level.

Ok if it’s not possible at the national level so we go local. There’s so many ways to achieve the same objective (Interview RA, 2009).

A good example of this local advocacy is the advocacy for the Special Education Fund, which is a fund for Local Government Units to spend on education, consisting of 1% of their real property tax. Not all LGUs are aware of this fund and E-Net is working together with them to create awareness about this. Through this engagement with the
local government, E-Net not only advocates for their EFA agenda, but they also introduce E-Net to key government officials, who can become strategic partners or ‘champions’ in their goal to realise Education for All.

In terms of government officials in LGUs, we have this structure. The government has a structure, the Local School Board, where the members and the mayor and the barangay captain and many other people in. So we do our best to get them involved and its more on raising the awareness that they have this special education fund and they have to use that special education fund to finance the education for their constituency, and not to use it somewhere else. We are still trying to raise awareness of these people, because some municipalities do not know that these Local School Boards exist and it should be on the municipal level, every local government should have a Local School Board. More so for the barangay captains, they are not even aware that they are on the Local School Board. Even the sometimes the mayor, they know about the special education fund because that is stipulated in the constitution, 1% of the real property taxes goes the SP Education Fund, you see that (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

As described above, there are many ways for E-Net to carry out their advocacies, generate knowledge, build a strong constituency, mobilise resources - both human and financial -, and pressure and work together with the government. These strategies will be explained more specifically in the following chapters. How the different members in the coalition work together, will be discussed in chapter 9.

In this chapter E-Net is introduced. The origin, structure, vision and mission, financing and strategies are discussed. Over the nearly ten years of existence, E-Net has grown from a civil society initiative brought together to discuss the lack of civil society influence in the first Philippine EFA decade, into a nationwide network over 150 organisations and individuals working on Education for All. They commit to expand and strengthen civil society participation in reforming the Philippine education system and in developing alternative learning systems with special concern for the marginalised, excluded and vulnerable sectors. The focus on these sectors is influenced by the inclusive political background of the founding members, who have been working on non-formal education and creating a counterforce to the elite-dominant government. They have different strategies they use in order to pursue their goal, including political pressure, social mobilisation, evidence based advocacy and engaging the government. In the next chapter I will look into the political context in which E-Net operates and
what the opportunities and challenges of this context are in achieving Education for All.

8. Political context: The opportunities and challenges for civil society engagement

The political opportunity structure assumes that the success of social movements is partly dependent on the political context. In this chapter I will look further into the political climate in the Philippines and the opportunities for civil society, and in specific for E-Net, to engage. In order to understand the way that E-Net engages with the government I will first look at the political context in the Philippines throughout the last decades before E-Net’s existence, and how this was limiting or enhancing civil society participation. As some of E-Net’s members have been part of civil society struggles to improve social standards including education in the Philippines even before E-Net came into existence, I believe it is important to explore this in order to understand the background of E-Net and the level and nature of civil society engagement in the Philippines in general.

Furthermore, I will look into the opportunities for E-Net to engage the government, both in terms of political context (structure) and E-Net’s interventions and strategies (agency). As times have changed and politics have changed, E-Net’s strategies of engaging politics might also have changed. I will elaborate on how, by strategically reflecting on both the political (and educational) context and the network itself, E-Net has adjusted its strategies.

And finally I will look into the international political and networking opportunities for E-Net, and how the international and regional context, and the global education agenda can influence the opportunities for success of E-Net.

8.1 The pre-E-Net era

As mentioned before, the Philippines has a rich history of civil society activism. Ever since the 1900s, there have been civil society organisations (CSOs) that protested against the government on the issue of land ownership and other agrarian problems. In the 1960s, triggered by worsening poverty and increasing political repression, great numbers of NGOs emerged (Carino 1999:84). They faced additional difficulties during the period of Martial Law (1972 – 1986). While the government during this period claimed that they envisioned a ‘new society’ that would be guided by popular
participation and sharing state power with the people, in reality many NGOs and other CSOs were considered subversive and security risks, and were objects of suspicion, hostility and outright violence (ibid. 84). Since 1986, mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines has arguably developed a distinctive repertoire, popularly known as ‘People Power’ (Hedman 2006:10). Civil society gained national importance in the latter part of the martial law regime, fulfilling functions the government did not. Many NGOs had built up strong relations with poor communities. Many activists, including members of E-Net, joined the illegal left-led resistance. As an interviewee pointed out, the Martial Law years had a negative impact on education:

_All throughout the period of Marcos Dictatorship education was really, for some reason, suppressed—not given priority, maybe because the main opposition to the dictatorship was coming from the academic sector_ (Interview RA. 2009)

When in 1986 President Marcos was forced to step down by the non-violent People Power revolution, many people believed this was the end of an era. Civil society organisations, that were part of the revolution and had been operating during the dictatorship, had been functioning as alternative delivery systems, channels of popular discontent, and models of a desired relationship between the state and the people (Constantino-David 1999:28). A new government installed by the People Power revolution, could not ignore these organisations. Students and teachers also played a big role in the non-violent overthrow of the dictator (San Diego 2005), including some of E-Net’s members:

_I think it has something to do with the historical development of NGO movement in the Philippines because the strong movements were coming from the youth—the activist submission of the youth starting 60’s going on to the 70’s which developed in the Philippines into the anti-dictatorship movement. So it was the youth, and then the teachers, very strong movement, specially the late 1970’s. We’re all coming from that tradition_ (Interview RA, 2009).

Most of E-Net members have a background of activism, especially the founders, who have been part of the anti-dictatorship movement. This background influences E-Net until today. During the Marcos years, political blocs were conceived and/or established, which were pro-democracy and against dictatorship. The term ‘political blocs’ does not refer to political parties, but in the Philippines setting it is popularly used to refer to ‘organisations which embrace ideological belief systems that are seen as alternatives to the paradigms of those who hold state power’ (Abao 1999:272). As
there were several blocs grounded in different ideologies of social democracy, national democracy, popular democracy and socialism, they had in common that they were non-party formations. The choice to build non-party formations is rooted in the mass movement bias of the blocs. Over the years, their main way of working was in the extra-parliamentary arena, mainly pressure politics through strikes, demonstrations, etc. Lobbying for a legislative agenda, or other parliamentary work, was carried out mainly to strengthen and gain more concessions for the mass movement (Abao 1997:274). This mass movement bias is also represented in the organisational base. All blocs have consciously politicised People’s Organisations around their ideology. Furthermore, the blocs recruit members from these organisations to strengthen the mass character of their individual organisations. According to Abao (1997), among political blocs, having no mass base means being a “hollow” bloc. Moreover, wanting to be considered an ideological bloc, they have to have an ideology. Additionally, a bloc can only be considered a serious challenger of state power, if backed by a significant mass base (Abao 1997:274). After the success of the People Power revolution, these blocs were expected to be part of the restoration of democracy. People were euphoric and favoured or wanted to be part of the post-Marcos administration.

The successor of Marcos, President Corazon Aquino, is remembered for the ‘restoration of democracy’ and the realisation of a new constitution, which limited powers of the presidency. Her administration put strong emphasis on civil liberties and human rights. In many sections of the new Constitution of 1987, the importance of people’s participation was recognised. The constitutional emphasis was on the role of NGOs as guardians of the public interest (Carino 1999:84). Several laws provided for civil society organisation (CSO) representation in Congress and in local special bodies. Although it seemed the state provided an enabling and facilitating environment for CSOs to exist, the question remains how powerful these CSOs could be in influencing government and policies. Even though the mechanisms for consulting CSOs were in place throughout government, real CSO participation was not necessarily taking place (Diokno 1997). Advocating for issues of social justice and equity within the newly installed democracy seemed a difficult mission. As the restored elite held seats in both the Upper and Lower house, reform issues that were originally centrepiece of the
Aquino administration were diluted. While the Left (-civil society) called to reorient public spending towards basic provisions for people, the government ignored this call and insisted on debt services (Abao 1997:275).

As the number of NGOs increased rapidly during the administration of President Corazon Aquino, some had questionable integrity, were set up by politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats, and aimed at personal advantage, rather than public welfare (ADB 2007: 2). In response, in 1991 the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) was established, to promote professionalism, expand reach, and increase effectiveness of NGOs (Constantino-David 1997:30).

While Left during this time started to see a decline in membership, the political blocs collectively started a reconceptualising process and rethink a new Left project on the level of organisation and strategy. It was during this time that the political blocs, from which many civil society organisations derive, were explicitly moving toward the state and acknowledging the importance of struggling within the state, rather than just challenging it from the outside. Furthermore, the idea of a national project anchored on local realities arose, and the previous practice of “centralism” was complemented with localised initiatives and engagements (Abao 1997:276). These visions are still represented within E-Net today, as most of the founders come from the anti-Marcos political blocs.

During the time of President Fidel Ramos (1992 – 1998), NGOs inspired vibrant public discourse and debate and helped to redefine the content of politics. Civil society became progressively institutionalized and professional. President Ramos was criticised by leftist groups for his economic reforms such as privatisation, trade liberalisation, and deregulation. In the next elections, many NGO leaders campaigned for Joseph Estrada, who became president in 1998. During Estrada’s presidency, several NGO leaders got government positions. The current president of E-Net, Edicio dela Torre, served three years as the director-general of the Technical Educational and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), which turned out to be a great learning experience that would later also benefit E-Net (Interview E-EC, 2009). However, Estrada’s pro-poor image soon became an illusion, and he quickly lost the support of civil society, and was ousted by another small People Power revolution after his corruption trial was aborted in 2001 (Liwag-Kotte 2001:21).
The current President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, came to power in 2001, initially with support from civil society. However, accusations of fraud in the 2004 elections reduced her popularity. During this time, E-Net came into existence and civil society participation was also becoming increasingly important in the international agenda. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo claims to have increased CSO participation, but critics question whether this is more rhetoric or reality. After almost nine years in office, many civil society organisations criticize President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for the lack of pro-poor policies, and only serving the middle and higher class (Interview RA, E-EC, 2009).

It was during this administration that the National EFA Plan was drafted and that civil society engagement became more important. As described earlier, E-Net was officially recognised as co-chair of the National EFA Committee and started engaging the government, and DepEd in particular, on an institutional basis. Although in the beginning, E-Net had good hopes for this administration, this soon diminished:

*We were filling big hopes on this administration when they start assuming office. She put up a good team but then because of politics, ambitions and corruptions the administration got deteriorated; then the education got forgotten along with many other reforms that were initially started (Interview RA, 2009).*

However, the newly gained position as co-chair offered opportunities for E-Net to engage the government.

### 8.2 Engaging the government
To effectively influence educational policies and legislation, it is strategically wise for civil society to organise themselves in a network, rather than loose organisations. This is confirmed by a DepEd representative, as she mentioned:

*That’s the beauty we have the E-Net. Because we will not be dealing with so many people, with so many sectors, with so many backgrounds. So when they face us, E-net will be the one.*

>>So if E-net didn’t exist?

*O yeah, it would be very difficult, it would be... messy! E-Net is a coalition, they speak with one voice (Interview Gov, 2009).*

Although the success of civil society shouldn’t be judged by how easy they make the life of a civil servant, this quote does show that by linking up into a coalition, they have a stronger voice, and they have more chance of engaging the government which would rather deal with one actor as opposed to many loose organisations. Of course the
willingness to collaborate depends on many more factors, but in this case, the creation of a coalition has been useful in terms of engaging government.

The DepEd’s structure and policies, offer several opportunities for civil society to engage in policy making procedures, and to influence education regulations. Over the years E-Net and its members have been learning ‘how the system works’. As mentioned in the interviews with both E-Net members and DepEd representatives, it seemed an important benefit for E-Net that its president had served in government for several years. For the DepEd, he was considered as someone who had been part of the system and therefore they could trust, and for E-Net it was very useful to have someone who knew the ins and outs of the bureaucracy (Interview Gov, E-BM, 2009).

An official occasion where E-Net engages with the DepEd is through their position as co-chair of the National EFA Committee. In this way, the engagement of civil society was institutionalised. This was perceived as a great achievement for E-Net. Not only are they co-chairing, but through this position E-Net is also an appointed member in the Technical Working Group of the Literacy Coordinating Council and the Technical Working Group for EFA. However, the role of co-chair also comes with the complexity of being the watchdog on the one hand, and on the other ‘partnering up’ with the government. This struggle can best be illustrated by the following quote:

If you cannot decide something is good or bad, you just call it a site of struggle. So the EFA Committee is a site of struggle! It really depends, and it is! It has its limitations, you have to be polite, you have to be formal, but yes it’s also good… they cannot shut you up, they have to give you all the documents, and as in anything you have all these formal processes... so! (Interview E-EC, 2009)

By strategically reflecting on this new position and struggle, E-Net recognised the importance of advocating both from within and from outside:

You can be so easy adapted to discussion, diplomatic .... What about the tradition of shouting from the outside? It's very difficult for the same person to do it; actually it is almost impossible no? I cannot bang my fist next to the secretariat of education. But if no-one raises it outside... (Interview E-EC, 2009).

In order to be most effective, E-Net also built a strong constituency of people outside of government, and therefore be able to advocate both from outside and within.

Even though E-Net is recognised as co-chair together with the government, it is not entirely clear how equal or real this partnership is. While E-Net has an official
position, it isn’t recognised as a full partner in policy formulation and decision making.
Therefore it is questionable what the nature is of this relationship and how
government officials see these civil society organisations; as valuable partners in the
struggle to realise EFA, or as a convenient ‘picture-taking’ opportunity to score on
best-practice by the inclusion of civil society. This issue can be illustrated by quotes
from one of the interviews with a DepEd representative:

That’s the beautiful thing in the Philippines. Well we still have NGOs that are focusing on
critiquing the government, but I think in general the Philippines has graduated from that stance.
So from watchdog, they are now considered as allies. And through the EFA we are saying, you
are not just the watchdogs, but you also have responsibility as CSO and so for the attainment of
the EFA plan. So you’re not just there to watch us, but to be with us, through that NEC, that’s
really the venue where in the community where one sector could work with each other. They’re
partners, not just watchers (Interview Gov, 2009).

However, on the other hand is mentioned:

We are really engaging the CSOs from planning to implementation. And in terms of their
contributions to the actual service delivery, most of the NGOs are providing services for as far as
ECCD is concerned. So community based ECCD programs. And then the ALS, that’s for the OSY.
So that’s basically where they are, so for us they are service delivery (Interview DepEd, 2009).

This example illustrates the unclear position of civil society’s relation to the
government, as they are considered watchers, partners, and/or service deliverers. For
E-Net this is also not always clear:

But then you can have a whole range from ‘I listened to you, thanks! I already listened you, do
you still want me to implement it? That’s too much!’ And sometimes they actually use various
structures, like this national EFA committee, to score points, good points, in international
reports. We’re not only consulting, but we even institutionalised their participation. And they
tell us that directly, they say, ah we will report this; this is an achievement (Interview E-EC,
2009).

Besides being co-chair on the National EFA Committee, E-Net also engages with the
Department of Education through the Bureau of Alternative Learning (BALS) and the
Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC), both which are agencies that are have programs
for learners not in school.

The Bureau of Alternative Learning (BALS) is the section of the DepEd that is working
on non-formal education. Many of E-Net’s members come from a tradition of
education work in what now is called the Alternative Learning System. It is probably
because of this background that although E-Net focuses on the broader Education for
All agenda, they have a special concern for the marginalised, excluded and vulnerable sectors. Or as a member explains:

*You know as civil society, we should not concern ourselves with the business of government in education, but because government is not putting attention into the disadvantage, that is where we should come in (Interview E-M, 2009).*

E-Net developed an analysis of learners falling through the cracks, in terms of geographic site, sector and identity. According to E-Net, the poor, the differently able, indigenous people, child labourers, Muslims, and girls are the most vulnerable groups, and these will be hit hardest by crisis events (EdWatch 2007).

Not only is E-Net’s advocacy aimed at preventing especially these vulnerable groups from dropping out, but they also advocate for more relevant education system, that caters for the whole society. According to a DepEd representative, Alternative Learning Systems is a makeshift measure for OSYs, but the ultimate goal is to bring them back into the public, formal education system (Interview Gov, 2009). This view differs from E-Net’s vision, who argues that a standard form of formal basic education will not be able to address the different contexts, the multicultural nature of communities, and the different learning needs (Interview E-EC, 2009).

As E-Net and the BALS both aim at developing and investing in Alternative Learning Systems, they sometimes work together.

*E-Net is of course an advocate of Alternative education. Our relation with them, they are partners; partners maybe in advocacy, partners maybe in technical. They are successful. And they are really good partners in building communities, building relations, because through them we can build relations with other agencies (Interview Gov, 2009).*

However, in terms of influence, it is unclear if the BALS recognises E-Net as partner in advocacy, or they are regarded mainly as service deliverers. Therefore, the relation between the Bureau and E-Net still leaves room for improvement. The lack of recognition of E-Net by the Bureau is reflected in the following quote:

*But for this year we were not able to ask for an increase in budget in ALS, because the government that is funding is the bureau of ALS of the government. They said ‘we have enough budget, we could not even take it anymore’, and they don’t take into consideration the work that is done by civil society. It’s like they think of their own provision and they say they have too much and they cannot handle theirs any more. And that’s a difficulty on our part. They are not thinking of us, of other service provider (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*

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The other government agency that is working on out of school learners, is the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC). This council was created in 1991, to formulate policies and coordinate national efforts towards the development of literacy skills for life long learning in a global society/community (UNESCO 2008:7). The LCC recognizes the importance of having a multi-stakeholder constituency, and they appreciate E-Net as a civil society representative:

Actually E-Net as I see it is really doing a lot, to negotiate the marriage between those in government and those outside. And because of the excellent leadership of the people there, he is also the co-chair of the EFA, so that’s already formalising the marriage of those in government and those out government. For some time there was nobody or no institution doing that (Interview Gov, 2009).

The Literacy Coordinating Council often consults E-Net, they work together and organise conferences to stress the importance of literacy programs in the Philippines. As the LCC has both national and local divisions, this is also a good venue for E-Net to push for their localised advocacy.

These are the formal structures in which E-Net engages the government in order to advocate for education reforms to realise the EFA goals. This work hopefully results in impact. More examples of ways of engaging the government, and the impact this generates are described in chapter 10, on impact.

8.3 The times they are a-changing

E-Net has been working on education reforms for ten years, and during these years many things have changed. The political climate has changed over time, the network has grown, the problems in education have developed, and the international education climate has evolved. As a result, E-Net has adopted and developed new strategies to work with this new reality.

First of all, the political climate in the Philippines has changed. In the 60s and 70s there were strong activist movements and many mobilisations. Left wing groups played a dominant role in anti-regime demonstrations. Labour unions, teachers, students, and other organisations, were very active in the ousting of President Marcos (San Diego 2005). During this time, mass mobilisation was a strategy often used by civil society. However, now things have changed:
In the 1990’s there was a low gradual infusion of new visions in the youth movement but it has never gone back to its original activeness (Interview RA, 2009).

...Yes, because the trends are changing, it’s not like before, before we could just go out onto the streets and say ‘Let’s give the children the education they deserve!’ but that’s not the way it is now (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

This new reality calls for a different approach. Instead of mass mobilisation and marching in the streets, E-Net now uses more evidence-based advocacy, and engagement with the government in order to push for reforms.

The political background of E-Net members also plays a role in the strategies of engaging government, as an interviewee pointed out that in the Philippines it matters whether you are a National Democrat or a Social Democrat. During the Marcos period, Social Democrats generally would be the ones with higher education, and who would know how to write and be in the media, but National Democrats would be the more politically oriented revolutionary group (Interview E-Sec, 2009). As many of its members and many of its board members came from a National Democrat tradition, E-Net from the start has been very careful about sending the message that they are really sincere about engaging the government, but that they also have clear positions on the kind of education reforms they want (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

Furthermore, what also changed over time was the government itself. During the time of E-Net’s existence there has been a great turnover in education secretaries, and E-Net has already seen six in office. This high turnover, led to changes in DepEd policies as different secretaries had different approaches and priorities. In response to this trend, E-Net soon realised that for the purpose of ‘sustainable advocacy’ they needed to aim their advocacy at education officials and so called ‘champions’. These champions were open to E-Net’s advocacy and shared the same frames. They could help E-Net in their advocacy work by sharing information and vocalise their advocacy within the Department, and E-Net also provided them with position papers and information on local education issues.

My thesis is that reformers in government in general, but in particularly in Southern countries, particularly in the Philippines, will be minorities. So obviously minorities by share of power politic will have less capability, but that doesn’t mean the limits are pre-set, there is manoeuvre. However, if they have a constituency outside, and the constituency is at least supportive, or is
coordinating, they can use that cleverly to increase their political leverage and maybe that they can also offer additional arguments (Interview E-EC, 2009).

The collaboration with these champions has been successful, and contributed to E-Net’s success opportunities.

While there was a turnover in education secretaries, the position of national coordinator has also been filled by different people. These different national coordinators had different approaches as well. However, the different approaches also reflect the different times in the existence of E-Net, as they are linked to E-Net’s development throughout the years. In the earlier years, E-Net had to fight for the official recognition of the Department of Education. It had not yet established the formal position of co-chair, and therefore the strategies of engaging government were different. One of the main difference in strategies is that the current coordinator started doing budget tracking and engaging other government institutions besides the DepEd. Through the budget tracking and the Alternative Budget Initiative, E-Net started to engage with Parliament:

They started to engage parliament. In my time, I was really hesitant to do this, because this is also another area you know, just like media, an area that is very difficult to have a handle on, they come and go, they are only there for four years, and then you don’t know if they have another term, if they are continuing this committee on education, whether they continue to supporting this area, it’s so much investment to be lobbying there. But they have done it (Interview ASPBrep, 2009).

This was a strategic move to improve education and increase the budget, through creative interventions with other stakeholders. Maybe a next strategy would be to engage with the Department of Finance on the utilization of Official Development Assistance.

Another recent trend is that E-Net over the years got more global and Asian oriented. Through the collaboration with ASPBAE, and their participation in the Real World Strategies, subregional (Southeast Asian) collaboration gained more importance. Through ASPBAE initiatives like Education Watch, and civil society participation tracking in South East Asian countries, national coalitions like E-Net learned more about the situation of education and civil society participation in neighbouring countries. This led to sharing of learning experiences, strategies, and
working together to strengthen civil society and create a stronger voice from the South.

Some members see the recent development of Asia as an upcoming international power, as a possibility to engage in a new regional political arena:

Well my own proposition is initially we should operate within ASEAN, with Indonesia, Cambodia, because as ASEAN is starting becoming an intergovernmental forum, trying to mimic the EU and all that, it can become a second arena, so it does not just become a lateral horizontal coalition, but it can also become an actual arena of engagement (Interview E-EC, 2009).

This suggests a possible shift within the global governance of education, as the (sub-) regional level seems to become more important. This also shows the importance of scalar interaction, and how civil society networks are ever more using different scales in order to push for their advocacy.

Another recent development, as mentioned earlier, is that E-Net recognized the importance of local advocacy:

That is part of the general governance strategy in the Philippines, even while we hope for and struggle for improvements at the central government level, there is more hope and in some ways more effort electing local officials, and influencing local officials, more transparent, more participatory government. That’s smaller scale, so maybe we can influence better. But this is maybe the development of the last 5 or 7 years. Before that we thought advocacy work was at national level (Interview E-BM, 2009).

Through their members they are increasingly working together with Local Government Units, Parent-Teacher-Community-Associations and other local stakeholders of education. The current debate is on how to set up local EFA committees that will keep track of the local progress towards the Education for All goals.

By strategically reflecting on the context and their own actions and impact, E-Net was able to adjust, develop and improve their strategies in order to have a bigger impact.

**8.4 International political and networking opportunities**

As mentioned in the first part of this thesis, the international political context is also important to consider as, especially in this time of globalisation and global governance, this can contribute to or limit the possibilities or impact of the national coalition. The international regulations and agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals provide E-Net with very workable frames.
E-Net is recognised as the Philippine national coalition related to the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and they are also a member of the regional organisation ASPBAE. These international relations can benefit E-Net in several ways. The fact that E-Net is related to an international well-known global campaign adds to their credibility and they can benefit from the reputation of the GCE worldwide. While the international GCE continues to put pressure on international institutions and donors to meet the EFA commitment, it is also constituted by national coalitions to pressure national and local governments to reach EFA. E-Net can use their relation with the global GCE to learn about the international education discourse and debates, and through its links with the international GCE, E-Net remains up to date on the international campaigns. One benefit for the Philippines in that perspective is that the current president of E-Net is also a board member of the GCE international Board. But, as it is a mutual learning process, the GCE also learns from E-Net as they have the local knowledge on the education situation and the government’s willingness to act. This information can be used by the international GCE for their international advocacies.

Furthermore, as it is an internationally organised event, the Global Action Week perceives a lot of attention which E-Net can use for their advocacy at the national level. The international magnitude adds to the status of the event and this can help to attract high profile people.

In a regional perspective, E-Net has active ties with ASPBAE. The value of the linkage ASPBAE and E-Net is a stronger coordinated voice from the South, especially South East Asia and South Pacific. According to an ASPBAE representative this is necessary as she stated in the workshop:

*In many conferences abroad, South East Asian delegates seldom talk. They are so soft spoken, they are so polite and they don’t push their agenda as much as the other sub-regions do. For example, as much as South Asians or Africans do. We hope we could have this stronger voice from Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and all other countries (Workshop Transcription 2009:22).*

Therefore, the linkage between E-Net and ASPBAE is important as it helps to develop a message together.

Another benefit of the partnership of E-Net and ASPBAE is getting to know and engaging the sub-/regional platforms of advocacy such as UNESCO, South East Asian Ministers of Education (SAMEO), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the
Asia Pacific Parliamentarian’s Forum (APPF), and even the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It is important to keep track of and participate in these (and other) platforms, as this is where the secretary of education, congressmen, senators, donors and funders are also engaged in.

Moreover, through the membership of GCE and also ASPBAE, E-Net members can participate in international and/or regional conferences and events. These are good networking opportunities to engage and establish links with other education stakeholders. When national coalitions participate in regional conferences where government officials are also present, the experience is that these officials become more open to negotiations with the coalition when back in their country. An example of this is given by one of the interviewees:

_When E-Net gate-crashed at the UNESCO Bangkok EFA Coordinators’ Meeting, we met DepEd people. Before that meeting, we have been knocking at DepEd’s door, but they would not let us in. After the meeting [in Bangkok], they began to entertain us (Interview E-Sec, 2009)._  

For ASPBAE it is important to obtain information from the national levels to use for their (sub)regional advocacies. This is provided through E-Net. This way the organisations strengthen each other.

Furthermore, the Real World Strategy (RWS) funds are channelled through ASPBAE. This fund aims to contribute to achieving specific policy changes at the global, regional and national level to escalate EFA progress. One of the initiatives derived through the fund is the Education Watch initiative. Education Watch is an independent, citizen based assessment of the status of basic education at regional, national and local level, designed to monitor the progress towards EFA, carried out by ten Southeast Asian coalitions including E-Net. The initiative was successfully implemented by the coalitions, who developed ownership of the project, became stakeholders amidst what they described as ‘a kind of belonging, a feeling of solidarity’ between the different Southeast Asian ‘colleagues’ (Razon 2008:25). RWS initiatives like Education Watch, help E-Net to engage both governments and donors on their policy reviews and plans for EFA, compelling attention to the neglected goals and neglected groups for concrete and systematic action. The RWS is an important financial resource for E-Net that allows them to work together with ASPBAE on (sub-) regional and national education initiatives. As the RWS fund is channelled through
ASPBAE, this makes E-Net somewhat reliant on the regional organisation. However, there seems to be good ties between E-Net and ASPBAE.

The close ties of E-Net and ASPBAE might be partly related to the fact that the previous national coordinator of E-Net, now works in a high position for ASPBAE. Although E-Net would have been part of ASPBAE even without this link, it shows that personal linkages can sometimes be beneficial for the coalition.

Through ASPBAE, E-Net thus also engages with other national coalitions in the region. The coalitions can share experiences and learn from each other. E-Net is considered as an example for other Asian countries. In 2004, members of E-Net Philippines together with ASPBAE went to Indonesia to share their experiences with the new Indonesian coalition that was coming into existence at that time. The Indonesian coalition was so inspired by the work done by E-Net that they named themselves after the Philippine coalition. The name of the brand-new Indonesian coalition was ‘E-Net for Justice’ (Interview ASPBrep, 2009).

Although not all members, especially the ones working on a more local basis, are directly aware of the work done on the regional or international level, other members recognise the importance of having those international linkages:

*So this is the thing without GCE, without ASPBAE, E-Net has maybe only one wing, but because GCE and ASPBAE, E-Net has more or less two wings (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*

On the national level, E-Net doesn’t only engage with the government and its members, but on many occasions, they also communicate with other education groups like Philippine Business for Education (PBEd), Synergeia, and the recently established Education Nation, that aims to put education high on the agenda of the presidential candidates for the 2010 elections. Even though these other education coalitions might have different aims and approaches, when there is a common ground that fits E-Net’s reform agenda. E-Net is the only civil society coalition that takes the whole EFA agenda into consideration, but as they recognise that education is a multi-stakeholder business, they use their networks to strategically work together to push for their Education Reform Agenda and the realisation of EFA.

In this chapter I looked at the political context in which E-Net operates as the national and international political context influences the opportunities for the network. As a
response to the elitist-led and -favouring political system, the Philippines has a rich civil society history. After the People Power revolution political blocs developed in order to create a counterforce against the government that remained to serve the elite. While nowadays civil society participation is institutionalised, the question remains how much actual influence they have. E-Net has been recognised as an official partner in the National EFA Committee. While this is a great opportunity to have any kind of impact, the reality shows that the position might not be as influential as hoped. By strategically reflecting on the political context, both national and international, E-Net adjusts their strategies and improves their opportunities for success. The coalition strategically makes use of the different scales in order to pursue their goal, reaching Education for All. The scalar interaction contributes to the success opportunities for E-Net as this creates more opportunities to engage and push for education advocacies. While the political context is a structural factor that influences the success of the coalition, in the next chapter I will look into the agency of the coalition. I will explore the benefits of working in a coalition and look at the internal success E-Net has had over the years.
9. Coalitioning, an added value?

While the external political and educational contexts influence the success or impact of the coalition, so do the internal factors of the coalition itself. Civil society organisations tend to organise themselves in coalitions or networks, demanding that their voices are heard in national and international political forums. Organisations can benefit from working together as they create mutual learning processes and they strengthen their position in the public domain. However, coalitions exist of many different members with different views and strategies. In order to achieve their common goal, the coalition members have to negotiate and give up some of their autonomy to the collective goal.

This is where the influence of agency matters. The scale and composition of the coalition, the members and relations between them, the different responsibilities, the motivation of the members, the strategic collective action, and the critical reflexivity of the network and its members are all factors that may contribute to or hinder the success of E-Net. How does a network with so many different organisations in scale, backgrounds, and objectives, work? Are there any tensions between the members? What is the added value for the members to be part of the network? And what has been the internal success of the network? These are the questions that will be addressed in this chapter.

9.1 Working together

The network counts 156 members nationwide which is further strengthened through linkages and partnerships with organisations at all levels: global, regional, national and local. One of the initial strategies identified is to ‘build a strong social movement on education that will not only give birth to education advocates but also start change processes at the community level – urging communities to take action on what they identify to be their problems on the ground’ (E-Net, Education Reform Agenda 2002).

The aim is to bring different stakeholders together, and E-Net has been quite successful in bringing people together varying from individuals, People’s Organisations, local and national NGOs, INGOs, to teacher unions, and academics. This great variety of members has identified the EFA framework as the common agenda:
This common domimator is education reforms and working for EFA. That's one. And then probably the exercise of democracy in the organisation, consultations and engagement of members into common activities and advocacy nature of work. And then the spirit of helping one another, working together. Probably another factor is E-Net is not exclusivist. E-Net is a very inclusive organisation, open to all organisations working for human rights, EFA and education reforms (Interview E-EC, 2009)

While the common agenda is the comprehensive EFA framework, not all members are working on the total package. There are members who focus mainly on ECCD, gender, Alternative Learning Systems, or other sectors of the EFA agenda. However, the members seem to recognise the importance of the complete EFA agenda and agreed that this should be the focus of E-Net as a network.

E-Net’s strength is its ability to unify the different organisations. In terms of weakness related to this, this great variety limits the positions on issues that E-Net could take. But when individual members (organisations) have a specific stance on an issue that the coalition has not (yet) agreed upon, they can advocate for this separate from E-Net.

*If you want to do your own advocacy for another topic, you can do so on your own. We bring a separate issue. So that is the consensus, if you want to advocate for a position which is not yet approved or not a common position, you can do it on your own. But if we already have come-up with a common position, then we can do it as E-Net. I think that is the agreement they have because you cannot please everybody* (Interview RA, 2009).

The general consensus is that when organisations join E-Net, they have to embrace the mission and vision of the network. They don’t have to adjust or change their vision and mission, but as a member of E-Net they have to be aware of the vision and mission of the network. As one of the interviewees pointed out:

*They are not required, but to be compelled to unite. They have to meet with others. We make them understand we are all education stakeholders, there's no point of not moving or fighting with each other...* (Interview E-Sec, 2009)

While in general organisations seem to be are aware of the importance of working together and are aimed at collaborating, sometimes there are tensions:

*Sometimes we lose members or they become inactive and there are also inviting splits within member organization and they fight. Somehow it affects the coalition but those are the realities of coalitions—some people are active at one point and suddenly they become inactive. But at least one of the strengths of E-Net is that it has a multi-sectoral membership coming from the different NGOs* (Interview RA, 2009).
Sometimes there is competition regarding research, as researches often are funded, and some organisations would compete to receive funding. Tensions or competition between similar organisations within E-Net can also exist when one organisation has to represent E-Net in a regional meeting. Not everyone agrees on why this organisation is the one who should represent. The E-Net board and/or secretariat then have to act as mediators.

In education coalition research and literature, tensions between teacher unions and NGOs are often mentioned. Fortunately according to my interviewees, this is not really the case in the Philippines. Maybe one of the reasons for this is that there are many different teachers’ organisations in the Philippines. These organisations have different backgrounds, come from different political stance and have different ideologies. There is not just one leading union which is most powerful, but they are splintered into several separate organisations.

Furthermore, a lot of the tensions between teacher unions and NGOs are regarding so-called para-teachers. In South Asian countries like India, the government hires non-professional teachers to respond to the expansion of primary school enrolment, and the limited public spending. However, these issues are not so prevalent in the Philippines, as here you cannot teach unless you have an educational degree (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

Another difference of the Philippines compared to other Southeast Asian countries, is that the teachers’ organisations in the Philippines are not officially recognised as teacher unions by the Department of Education. The department claims that in order to be recognised they need to have a membership of at least 20% of the teaching force. As there are so many different unions, there has been non organisation large enough to be recognised as a union by the Department of Education.

There have been many attempts trying to link the different unions, and merge them into a larger, and therefore possibly stronger union, but with no success (Interview E-EC, 2009). It could be beneficial for E-Net if the teachers organisations would link up, so that they would have a broader constituency and would be recognised by the government. It seems the ideological differences between the unions keep them competing and even create tensions within existing unions that
might lead to more splintering. An example of this is when the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), which used to be a member of E-Net, in 2007, split into two separate organisations over differences in ideology and strategy. The one part, more radical, remained called ACT, while the other part went on under the name of TEACHERS Inc (Interviews E-Sec, E-EC, 2009).

There are four teacher organisations that are members of E-Net: TEACHERS Inc, Teachers Dignity Coalition (TDC), Samahang Mangagawang Pilipino-National Alliance of Teachers and Office Workers (SMP-NATOW), and Teacher Organization for Philippine Public Schools Sector (TOPPS), the latter two being members of Education International.

Unions have a different structure than NGOs, as they work on a membership base and come up for the rights of their members. Teacher unions are often blamed by NGOs to solely advocate for improving salary and standards for teachers, without looking at the quality of education and the broader EFA agenda. However, the teacher organisations within E-Net also focus on the broader agenda.

*We [teachers] also raise other issues like the Philippine government's commitment to the EFA goals, and the women empowerment, the ECCD, with E-Net and even the ALS. The partnership between the teachers and LGUs and civil society is very important, in raising the issues, in our struggle (Interview E-M, 2009).*

Teachers’ organisations membership within the network has increased over the years. However, as the membership of teacher organisations, NGOs and other civil society actors in E-Net is still quite balanced, this doesn’t cause internal tensions.

In terms of influence, it seems that the most powerful members are not necessarily the largest organisations, but rather the most active. There are smaller organisations, which are more active and therefore better heard within the network rather than some large and relatively inactive members.

*Of course the loudest voices are the most active voices (Interview E-M, 2009).*

The larger INGOs in the network don’t seem to be more influential than the smaller local-based organisations, as long as they are equally active. Even Oxfam GB, which has been supporting and funding E-Net from the start, does not influence the agenda more than other members:
Oxfam in no way did it try to impose its advocacy on E-Net. I think in terms of advocacy agenda, Oxfam is very clear, it’s up to you, but Oxfam is also an advocacy organisation. It wants to make a statement in terms of the Oxfam agenda, but it does not impose (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

It seems however, that the grassroots organisations, as they have fewer resources and are less structured, cannot be as influential as the NGOs and teachers’ organisations. Of course, the question of being active also depends on the organisation’s own resources, both human and financial.

Another factor that might influence the activity and influence of an organisation is geography. E-Net is a nation-wide network, but most of the national advocacy happens in the Northern Capital Region, where government and the E-Net secretariat are based. It is therefore easier for organisations in the same region to participate in Manila based events. However, not all events are Manila based, as there are many local initiatives in the regions, such as local GAW activities.

The board members are the regional representatives, but most of the communication of the regional members is with the secretariat through email and cell phone. As face to face contact is very important, the staff of the secretariat tries to visit the different regions as often as possible. However, the workload and the financial constrains of the secretariat, prevent this from happening. It is also not always possible to bring people from the regions to Manila, because of financial limitations and also the time it takes to travel this archipelago. However, local organisations have appealed for stronger ties with the secretariat and the national advocacies. The physical presence of secretariat staff has proven to contribute to success opportunities:

I think we have been successful in Quezon City, maybe because the secretariat is here, so we are really able to connect with members. And the thing is in Mindanao for example, we have staff there already, and I have been pushing the staff to go beyond the PIECE project, because we are here as E-Net members, we are here not only as PIECE (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

In their pursuit to localise EFA, board members could utilise their position as regional representatives better, to link the local with the national initiatives and advocacies.

9.2 The sum bigger than the parts
Collective action among civil society actors is motivated by different reasons. They strategically want to have a stronger voice and benefit from a stronger position. Furthermore, linking up increases the possibilities as through the linkages with others in the network, members can go beyond the limitations of their own organisation.
Moreover, members can share their experiences, skills and information (Mundy & Murphy 2001). This can be considered the added value of being part of a network.

*Being one with E-Net ads to our certain prestige, our strength (Interview E-M, 2009)*

However, E-Net members have different backgrounds and different strategies. As E-Net is a network based on ‘inclusiveness’ it aims to bring together members from all areas and levels working on education (and other reforms), and all members are valued for their own contribution. Some organisations which join E-Net don’t have advocacy as their core strategy, but are more grass-root based and providing services. These organisations are still important members, as they have a lot of local knowledge and can help provide information that is used in E-Net’s (national) advocacies.

For example E-Net counts several local organisations that are providing ECCD services. As this is a neglected area of education, it is important to include these organisations in the network, even though they are not (yet) so familiar with advocacy work.

*Also the ECCD programme is also our way, of encouraging our members to get involved with our advocacies. Because when you are in a coalition it’s not easy to say to the members, ‘provide us these services, you join us in our advocacies’ and you cannot give them something in return. Especially the people’s organisations, they do not have their own funds. And if you are going to join us, we at least have to give them something in return. Include service, something that would improve them (Interview E-Sec, 2009)*.

Thus, E-Net helps these local organisations by letting them use the secretariat office for ECCD classes that will help the ECCD instructors to get an officially recognised diploma. This way there is a mutual benefit for both the organisations and the network.

The relationship with people working on the local level is probably one of the characteristics that differentiates E-Net from other coalitions, and is something that is part of their identity. E-Net is a member-driven network, which highly values members-interaction.

*In the Philippines there are a lot of coalitions, and some of the strong coalitions, they have become strong because they have a large secretariat. And the secretariats have become so large that it was able to do advocacy even without a constituency. And this is I think one tendency that E-Net doesn’t want to have, doesn’t want to become (Interview E-Sec, 2009).*

Ever since E-Net started, the board has been very vocal about the way of working with the members, and tackling the vertical relationships among members. This possibly
derives from the Left political bloc orientation, where many of E-Net’s members come from. E-Net facilitates pedagogy of dialogue on problems and issues that determine the quality of life of the people. This pedagogy is based on Freirean principles of people-centred transformation (Hin-Toh & Floresca-Cawagas 1997:534). This way E-Net has national and local advocacies based on local knowledge, and it strengthens the local initiatives with information on national and international. The ideal is that there should be ongoing dynamics as the members are the network (Interview E-sec 2009).

In this perspective it is also interesting to look at how E-Net members perceive their collective identity as identity production is an essential component of collective action (Dellaporta 2006:92). In social movements one the one hand, organisations aim to affirm their own specific formulation of their collective identity as the global identity of the movement. On the other hand, at the same time the reinforcement of an organisational identity allows for differentiation from the rest of the movement (Taylor 1989). According to Dellaporta (2006:94), the construction of identity implies both a positive definition of those participating in a certain group, and a negative identification of those who are not only excluded, but actively opposed.

It seems that the collective identity is being part of “a network for educational reforms”, or otherwise “E-Net”. However, when speaking of “E-Net” in the interviews and during the workshop it was not always clear what was referred to. Sometimes “E-Net” was used to refer to the network as a whole, while other times it reflected the secretariat, or board. This is an interesting notion, as members who are part of the network, and therefore are E-Net, refer to it as a separate identity. For example, as mentioned in the workshop:

*I feel that other than E-Net [secretariat], other organisations and other members of the board should be given a chance to represent E-Net [network] (Workshop Transcription 2009:104)*

In this way, the collective identity of “E-Net” sometimes has different meanings.

Probably this touches upon the current ambiguity of responsibilities within the network. E-Net has grown in members over the years, has accomplished being recognised by the DepEd, and evolved many other ways, but it seems the division of responsibilities of the members, secretariat and board are not so clear anymore.

The collective identity of E-Net and the internal relations are also constantly reflected upon. Strategic learning takes place at various occasions, such as coalition
meetings, after specific campaigns, and during General Assembly, where the members evaluate the previous experiences and set the agenda for the new term. But besides these occasions, E-Net did an own evaluation of civil society participation through ASPBAE in 2003, and had an external evaluation by Oxfam GB in 2006. Both occasions were good moments to reflect on the work done so far and on the strengths and weaknesses of the network.

The recommendation of the 2003 research was to ‘unify and clarify its position on education. Furthermore, it was recommended that civil society should focus their advocacy initiatives on key issues to achieve maximum impact and involve more networks and members in the EFA campaign’ (Raya & Mabunga 2003:28). Since then, E-Net has taken up this strategy, and has brought out issue based policy statements, specific campaigns, and has included even more members in their campaigns.

Unfortunately, the current increased workload of the secretariat, prevents them from being able to thoroughly reflect on their advocacies and activities. While some reflection is being done, the limited capacity urges the members of the secretariat to move on and continue to focus on the next project, meeting or activity.

The workshop that was part of this research was another occasion for reflection, which brought up new issues to discuss. Especially with the new reality of lack of institutional funds, there is a need to redefine the network and for all members, including board, and secretariat, to recommit them to the network. The new reality of lack of institutional funds, brings about new responsibilities for the members:

*Because previously we had money, and the secretariat could work on its own. But now that we don’t have money, it’s up to the network, to sustain its advocacy* (Interview E-EC, 2009).

There are new island wide consultations are planned for 2010, in which collective identity and the commitment of the members can be re-defined.

Furthermore, something that is not often addressed in social movement research, but is nevertheless important, is the emotional value of being part of the movement. The membership does not only have strategic gains, but members might also have personal gains in terms of personal development. This is very much reflected in the following quote:
I’ve become a better teacher, a better person because of my involvement in E-Net. I’m more interested and connected to people from all levels of society. It has enriched my life with more friends, more activities, a sense of humanity and socio-consciousness (Interview E-BM, 2009)

Members find it important to feel they are not alone in their struggle (Interview M, 2009).

9.3 Internal success of E-Net
As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, working in a coalition brings about challenges and opportunities. By strategically reflecting over these matters, the coalition can influence their success. To analyse the internal success of the coalition, I looked at how the size and available resources of the coalition have changed over the years as well as the organisation, collective identity and increase in membership and network. Furthermore I considered the internal cohesion, networking skills, and power relations within the network, and I looked at the strategic learning of the coalition members as I believe this can influence the potential external success.

One of the main internal successes is the broad constituency E-Net has built over the years. For the first time, over 150 NGOs/CSOs that are working on education and reforms have come together to form a common agenda and position. They are working together according to their particular strengths, and despite their political differences. The growing number of members illustrates the success of this collaboration. E-Net is the biggest civil society coalition working on EFA and education reforms in the Philippines. This status gives them a stronger position, which might influence the recognition of the government. The members are spread nation-wide, which is beneficial for retrieving local information. Furthermore, the members have different backgrounds, varying from local service deliverers, ALS trainers to large INGOs, researchers and teacher organisations. This wide variety of members is useful for the different advocacies and strategies as they all bring various expertise to the network. For example, the member focussed on economic reforms and research, can help with budget tracking and research on education financing. The members working with out-of-school youth can help vocalise the problems of the formal sector and ALS. Teachers’ organisations can lead advocacy for policies for teachers. The general consensus is that working together is beneficial for all (Workshop Transcription 2009).
Furthermore, the internal cohesion can be seen as another internal success. While the coalition’s members have various backgrounds and ways of working, you could expect difficulties in agreeing on goals or strategies. However, the members seem to agree and respect the structure and purpose of the network. The collaboration of the different organisations causes no major power struggles amongst the members. If there are issues that won’t fit E-Net’s agenda, these will be carried out separate of the network. Although some tensions may occur, so far there have been no major break-ups or problems that damaged the network (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

Because of the collaboration there is also stronger alignment of individual programs and better access to information. As information is distributed among the members through E-groups, workshops, meetings and through the secretariat, they can learn from each other and copy best practices. Moreover, the collaboration with actors from other areas in education contributes to the understanding of the complete EFA agenda. For example, members working on ALS can learn about the issues of the teachers in the formal system, and members of the formal system can get and understanding of the issues regarding the non-formal education.

Furthermore, E-Net has always been focused on building the capacity of their members. Through workshops and information sharing, they aim to strengthen the position of their members, in order to advocate for their educational rights. The sharing of expertise, knowledge, experiences and making use of networking and scalar interaction strengthens the network and the members.

An example of an internal capacity building success was through the budget tracking initiative. While the working group on education financing did budget tracking on the national level, they also developed tools for local budget tracking which they shared with local members in several budget tracking workshops throughout the country (Interview RA, 2009). This provided the members with new skills and knowledge about the education budget, which they could use for their own advocacy.

Besides, in order to speak for themselves, E-Net organised a capacity building workshop for out-of-school youth. During this three day workshop, these youth got training in advocacy, public speaking and media attention. This way, they would be able to participate in the education debate, and vocalise the issues of out-of-school youth in Global Action Week activities and DepEd meetings. This is another example of
capacity building and strengthening the multi-stakeholder constituency which can be seen as an internal success.

Moreover, the symbolic value for the members shouldn’t be underestimated. The sense of being part of something bigger is considered important. To meet up with other activists who share the same advocacy also has a sense of comradeship and is encouraging for members to know they are not alone in their struggle. Many members I interviewed spoke with a certain pride about the network and were proud of being a member. This means people value being part of the network and uphold the collective identity, which can be considered another internal success.

Finally, the coalition has been able to evolve by strategically reflecting over the network and developments over the years. Strategic reflection takes place not only at the General Assembly, but also in meetings between the board and secretariat, in working group meetings, and among members themselves. The workshop that was organised for this research was also a good opportunity for strategic reflection. By strategically reflecting over the context and the network and learn from previous experiences, they have been able to continue to develop. The new planned island wide consultations are also moments of strategic reflection and to think about how to deal with the new reality.

To sum up, E-Net over the years has developed into a network of over 150 members from diverse backgrounds. It has been successful in building a diverse and strong constituency of members with different expertise. The division of topic-based working groups has been a great strategy to work according to members’ strengths. Through knowledge sharing and capacity building, both the members and the network gets strengthened, which is an added value of belonging to the coalition. Although tensions may occur, E-Net is generally respected as a network where people acknowledge the importance of different stakeholders and therefore respect each other and generally keep differences out of the network. Furthermore, belonging to the network has an emotional value for the members. The growth of the network, the internal cohesion, capacity building, collective identity and learning and developing through strategic reflection can all be considered as internal success. The next chapter will look at the external impact of the coalition.
10. External Impact of E-Net

As the aim of this research is to see if E-Net is successful and what factors contribute to or hinder the success, the next step would be to look at what E-Net has achieved. While in the previous chapter the internal success or impact is discussed, the focus of this chapter is E-Net’s external impact. Burnstein (1999) divided this concept into three sub-dimensions, known as political, procedural and symbolic success. In this chapter these dimensions will be addressed.

Although it is difficult to measure impact and attribute certain changes solely to the work done by E-Net, there have been some changes in the education climate and politics of education that can be connected to civil society engagement. In this chapter I will try to give an overview of the external accomplishments and impact of E-Net.

10.1 Political impact

Political impact, according to Burnstein (1999) refers to the specific impact of the movement in observable policy outcomes. When looking at political impact, it is difficult to attribute changes in policies solely to the work done by E-Net. Other actors and external factors might have contributed to the change in policies. Despite this difficulty, there are some examples of policy outcomes where E-Net has certainly played a role.

**BESRA**

Although the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda is an instrument set by the Department of Education, E-Net as a co-chair of the National EFA Committee, has followed the development of this policy reform package. Through the engagement with the DepEd, E-Net has been especially vocal on the issues of out-of-school youth and Alternative Learning Systems. As the BESRA is a framework for collaboration between government and other sectors, the DepEd has listened to the claims of civil society. The question remains how much influence E-Net has had on the agenda, but at least some of their advocacy work is reflected and formalised in this policy reform package. This doesn’t mean the BESRA agenda is necessarily E-Net’s agenda, but at least it raises issues that E-Net is advocating for. The BESRA is set up in order to create a basic education sector that is capable of attaining the country’s EFA objectives by the
year 2015 (BESRA 2006), which is something that E-Net is also advocating for. This in itself is already a success as frame alignment has taken place between the government and E-Net. However, the next step is to look at the implementation and interpretation of the BESRA, as the ways of interpretation and implementation between the government and civil society can vary.

*Alternative Budget Initiative*

Probably one of the best examples of the political impact of E-Net is the Alternative Budget Initiative (ABI). Since its formation in 2001, E-Net has been involved in budget monitoring and advocacy. The working group on “Education Financing” conducts research, identifies critical gaps in education performance and outcome and proposes policy measures and specific budgetary allocations to address such gaps. In collaboration with other civil society groups like Social Watch Philippines and the Freedom for Debt Coalition, E-Net is pursuing its budget advocacy initiatives (E-Net ABI 2008).

In 2006, the budget advocacy campaign made a significant breakthrough. Civil society groups, for the first time, were able to effectively lobby for reforms in the national budget hearings in both the Upper and the Lower Houses. NGOs collaborated with legislators and formulated an alternative budget, aimed at realising the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All-goals. The campaign coalition was initiated and coordinated by Social Watch Philippines (SWP), and E-Net was responsible for the education cluster of the campaign.

In 2007, the campaign had another breakthrough. For the first time in history, the Committee on Appropriations of the Lower House has allowed the participation of CSOs in budget hearings and has vowed to make such practice permanent. The members of the Alternative Budget Initiative, including E-Net, presented their views, comments and recommendations on the General Appropriations Bill. They recommended an alternative budget that puts social services at top priority and eliminates unreasonable big and vague budgetary allotment (E-Net ABI 2008).

Because of the constructive interventions by the members of the Alternative Budget Initiative in the national budget process, education and health services were given better allocations. This effort has been recognised by the National Economic
Development Authority (NEDA), who highlighted in the 2007 MDG Report that the Alternative Budget advocacy in 2007 resulted in an increase of 22.7 billion Philippine pesos (PhP) in additional proposals for MDG-related activities and an approval of the PhP 5.5 billion in the 2007 national budget for social services. Furthermore, the ABI campaign for the 2008 budget resulted in PhP 6.3 billion increases for social services, meaning more allocations for health, environment, agriculture and education.

While the ABI campaign is a multi-sectoral campaign, the education sector has been the biggest gainer, as it covered half of the increase in the budget. However, in the process of budget amendments particularly in the education budget, the lower house version of amendments did not match those of the Senate’s. During the bicameral conference committee meetings, there were discussions to reconcile the figures, making the education budget once again the bone of contention. Fortunately, it resulted in 3.2 billion additional funds for the Department of Education (E-Net ABI 2008). This advocacy experience has opened new opportunities in ensuring greater and more direct participation of stakeholders in the budget process.

Furthermore, E-Net has supported the passing of several bills regarding education reforms. For example, E-Net has been supporting the amendment of the Magna Carta Act for Public School Teachers, which aimed at additional benefits to teachers. Another bill E-Net has supported is the bill for Multi-lingual education. The question of course remains how much influence E-Net has had in the passing and/or implementing of these bills, but they have been part of the process.

Local Policies

Another example of political impact is at the local level. The Local Government Code of 1991 paved the way for civil society participation in governance. This decentralisation policy gave Local Government Units more power, responsibility, authority and resources. For education matters Local School Boards were created, which proved to be new venues for local EFA advocacies. The education decentralisation and E-Net’s localisation of EFA advocacy has resulted in some local policy changes. For example E-Net’s member ESKAN, has been able to pass a local ordinance, to implement literacy programs for parents. As over the years, ESKAN has established good relations with the Local Government Unit, this ordinance was adopted by the Local School Board.
There are more examples of E-Net members influencing the passing of local ordinances, but these efforts are not all documented. Advocating for local ordinances is a strategic move as these will stay on when the administration changes. Local budget advocacies of E-Net members have also been successful in some cases, for example ESKAN was able to mobilise financial support for education for child labourers, PEPE was able to access financial support from the Mayor’s office in Atok in support of the mentoring for indigenous children, and PILCD was able to access a resource centre in Buguias (E-Net Project Report 2009).

Furthermore, DepEd Order 94 series 2009 on Guidelines in Creating Regional EFA Committees is based on draft guidelines presented by E-Net in a meeting of the National EFA Committee (E-Net Project Report 2009). These are all great examples of how E-Net has influenced both national and local policies regarding education.

A problem that is linked to political impact is that in Southern countries, much more than in most Northern countries, the passing of a law is often not enough. The next step is to follow the implementation, as that is not necessarily a result of passing the bill. This is probably a difference between Northern and Southern countries that should be distinguished in the advocacy coalition framework.

10.2 Procedimental impact
Procedimental impact refers to implicit changes in the decision making procedures of policy makers that recognize the civil society movement as a legitimate actor.

As described in chapter 8, E-Net engages with the governments in different ways and on different levels. This by itself is already an example of procedural impact. E-Net has become a credible network, recognised by government and donors, and is invited to participate in key meetings. This is a recent development, and as reflected in the interviews, this is considered a big accomplishment (Interviews Gov, E-EC, E-BM, E-Sec, E-M, 2009).

The status of being co-chair on the National EFA Committee (NEC) is, of course, a big procedural accomplishment. The fact that civil society participation has been institutionalised is a big difference from the Philippines some decades ago. This is the result of CSOs’ push for civil society influence in policy making over the years. Partly it
might also be addressed to the international framework/climate of the growing importance of civil society advocacy.

Even before the official formation of E-Net, the government was aware of the need for a grand alliance. The country report that was drafted for the first EFA decade evaluation, pointed out that for future EFA planning and implementation activities, developing partnerships would be critical for ensuring the active participation of all sectors and stakeholders (Raya & Mabunga 2003:14).

However, the education secretary at that time, Senator Roco, was not supportive of the ‘grand alliance’ concept and the role NGOs were to play in the national EFA structure. He did not push the executive order from the president, which would create the National Committee on Education for All (ibid. 14). While civil society groups kept on linking up and organising themselves, there was also a push from within the government to involve civil society actors. It was only after secretary Roco resigned that civil society could play a role. And in this new scenario, even people from within the government pushed for a ‘grand alliance’ and wanted E-Net as the civil society representative:

Then, so many years later, you had the opposite... some other government ministries, especially the planning ministry, because one of the Education specialist there is really committed to this concept of a ‘grand alliance’, said it should not only be the DepEd. And because he knows me, he knows E-Net, and it’s very hard to have another government agency as co-chair, the DepEd will be jealous. But if we put civil society there, maybe less... So they were the ones pushing it, we were not campaigning (Interview E-EC, 2009).

While it is considered a great achievement, the question remains how real this co-chair status is. Does being co-chair also mean having co-responsibility? And does being co-chair mean equal positions? One could say although E-Net is recognised as a NEC co-chair, it isn’t recognised as a full partner in policy formulation and decision making. As one of my interviewees pointed out, the relations between the chair and co-chair are not equal:

He said “you’re co-chair! If DepEd doesn’t call a meeting, call a meeting!” But do you really think any government ministry will come to a meeting called by CS? Probably not! (Interview E-EC, 2009).

Another problem that was mentioned is the lack of political will of the NEC to convey meetings:
The EFA secretariat is telling us there is a problem in terms of getting people together, the schedules and all. But I was telling them that if we have the political will, the schedule would be a technical thing. ... but so far there have been no meetings of when it is going to be and what is going to be the agenda (Interview E-Sec, 2009)

This shows the unequal power relations of the chair and co-chair and the lack of political will from the government’s side to take civil society serious. This also shows the lack of information sharing, which is another problem mentioned in the interviews (Interview RA, 2009).

Yet, even though these are serious considerations, this institutionalised position should not be abased. It does offer an official space to push for their agenda.

If you cannot decide something is good or bad, you just call it a site of struggle. So the EFA committee is a site of struggle! It really depends, and it is! It has its limitations, you have to be polite, you have to be formal, but yes it’s also good... they cannot shut you up, they have to give you all the documents, and as in anything you have all these formal processes... so! (Interview E-EC, 2009)

The position of co-chair is also considered a big achievement by the members of E-Net and they are proud of this realisation. On a local level, they can also use this in order to gain more respect and win over local government unit representatives. In this sense, it also has a symbolic value:

In local politics sometimes the dynamics might be difficult, that some local member of E-Net is not so acceptable to the major or governor. But when, and that’s what we were trying to do, if you get the papers from the national and we say look E-Net is co-chair, we are not an anti-government organisation, we are willing to operate, it helps a little (Interview E-M, 2009).

Linked to their position in the National EFA Committee, E-Net also has civil society representatives in the Technical Working Groups of the committee. Therefore their influence reaches further than the National Committee. In this way, E-Net members link up with the government agencies and officials working on specific topics, which provides them with an opportunity to link up with possible ‘champions’ inside the bureaucracy. For example, for the Five-Year Literacy Campaign Plan drafted by the Literacy Coordinating Council spearheaded Technical Working Group, E-Net’s input and recommendations were adopted for targeting and strategizing functional literacy programs (E-Net Project Report 2009).

In addition, DepEd consulted E-Net regarding the budget requirements for the EFA mobilisation and awareness-raising for the 2010 budget. This in a sense manifests the
Department’s trust in civil society’s participation in the agency’s budget deliberations (E-Net Project Report 2009)

Another example of procedimental impact is that E-Net is invited to official meetings, such as bill hearings in the Senate, public hearings of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts, and Culture (Interview E-Sec, 2009). The fact that civil society is officially invited to these meetings shows how their status has improved over the years.

The collaboration with their so called champions within the government is also a procedimental impact, as these key officials consult E-Net for information:

Like when there are budget hearings, education hearings, we do provide those advocates of education in the government, we provide them with the results of our research and yes we do have a good relation (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

While these examples are mainly focussed at the national level, the localisation of the EFA advocacies also proved to have procedimental impact. Some E-Net members have been able to build good relations with the Local Government Units. Through these relationships, E-Net members are recognised as valuable partners in addressing education issues (Interview E-BM, 2009).

E-Net organises workshops on local governance of EFA, which are attended by LGU representatives. In these workshops, they share experiences and list best practices. Members of E-Net have engaged with the Local Government Units, and make them aware of the Special Education Fund which they can use to invest in education. Through workshops, E-Net does capacity building and strengthens the local organisations, so that they can claim their educational rights.

What also can be seen as a procedimental success is the fact that E-Net is recognised by other civil society organisations as the civil society network working on education:

And then what happens is, all the other campaigning organisations, GCAP, Social Watch and others, they in a sense consider and recognise ah it’s education, let E-Net talk about it! So it’s like we have established a niche that we represent. Even when the corporate advocacy groups were set up. And they are in some ways doing much better ways, in certain fields, they have more money, they have higher profiles, but when it comes to a more community-based, civil society based approach, especially focusing on Alternative Learning, they would say... ah let’s invite E-Net! (Interview E-EC, 2009)
This shows they are not only recognised by the government as valuable stakeholders in the education debate, but also by other civil society organisations, who consult E-Net on education matters.

Finally, another procedural impact can be seen in the presence of government officials at events organised by E-Net. At the beginning of the Global Action Week 2009, E-Net organised a press-launch to inform people about the state of education and the activities organised for this year’s event. At the meeting the undersecretary Ramon Bacani was present and spoke on the panel. At the leading event of the GAW, the Big Read, the vice-mayor was present and participated in the activities. This shows that government officials recognise the activities by E-Net, and find it important enough to make time in their agenda and attend. However, not all government officials are always willing to participate, and it is usually the same people that support E-Net.

10.3 Symbolic impact
Symbolic impact refers to changes at the public opinion level and to transformations in belief systems and ideologies. Although symbolical impact is probably the hardest level of external impact to measure, there are some matters that can be considered as such. For example, E-Net has become a credible network, recognised by government, civil society and donors. The name E-Net is known in the education advocacy field. Mainly in the Northern Capital Region I found, education stakeholders knew about E-Net. However, outside the capital, and in other fields of advocacy work, E-Net is not always known.

Over the years, E-Net has been successful in raising awareness on Education for All. Before E-Net started its advocacy, not many people were aware of the concept of Education for All. While many people have been working on education, whether formal or non-formal, not everyone knew of the existence of the Education for All goals. E-Net has been introducing and promoting ‘EFA’ to a bigger audience, and even introduced the concept to some people within the Department of Education who were not aware of it (Interview E-EC, 2009).

Through research, E-Net has also created more awareness on the state of education in the Philippines. The Education Watch initiative ‘Mapping Out
Disadvantage Groups in Education’ is an example of knowledge production based on local members’ participation. The findings of the initiative were integrated in official government reports such as de Mid-Decade EFA Assessment (E-Net Project Report 2009) which illustrated the real education situation and problems on the local and national level.

Another example of symbolic impact can be seen in the capacity building of local communities. Though workshops, E-Net is making local communities aware of their education rights. In this way, they influence the public opinion at the local level. A group of education budget advocates, EFA campaigners, organisers and advocates, organised and developed capabilities through EFA orientations, education financing workshops, ALS trainings/orientations, advocacy workshops, and a course on Early Child Care and Development (E-Net Project Report 2009). Furthermore, they created a system for civil society’s budget tracking in education that was initially disseminated for use of education advocates in schools and communities. These activities strengthened the members, and created more awareness on EFA and related matters, and influenced the public opinion.

The increasing participation for the Global Action Week can be seen as a form of symbolic impact as well. Every year there are more participants for the Action Week: children, youth, parents, teachers, LGU officials, DepEd representatives, activists and other education stakeholders. E-Net creates awareness about EFA and the educational rights of people and communities among the increasing number of participants during the action week, both nationally and locally. This not only resulted in increased community participation in E-Net’s public campaigns, but it also increased the number of community advocates.

Furthermore, E-Net makes use of the media to create more awareness about their advocacy. They consider media advocacy as constituency building within, while creating their own information dissemination (Interview E-Sec, 2009). While it is difficult to influence ‘public opinion’, and even to say what exactly is meant by ‘public opinion’, E-Net uses the media to raise some issues to a broader audience and stresses the importance of certain education matters. They bring out press-statements, publish articles on their website and they generate media attention with their activities in order to obtain the attention of both the government and the public.
However, their press-statements are not always picked up by the media. It seems to be difficult to establish good relationships with journalists as there is a fast turn-over of newspaper reporters in the Philippines, and the competition among them is very high. At the GAW-event for example, journalists were present, but most picked up a media-package and left for the next event to cover. It seems to be difficult to find journalists with a specific interest for education that can cover the whole event.

Or in some cases media people use E-Net’s press-releases and used it as their own, or as happened, even use it as a DepEd statement (Interview E-Sec, 2009). The question is how bad this is, as on the one hand E-Net is not recognised for its input, but on the other hand at least their message is being picked up and they are advocating for a goal rather than their name (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

Furthermore, media attention is also depending on how ‘hot’ the topic of education is. This relies mostly on controversial stories. An example of this is when a 13 year old girl committed suicide over the financial constraints of her family to participate in a school-project, education was suddenly a prominent topic for the media (Interview MedC, 2009). Besides, during my time in the Philippines, the national feeding program of the DepEd was faced with a scandal regarding the overpricing of the noodles for the school children. In these occasions, there is a lot more media attention for education, and therefore also more attention for E-Net’s message.

Nevertheless, E-Net members have reflected on the problem of media coverage, and they have learned that broadcasting media have longer tenure compared to newspaper journalists, so therefore they are more and more focusing on building relations with them. Moreover E-Net is also learning from the younger generations on using cheap technology and websites such as YouTube to disseminate their message and influence public opinion (Interview E-Sec, 2009). This strategy could be a way to increase the symbolic impact.

However, while their media strategies could be strengthened, E-Net has had symbolic impact through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and raising awareness on EFA.

Concisely, even though it is difficult to measure impact and to attribute it (solely) to the work done by the coalition, the examples given imply that E-Net has had (or at least influenced) external impact in all three dimensions. By strategically reflecting on
the context and the coalition itself, E-Net has been able to influence certain policy changes, has been recognised by the government, and has a symbolic impact as they create more awareness on EFA and influence the public opinion through the media. When looking at the power relations between the government and E-Net, it can be said that on the one hand -even with the institutionalised position of co-chair- the government still holds the power, but on the other hand E-Net influences policies and policy making procedures, which means it is recognised as a legitimate power holder as well. While these examples can be considered as great achievements, there are also challenges facing E-Net. These will be discussed in the following chapter.
11. Challenges facing E-Net

While E-Net has been able to achieve success on various levels, they also face certain challenges. The challenges can be distinguished into internal and external challenges, and address both structure and agency. While internal challenges address the structure, organisation, internal relations, and resources of the network, external challenges concern the structure and commitment of the government, the nearing of 2015, and the upcoming elections.

11.1 Internal challenges

One major challenge is E-Net’s limited resources, both human and financial. This is acknowledged by the members, board, and secretariat and was also reflected in the Oxfam GB evaluation in 2006 (Interviews E-EC, E-Sec, E-BM, E-M, Oxfam 2006). The limited financial and human resources limit the network’s capacity to work on issues with the same level of rigor. At the time of my fieldwork there were four people working in the Manila secretariat. However, at the time of writing this thesis, only two full time staff remained. The lack of capacity results in an increasing workload for the members of the secretariat, who were already multitasking and working very long days.

The cut in staff is due to the end of the institutional funds of Oxfam GB. A major challenge therefore is to look for new funds, to be able to continue their work. Unfortunately the Philippines is not an Fast Track Initiative country, and therefore it is not possible for E-Net to apply for the Civil Society Education Fund that is linked to the initiative. The Real World Strategies funds channelled through ASPBAE are probably one of the main financial resources at the moment. At the time of writing, E-Net has handed in project proposals with the EU and with ASPBAE. Hopefully these proposals will be acknowledged, and E-Net can use these project funds to continue their advocacy. While project funds are good for the short-term, a long-term solution needs to be found as well. Whether it is in the form of new institutional funding, or a reconsideration of members’ (financial) input, the challenge for E-Net is to look for new sustainable ways of generating income.

Furthermore, the PIECE project is initially planned until July 2010 and it is unsure whether there will be a follow up. Therefore, the challenge is to create enough
mechanisms before the end of the project, in order to sustain the efforts of the program. The local EFA advocates need to be empowered and be confident enough to pursue the advocacy, even after the project is finished (Interview E-Sec, 2009). Before then, they should try to make the Local School Boards functional, and to have the other mechanisms in place, in order for people to continue advocating for their education rights. Considering the difficult situation in the region of Mindanao, this will be a challenge for E-Net.

As mentioned in chapter 9, the coalition is now at a turning point. According to an interviewee, it has now ‘matured’, and it is time to re-evaluate and re-invent the ways of working (Workshop). Even the base of the network is open for evaluation:

_E-Net is a network and it should be run by a network and not an NGO. And so far, it has moved like an NGO, but with members. It’s working as an NGO, but with a constituency and always with a constituency. But it operates like an NGO in the sense that some of its work is projectized. But what it requires is really a group of campaigners, a group of organizers, and a group of policy brief makers, so those three are important (Interview E-Sec, 2009)._

Especially the relations between the board, secretariat, and members should be reassessed. While the constitution clearly divides the tasks and responsibilities of the members, executive committee, board and secretariat, these boundaries are not so clear in reality. While the executive committee and board according to the constitution have more decision making power, the daily responsibilities lie with the secretariat and most of the activities are secretariat driven (Workshop Transcription 2009:135). This sometimes causes tensions as the secretariat is often put in positions where it should make quick decisions. They are the ones dealing with a lot of the members and government officials, and represent E-Net in meetings. It is difficult for them to have to take every decision to the board, before being able to carry this out.

The secretariat can make decisions about matters concerning the daily management of the network, but it is not always clear where the boundaries are, and when the board should come up with a statement.

_The board is like a sounding board, we discuss so what do you think? But afterwards it’s up to the secretariat (Interview E-Sec, 2009)._

The busy schedule of board members can also be considered as a challenge linked to this. As some board members have a very full agenda, they cannot always attend
meetings, conferences or activities. This can be problematic when the DepEd addresses an invitation or request to one of the board members, who cannot attend and due to a busy schedule fails to forward to the secretariat.

The relationship between the members and secretariat can also be redefined. As the secretariat staff gets paid to work for E-Net, other members may have to act on a voluntary basis. This might cause unequal relations between the secretariat and the members. On the one hand members might think ‘let them do the work, because they get paid’. While on the one hand there is a push for decentralisation of resources and tasks. However, from the interviews and the workshop, it seemed that the secretariat is very much respected for their dedication to their work and for their capacity to multitask (Workshop transcription 2009).

Furthermore, many of E-Net’s board members have been working on reforms for a long time, even before and during the time of Marcos. The initial founders are highly respected for their commitment, and efforts for the network. They are high regarded, which makes them more powerful. However, they are not getting younger, and they are likely to retire within the near future (Interview E-EC, E-BM, E-Sec 2009). It will be a challenge to find new leaders. The founders of E-Net have a history of activism, and it seems challenging to find ‘new blood’. According to some members, the best place to look for new leaders is within the People’s Organisations and NGOs, as they work for their ideals and not for money (Interview E-BM, 2009).

Besides the internal relations, the structure of working in thematic working groups can be up for revisions as well. While in this way members are working according to their strengths, not all working groups are as active. Some working groups have frequent meetings, activities and communication, while others seem less active and need to be revived (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

One other challenge is to focus the advocacy work on a more local base. Some members that are not Manila-based have raised this as an issue. They feel most of the projects and activities are based in the capital and they want to decentralise the advocacies by setting up regional centres (Workshop Transcription 137). A suggested strategy through the workshop and interviews would be to set up regional chapters of E-Net and regional EFA committees in the different provinces. Together with the local EFA advocates, this would further strengthen E-Net’s constituency. However,
according to the members, this should be accompanied by decentralised resources (Workshop transcription 2009).

Another challenge for E-Net is to build an even stronger constituency. While E-Net has been able to gather many different organisations and individuals around a common goal, the challenge is not only to broaden, but also to deepen the constituency. In terms of numbers and considering E-Net’s multi-stakeholder approach, the challenge would be to include students, parents and youth advocates. While in the 70s movement, the students played a big role, there are no student organisations seen within E-Net today. Parents are important also stakeholders in education, and they should be included in the advocacies as well. Furthermore, to deepen the constituency, it is important to look at the commitment of the members. Some members have become inactive, and others might only be active in some activities or workshops. In order for an advocacy coalition to be successful, they should have a strong constituency. It might be good to re-evaluate the commitment of their members, and see who can contribute to what.

Furthermore, as E-Net is focused on reaching the marginalised sectors, communication and collaboration with these sectors can be complicated. A lot of the communication goes through email and or cell phone. While many people in the Philippines own a cell phone, internet is not always within reach, especially in the most remote (and vulnerable) areas. This is limiting the possibilities of collaborating with other members of the network, and communicating with the board and secretariat. Besides, members working in these areas often don’t have the capacity and resources to attend coalition meetings, which are mostly far away, and they are therefore in an unfavourable position.

Another challenge that came out of strategic reflection by the secretariat, is to redefine their target sectors. As E-Net has a particularly focus on the marginal and vulnerable sectors, which are least addressed by the government, they might need to redefine the boundaries of these sectors. More and more people are moving abroad in order to look for better job perspectives, and many of these Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are undocumented migrant workers whose rights to education have been violated by host countries. Through E-Net’s engagement in the ASEAN, they noticed that migrant organisations only focus on political-economic rights, and not on social
civil rights. E-Net considers this to be a gap that needs to be addressed, and the challenge for them is to have a more inclusive definition of vulnerable sectors (Interview E-Sec, 2009).

Moreover, as E-Net has a holistic view on education, it might be a challenge to include higher education in their advocacies. Influenced by the international frames, E-Net now focuses on the EFA agenda, with a special focus on the vulnerable and marginalised sectors and extra attention for ALS and life-long-learning, but higher education is missing in their advocacy. In a country like the Philippines which is facing an enormous brain drain, this seems to be too important to miss. According to some members there is a problem as far as curriculum development is concerned, as there is a mismatch between what the industry requires and what academe offer (Interview E-M, 2009). While higher education might be addressed in the Formal Education working group, more attention is given to basic education (primary and secondary), and it might be a challenge to focus on higher education in a separate working group.

As mentioned in the interviews by members of E-Net, ASPBAE and DepEd staff, there is also a need for a civil society information database. Documentation and research on local civil society initiatives will strengthen E-Net’s advocacy. The challenge for E-Net is to set up a database with information on the projects carried out by E-Net and its members. This is a way to map all the initiatives carried out by civil society members. The DepEd has requested this, so that they can see what is being done on the local level and where. For E-Net members this can be used as a learning strategy, and they can try to copy best practices from other regions. Furthermore, a database could be used to show the work done by E-Net and its members, in order to attract new funders. The documentation of all the initiatives will be a lot of work, and the current financial and capacity constrains prevent it from happening. It will be a challenge to look for the resources, both financial and human, to realise the much needed documentation. Further research on education issues, will also strengthen E-Net’s advocacies. It can help them to formulate evidence based advocacies, and inform other stakeholders, including champions in the department, about the concerns they have.
New island wide consultations are planned for 2010. Probably in this sequence of meetings, all these issues will be discussed. Hopefully, this will result in the recommitment of members, and make way for new strategies for E-Net.

11.2 External challenges
As already mentioned in chapter 8 and 10, the commitment of the government remains a major external challenge. Although E-Net has been recognised by the government as the civil society representative and co-chair of the National EFA Committee, questions remain on the political will of the government to collaborate, and therefore the level of influence for civil society. Or as put by one of the interviewees:

_The political will is nowhere to be found when it comes to addressing the big issues (Interview E-EC 2009)._ 

In a country where the government is mainly working for the elite, a strong civil society counterforce is needed. The challenge for E-Net is to pro-actively position itself as co-chair and make use of all the possibilities attached to this.

Yet, another challenge is that 2015, the year set for reaching the goals of EFA, is near. The Philippines is still a long way from reaching those goals, and actually the situation is worsening. The number of out-of-school youth is increasing, the education budget is declining, the quality is decreasing and other problems remain. With the population growth increasing faster than the education budget, the amount spend per student is decreasing.

The Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems, which is responsible for addressing the out-of-school learners, only receives 0.2% of the education budget. E-Net has been advocating for an increase in the BALS budget, but it has not increased as much as desired. As the Alternative Learning Systems is one of the core education sectors of E-Net, the challenge is to strengthen the relationship with the BALS, and keep on advocating for a bigger budget towards Alternative Learning initiatives.

Moreover, the National EFA Plan is also set until 2015. Therefore, in order to maintain an official structure, and possibly an official recognition, E-Net is challenged to advocate for a new (or continuing) structure after 2015, and keep on putting education on the agenda.
Another challenge is the limited access to information. While the government claims to be open towards civil society, experience has found that they are not always as open in sharing information (Interview RA 2009). In order to address this, E-Net should be proactive and claim their rights as co-chair of the NEC, and use the established relations with the ‘champions’, in order to obtain information. Another way to access information is to do own researches, but this is difficult due to the limited capacity and resources of the network.

Furthermore, as Bautista et al. (2008) described, the structure of the Department of Education is also a challenge. According to them, the structure does not benefit reforms, as it is a highly centralised system. Besides, the Department has a projectized approach to reforms, and the reforms tend to focus on inputs such as buildings, books, teacher training, and DepEd assumes that this would automatically lead to better results. They fail to look into what students should be learning, in terms of relevance and context (Bautista et al 2008).

In May 2010, there will be new elections held in the Philippines. This might be a good opportunity for a change in the political climate and to have a more education oriented president. The presidential candidates have already started campaigning, and two have already contacted E-Net to have a face to face meeting to discuss their concerns. The fact that presidential candidates approach E-Net can also be considered a symbolic success, as it means they are taking E-Net serious and value their opinion and constituency. E-Net doesn’t want to be linked to one particular candidate, but they can use the opportunity to influence possible new government officials with their information and advocacies. Besides, E-Net can use the attention for the upcoming election to influence other education officials, and raise their advocacies in the media.

Another challenge, as mentioned in chapter 10, is to build stronger relations with the media. Even with the limited capacity and resources, creative media strategies could be obtained. With regards to EFA awareness, DepEd’s resources could be utilised through the National EFA Committee (Interview MedC 2009), and cheap technology and YouTube could be used to disseminate their messages.

All in all, the context and the development of the coalition itself generate internal and external challenges. It will depend on the reflectivity of the members, whether and how these challenges will be addressed.
12. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to explore the impact or success of E-Net, and to see which internal and external factors, and the critical reflexivity over these factors, contribute to or hinder the internal and external success of the network. Based on interviews, participant observation, workshops, the analysis of relevant documents, participation in several conferences, rallies, training sessions and other activities, I tried to analyse the coalition and get a better understanding of how transnational civil society coalitions work. In this chapter I will present my conclusions.

The research is informed by theories of globalisation and its effects on social movements. The underlying aim is to understand the complexities of globalisation and education. Parallel to the evolution of global politics, social movements and civil society coalitions are rescaling their activity and creating more links to the international level. As a response, transnational advocacy coalitions and global social movements are emerging (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Mundy & Murphy 2001).

The Global Campaign for Education is an example of such a global movement. With an international office, links to regional organisations and national coalitions with local members, this multi-scalar movement pushes for the achievement of Education for All.

In order to get a better understanding of how transnational advocacy coalitions ‘work’, I analysed the Philippine national coalition related to the Global Campaign for Education, called E-Net. The underlying question is to see how civil society coalitions ‘matter’ in the efforts of realising Education for All. The research question that guided me throughout the research was:

What has been the impact of E-Net on Philippine education and which internal and external factors, and critical reflexivity over these factors, contribute to or limit the success of E-Net?

In order to answer this question, I formulated sub-questions regarding strategic collective action, power relations, scalar interaction, political opportunities and critical reflexivity. I considered several concepts, internal and external factors in order to explore the impact or success of the coalition. As internal factors the structure, cohesion, power relations, vision, strategies, learning, and agency of the coalition have
been analysed. External factors include national and international governance structure and opportunities.

For the research it was important to look at aspects of both structure and agency. The political and educational context (structure) influences the opportunities for E-Net. For example the level of openness of the political system, and level of decentralisation can influence the success of the social movement. However, it is not only the national political context that matters as in an increasingly globalized world the international political context also influence outcomes. The international education agreements such as the Education for All goals (Dakar 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals, can influence the success opportunities of the coalition as well. E-Net, which is part of the Global Campaign for Education and the Asian South Pacific Bureau for Basic and Adult Education, can use the different scales for strategic scalar interaction and networking opportunities.

Another important aspect of the research is critical reflexivity of the coalition members on both structure and agency factors. Critical reflexivity allows the coalition to evaluate and learn from past experiences, revise strategies and formulate new strategies according to contextual changes. This strategic learning can contribute to better opportunities and more impact for E-Net. Critical reflexivity is intertwined with all aspects of the research as members should reflect on the political and educational context, on the network and on themselves. To attempt to ensure I developed a representative idea/image of the impact or success of E-Net I also asked the contra-factual question ‘if E-Net didn’t exist, what would the educational panorama look like?’ and posed this question not only to members, but also outsiders and government representatives.

12.1 Maturing of E-Net: the internal success
In the ten years that E-Net has existed, the network has grown from several organisations brought together to discuss the lack of civil society influence in the first EFA decade, into a nationwide network of over 150 organisations and individuals, who are working on Education for All and education reforms. The growing membership can be considered an achievement, especially when considering the great variety of members, from grassroots service deliverers, to teacher organisations, researchers,
and people from large (I)NGOs. This shows the network’s ability to unite (and maintain) a diverse range of actors around the common goal of EFA, and made them the biggest civil society coalition working on education reforms in the Philippines. Although there have been some tensions within the network, generally members seem keen to work together and respect each other’s work and positions. Members are contributing to the network according to their strengths, through the topic-based working groups. There seems to be good internal cohesion, although some members complain that most activities are too Manila-based and they call for further localisation of the advocacy work, including a localisation of resources. Not all members are equally active and this results in the most vocal and active members being the most powerful members.

Through the institutional funding of Oxfam GB, E-Net was able to have full time paid staff at the secretariat. The organisation structure of a General Assembly, Executive Committee, Board of Trustees with regional representatives, national secretariat and members seems to working well. The internal organisation facilitates collective decision making and participatory and critical processes of learning, knowledge production, and reflection. However, sometimes the roles and responsibilities of the board and secretariat are not clearly divided. While the secretariat is formally described as a support unit, in reality they seem to be much more than that. Moreover, while the regional board members are officially responsible for the communication from the local to the national level and vice versa, in reality the secretariat is the main contact for local members. This seems to be a perennial problem for all types of social movements.

To me it was unclear when the board was responsible and when the secretariat. On paper, it seems the board is higher up the hierarchical ladder in terms of management, while in reality the secretariat seems to have more responsibilities. While board members are expected to represent E-Net and participate in forums, meetings and working groups, often it is the secretariat that does this job. In fairness to the board members, who are spread out over the country, time and financial constrains prevent them from attending all meetings. The board members are highly respected people, and are held in high regard. This might influence the division of roles and responsibilities as well.
Now that the institutional fund of Oxfam GB has terminated, out of the four full time paid staff members that were working in the secretariat during my fieldwork, only two are able to remain full time. With the immense workload and responsibilities of the secretariat, this is most likely to have a negative effect on the internal and external success of E-Net. In this new reality the roles and responsibilities of the network should be reassessed. Although the lack of funding definitely influences the opportunities of E-Net, many members agree that it doesn’t mean the end. There are new island wide consultations planned for 2010, which will be a great opportunity for this reassessment and recommittal of board, secretariat and members as well. As the staff of the secretariat was paid, this in some ways has taken the responsibility from the members, as there were people ‘paid to do the job’. The lack of funding therefore is also an opportunity to see which members are really committed and what everyone can bring to the table.

In the process of maturing, E-Net also adjusted their strategies. While in the beginning, there was a strong focus on being recognised by the government and increasing civil society influence in the EFA process, now that E-Net has gained an institutionalised position along side the government, they altered their strategies. Through strategic reflection they realised being ‘in’ is not enough, but there is a need for advocating both from within and without. Furthermore, E-Net has realised the importance of the localising more of its EFA advocacies.

Trough advocacy workshops, EFA orientations, education financing workshops, ALS trainings and a course on ECCD, E-Net has developed the capacities of their members. The network strategically uses of the expertise of the members. For example, the working group on education financing did research on the finance of education and effectively used their findings for financing workshops for members all over the Philippines. Members learn from each other. This again is an example of the added value of collective action.

The power relations within the network are considered relatively equal. While the board and secretariat make out the ‘top’ of the network and decide over activities and strategies, they don’t have only a top-down approach. E-Net is based on ‘inclusiveness’ and greatly relies on bottom-up input as well, which is influenced by the political blocs of which a lot of the founding members derive. However, formal
reflection processes are mainly carried out within and between the board and the secretariat, leaving local members underrepresented in this process. The main problem in terms of power distribution I found is that members outside of Manila considered the activities and advocacies too much capital-based. Though the localisation of EFA, the local chapters could be strengthened and power (and financial resources) might be divided more equally.

12.2 E-Net's contribution to Education for All
In terms of E-Net’s contribution to making sure all Filipinos have access to multi-cultural, gender-fair, liberating life-long learning, I have looked at the external impact. The external impact of E-Net has been divided into three sub-dimensions: political, procedimental and symbolic success. While these address different dimensions, they are also interlinked. The political impact refers to the specific impact of the movement in observable policy outcomes. However, when looking at impact, the problem of causality arises. It is difficult to say that a change in policy is solely related to the work done by E-Net. Other actors, and the government’s own strategy or perception might have influenced this (even more) as well. What can be said though, is that E-Net in some ways has had something to do with the policy change. E-Net has influenced policies both on national and local level. One of the main political impacts that the E-Net has achieved, is through the Alternative Budget Initiative, which resulted in an increased budget for education at the national level. At the local level members have pursued local budget advocacy, resulting in allocation for more education programs in selected municipalities.

The political impact is linked to the procedimental impact, as E-Net has gained official status to engage the government through the position of co-chair of the National EFA Committee. Through this position, civil society participation in realising EFA has been institutionalised. Besides being co-chair, E-Net is also a member of the government’s Technical Working Group of the Literacy Coordinating Council and Technical Working Group for EFA. Furthermore, E-Net’s recommendations for localising EFA were adopted into the Guidelines for Localizing EFA by the National EFA Committee.

A clearly defined strategy of E-Net to engage government, was to make explicit that they were not a civil society group advocating for a revolution, but more for an
overhaul of the system, and that they wanted to collaborate with all education stakeholders, including the government. This, and the fact that E-Net’s president has served in government as well, contributed to enhanced relations between the government and E-Net. While the co-chair position brings about many possibilities for E-Net to push for their advocacy, it also generates some challenges. On the one hand, E-Net is considered a partner of the government on the Committee, but at the other hand E-Net is also a watchdog. This led to the recognition of the importance of advocating from both outside and within. Furthermore, there is the question of how real the position of co-chair is. The power relations between the chair and co-chair are unequal. It is still the DepEd that calls the shots. However, through the years, E-Net has developed into an acknowledged civil society authority on EFA, recognised by both other civil society groups and the government. Through different channels, they push for education reforms, and especially for those that will benefit the most vulnerable groups as they are neglected by the government. The explicit declaration of not wanting to overthrow the system, but wanting to collaborate with all stakeholders in education, including the government, has been a strategic move. Furthermore the localisation of EFA and advocacy has proven to be beneficial. By reflecting on the context, E-Net discovered that while achievements on the national level are harder to pursue and take more time, they strategically use the decentralisation of education governance and increasingly engage with local entities for their advocacy work. It seems easier to have impact at the local level, both in terms of political and procedimental.

The symbolic impact of E-Net can be found in helping create public opinion on education in the media through printed articles, radio interviews, television appearances, Global Action Week activities, and literacy and ALS festivals. Although the relations with the media could be strengthened and they could make better use of media technologies such as YouTube, E-Net has created more awareness on education and EFA. Throughout the years E-Net has made local communities more aware of their education rights.
12.3 From local to global, and back
When looking at strategic scalar interaction, I found that this influenced E-Net’s advocacy in a positive way. E-Net’s members are aware of the challenges and opportunities of interactions both within and beyond scales. They make strategic use of the different scales, and reflect on how they can maximise the benefit of engaging the different scales.

As E-Net is a nation-wide network, trying to improve education-standards in the Philippines, their focus is mainly on the national level. While through strategic learning, E-Net has started to focus on the localisation of advocacy work, still many members from various localities in the country are requesting a more localised approach of E-Net. The local members give input on the local situation that can be used in national advocacies.

While some globalisation-theorists focus on the increasing importance of global governance and consider the state of decreasing importance, in my research I found that in this case, the national coalition is mostly occupied with national matters. However, there is a growing tendency to work beyond the borders, which mainly counts for sub-regional collaborations. The Philippine coalition is aware of the increasing importance and opportunities to work together with neighbouring countries, stimulated by ASPBAE, in order to create a stronger (Southeast) Asian voice. The regional organisation ASPBAE seems to have a larger influence than I initially expected. Essential project funding is channelled through ASPBAE, and they are an important partner in creating opportunities to engage the increasingly important (sub)regional level. As this seems to gain more importance, this makes E-Net more dependent on the regional organisation. Furthermore by linking up with other Asian coalitions, coalitions can exchange information and strategies and generate capacity building through mutual learning.

In terms of engaging the global scale, I expected the influence of the GCE to be larger. The main issue that binds the GCE and E-Net is the Global Action Week. The international status of the event might increase media attention and adds prestige, but the internationally chosen dates for the week are not suited for the Philippine context, as it is during vacation time. Furthermore, while the GCE addresses education issues on the international level, this doesn’t seem to trickle down to the members of
the coalition. However, the GCE might influence the so called boomerang effect, as through international advocacies they might pressure the national governments and open up political opportunities for E-Net at the national level.

E-Net seems to be prioritising the national (and local) level as this is where they can be most effective, and they increasingly engage the (sub)regional level with the support of ASPBAE. However, by strategically reflecting on the opportunities and challenges of the different scales, E-Net maximises the benefit of engaging the different scales.

Going back to the question if civil society coalitions ‘matter’, I would have a positive (confirming) answer. The question of how civil society advocacy coalitions matter I think largely depends on the national political context in which they are embedded. Especially in countries where the government rhetoric differs greatly from reality and is mainly serving the elite, a strong civil society counterforce is needed. In this example, the impact, strategies and challenges for civil society were shown, and although there is certainly room for improvement, E-Net has proven to be an important actor in the global governance of education. By strategically reflecting on the context and the coalition’s own agency, the impact of civil society can be improved.

**12.4 Limitations and recommendations for further research**

To conclude, I would like to share the limitations of the research. While I have spent over three months in the Philippines, attended many meetings, conferences, participated in many activities, travelled from Manila to various places in the country, it still wasn’t enough time to get a complete grasp of the whole network. As E-Net has so many members, activities, years of activities and events, three months just doesn’t seem to do justice.

Furthermore, while I conducted a literature study before my fieldwork, the lack of knowledge of Filipino history and culture might have limited my capacity to grasp some of the underlying/hidden cultural and political processes at work in the coalition.

I interviewed over 20 people, mostly from within or related to the network. I would have wanted to interview more government officials, and/or outsiders, but this proved to be more difficult than expected. However, while getting official interviews was not
always possible, I’ve spoken to various officials and outsiders at the many activities organised by E-Net. This increased my understanding of how E-Net is perceived by these actors. Furthermore, I tried to balance this limitation through an extensive analysis of documentation.

Another constraint was the language. Although English is an official language in the Philippines, and most people I encountered were very much able to communicate in English, in many cases other languages such as Filipino or local languages were used. This way in meetings, conferences and workshops, but also in the office, I was sometimes not able to understand what seemed vital information.

Moreover, a (more theoretical) limitation that is mentioned earlier in the thesis is that of causality. Although it is difficult to say E-Net was (solely) responsible for certain examples of impact, by asking different stakeholders and using various sources, it was possible to say that at least E-Net had some influence in the mentioned impact. However, impact and success remain difficult topics to research.

An impact study could also contain a more elaborate understanding of the changes in the lives of the beneficiaries of E-Net’s advocacies. This is something that is embedded in this research, however not explicitly looked at, but could be interesting as well.

A recommendation for further research would be to further investigate the relationship between the national and the regional, as I found this is increasingly important. Possibly as a reaction to globalisation, nations are more comfortable engaging global governance on a regional base, where they have some sort of ‘collective regional identity’. Although countries in certain regions can be very different, they also have similarities and share an ‘Asian’ (or African, or…) identity, which is more attuned to their own culture than a broader ‘global identity’. On the other hand, maybe it is just easier to engage on the regional level for practical reasons. However, these are just my speculations, but it would be interesting to get a better understanding of the relation between the two scales and the growing importance thereof.

Furthermore, as E-Net is at what appears as an important turning point, it would be interesting to see what happens in 2010. I expect there will be some changes in the network after the island wide consultations and the 2010 general assembly. It
would be great to do a follow up and see how the coalition strategically adjusted their strategies.

Finally, despite the limitations of the research process and the great deal of further research that can be done, I hope that this research and the process that produced it also demonstrates the richness and importance of studying civil society movements engaged in advocacy for education. They are relatively new players in global governance, and there is still much to learn about the richness and complexity of these actors. Throughout my fieldwork I witnessed the strength, motivation, knowledge and passion of both long-term activists and new members of the coalition, who are actively fighting against injustice. This has really been a great inspiration for me and hopefully can be for others.
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Websites:
# Appendix

## Overview Interviews

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<td>National Coordinator E-Net secretariat</td>
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<td>Haydee Ann Montoya</td>
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<td>Maribella Tanang</td>
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<td>Addie Unsi</td>
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<td>May 09</td>
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<td>Edicio dela Torre</td>
<td>President E-Net, ELF</td>
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<td>Flora Arrelano</td>
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<td>Rebecca Gaddi</td>
<td>Treasurer E-Net, PRRM</td>
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<td>Sr. Sandra Clemente</td>
<td>Auditor E-Net, UC CESDEV</td>
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<td>Vilma Gonzales</td>
<td>Board member E-Net, USM KCC- Teachers</td>
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<td>Jesse Agbulos</td>
<td>Board member E-Net, Maminturan Development Foundation, Inc</td>
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<td>Kin Aldaba</td>
<td>Board member E-Net, ESKAN</td>
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<td>Dan Candare</td>
<td>Member E-Net, ESKAN</td>
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<td>Benjo Basas</td>
<td>Member E-Net Teachers Dignity Coalition</td>
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<td>Luchi Flores</td>
<td>Member E-Net, Coalition for Better Education</td>
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<td>Luz Anigan</td>
<td>AER, Phil. Social Watch, Research Associate</td>
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<td>Rene Raya</td>
<td>AER, ASPBAE, Research Associate</td>
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<td>Raquel Castillo</td>
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<td>David Archer</td>
<td>GCE Global</td>
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<td>Dr. Trongco</td>
<td>DepEd, Assistant Chief, BALS NCR</td>
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<td>Dr. Minda Sutaria</td>
<td>Education expert, consultant LCC, DepEd</td>
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<td>Phsyche Olayvar</td>
<td>DepEd, EDPITAF</td>
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<td>Juan Migel Luz</td>
<td>National Institute for Policy Studies, former undersecretary of education</td>
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<td>Outsider</td>
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<td>May-I L. Fabros</td>
<td>Media contact</td>
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E-Sec E-Net Secretariat  
E-EC E-Net Executive Committee  
E-BM E-Net Board Member  
RA Research Associate  
ASPBrep ASPBAE Representative  
GCErep Global Campaign for Education international representative  
Gov Government representative  
Outsider Outsider  
MedC Media Contact
Cecilia Soriano is the national coordinator of the E-Net secretariat since 2006. Before this, she was working with Popular Education for People’s Empowerment (PEPE).

Haydee Ann Montoya is deputy coordinator of the E-Net secretariat. She has been in this position since 2007.

Regie Guillen is the Advocacy & Campaigns associate of the E-Net secretariat. Prior to this, as a social development worker he was working on land reforms.

Maribella Tanang is the administrative/finance officer of the E-Net secretariat. She has been working with E-Net for three years as regular staff and three years as volunteer.

Addie Unsi is the project coordinator of the PIECE-project. He is part of the E-Net secretariat in Mindanao and has been with E-Net since 2008.

Edicio dela Torre is the president of E-Net. Furthermore he presides the Education for Life Foundation (ELF), and is a board member of the Global Campaign for Education. For three years, he served as head of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Prof. Flora Arrelano is the Vice President of E-Net. In addition she is president of the teachers’ organisation TEACHERS INC., and before the split, served as president of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers.

Rebecca Gaddi is the treasurer of the executive committee of E-Net. She works as a gender specialist at the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), which is one of E-Net’s founding members.

Sr. Sandra Clemente is the E-Net executive committee’s auditor. She works at the University of Cebu and is director of Community Extension Services and Development and Civic Welfare Training Services (CESDEV/NSTP-CWTS).

Vilma Gonzales is a member of the Board of Trustees. She has been a member of E-Net since 2000, and a board member since 2004. She teaches at the University of Southern Mindanao (USM).

Jesse Agbulos is a board member of E-Net. He represents the Mindanao region and the Indigenous People’s movement within E-Net. He works with Maminturan Development Foundation, Inc.

Abdalises ‘Kin’ Aldaba is one of the Visayas representative in the Board of Trustees. Moreover he is the executive director of Eskwelahan Sang Katawhan Negros (ESKAN) and has been with E-Net since the start.

Dan Candare works for Eskwelahan Sang Katawhan Negros (ESKAN), which is implementing local education programs, strengthening Local School Boards, and engaging the Local Government in Negros. He is a member of E-Net.
Benjo Basas is a high school teacher and the chairperson of the Teachers’ Dignity Coalition (TDC). He has been a member of E-Net since 2007.

Luchi Flores the executive director of the Campaign for Better Education and member of E-Net.

Luz Anigan is one of E-Net’s research associates. She works for Action for Economic Reforms (AER) and has been part of the Philippines Social Watch team. As a research associate, she has done research and given training on education governance and financing of education to E-Net members.

Rene Raya is a research associate of E-Net. He is a trustee of Action for Economic Reform (AER) and a convenor of Social Watch Philippines. Furthermore works as Lead Policy Analyst for ASPBAE. He has been with E-Net from the start.

Raquel Castillo is Asia Policy Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator at ASPBAE. She has been with E-Net as a member of the Interim Steering Committee in 2001-2002, and has been the national coordinator of E-Net from 2003 until 2006. Now she is the regional partner through Real World Strategies in Asia-Pacific.

David Archer is a board member of the Global Campaign for Education, and head of Education at Action Aid.

Dr. Felicino Trongco is assistant chief of the ALS division of the Department of Education, Northern Capital Region. As he works for the Bureau for Alternative Learning Systems, he shares E-Net’s advocacy for increasing budget and attention for ALS.

Dr. Minda Sutaria, an education expert, has worked in all levels of education as a teacher, principal, supervisor, curriculum writer, assistant chief, director of public schools, director of elementary education, undersecretary, and deputy minister for non-formal education. Furthermore, she is one of the College of Consultant Fellows of IIEP-UNESCO. She currently works as a consultant for the Literacy Coordinating Council of the Department of Education.

Pshyche Vetta G. Olayvar is the director of Education Development Projects Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF) of the Department of Education. Furthermore she served as the head of the National EFA committee secretariat.

Juan Migel Luz is the executive vice president of the National Institute for Policy Studies. He served as education undersecretary, but was

May-I L. Fabros is an affiliate of E-Net. Through her experience of working with Global Call to Action Against Poverty – Philippines, she has become an campaign expert and advises E-Net on media strategies and campaigns.