Chapter 4  The Empirical Part - Analyzing the 31 ESI programs

4.0  Introduction

In this chapter, the ten contextual level factors defined and elaborated in Chapter Two will be used to explore whether they have influences on the 31 case studies selected from the eight European countries. It is hoped that the analysis will find answers for the 4 research questions posed in Chapter 1. This constitutes the empirical part of this dissertation. The countries are analyzed in the alphabetical order. The main contents of this Chapter are:

4.1 The analysis of the two Belgium (Fr) case studies
4.2 The analysis of the three Dutch case studies
4.3 The analysis of the four Finnish case studies
4.4 The analysis of the four Greek case studies
4.5 The analysis of the two Italian case studies
4.6 The analysis of the two Portuguese case studies
4.7 The analysis of the four Spanish case studies
4.8 The analysis of the ten cases studies from the UK

In the analysis of the case studies of each country, the general background information about the features of each country’s education system and the recent educational reforms and school improvement will be briefly presented. Following this is a short description of the case studies accompanied by the findings from the analysis of the case studies. A table will summarize the factors, which have fostered or hindered ESI within the country. The detailed analysis of the case studies of each country will be presented in the Appendix 2 at the end of this dissertation (please read them first).

4.1  The Belgian (Fr) case studies

4.1.1  Introduction/Context

Lying on the south shore of the North Sea, Belgium is a country with a federal constitutional monarchy. It harbors three cultural communities: Dutch-speaking Flanders in the northern half, French-speaking Wallonia in the southern half, and a German-speaking minority in the East. The determinant constituent element of a community is its culture and language (Sun and de Jong, 2001). Within this decentralized system, there are three levels of decision-making with their respective structures of legislative and executive power: the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions as economic entities. The level responsible for education is the Community level. The case studies presented in this dissertation are strictly limited to the French-speaking Community.

Education throughout Belgium is compulsory from the age of six until 18. There is a prescribed curriculum and timetable in each community (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 24). Teaching methods, textbooks and materials are not centrally prescribed. The methods of assessment are at teachers’ discretion (ib: 25). Methods of assessment and the award of certificates are determined by the individual schools, though the upper secondary education certificate is externally ratified (ib: 27). After qualifying, a would-be teacher in the state system must serve a period of at least 240 days as a temporary teacher, followed by a probationary year and receive satisfactory reports from their head teacher and a school inspector, before being accorded the status of permanent teacher. In-service training is available at all levels and is encouraged but not compulsory. To be eligible to
become a head teacher in the state system or an inspector, a teacher must be at least 35, have at least ten years' teaching experience and pass a special examination (ib: 31). In the French-speaking Belgium, Inspectors inspect the work of individual teachers and offer support and advice (ib: 32).

Since 1994, particularly since the OECD report on national education policies was issued, the French-speaking Community has achieved steady progress in attempting to set up an effective system of monitoring devices through a number of initiatives, for instance setting up a council for Education and Training, drafting a system of references for the competencies relevant to the whole of compulsory schooling, implementation of the School Plans, obliging every school to issue an annual progress report and the creation of monitoring committees and assessment tools. According to Demeuse et al. (2000), “to say that French speaking Belgium does not stimulate schools to innovate is not really true. Some endeavors do exist, like external evaluations. Yet these are not prescriptive and their results are not widely exploited. That regulation mode is of course quite light in comparison with practices existing in other countries, mainly in the UK, or even in Flanders, where a restrictive audit system operates. The fragmented system and the lack of references in terms of pupils' outcomes increase the difficulty in finding projects which could be labeled 'school improvement projects'” (Demeuse, et al. 2000: 37). However, the idea of a “better school for all”, reducing the number of “failures” in the system, adapting curricula more successfully, and ensuring in-depth acquisition of the skills taught, have resulted in the two Belgium case studies, which are embedded inside this wide context.

4.1.2 Brief introduction to the two Belgian (Fr) case studies
The 1st program focused on testing the effectiveness of a new algebra instruction method in the first year of secondary education. The project covered four years from July 1996 till 2000. The final aim was to improve mathematics teaching and learning, particularly focusing on preparing a complete course on teaching Algebra with a new methodological approach. Three schools, six first-year teachers and 225 students were involved. The researchers (University of Liege) gave the pre-test and post-test to both the control group (428 students in 25 schools) and the experimental group (225). The conclusion was "even though these research results do not prove their superior efficacy for the learning of algebra, the experimental method seems to be as effective as the conventional method."

The 2nd program was about the innovation "School Without Failures" in primary education. The general aim was to reduce school failure and student grade retention so as to increase the effectiveness of primary education. 'Mastery Learning' was used in classroom teaching. Teachers were trained to implement and to develop formative evaluations. The project (1993 to 1999) was designed and conducted by researchers at the University of Liège with the co-operation of the School Inspectorate, involving 6 primary schools and 165 pupils. Two cohorts of pupils were monitored during the course of their entire primary school path. The program has reduced the student grade retention without decreasing the attainment level in the first four years. Besides this, teacher collaboration between grade levels has been improved.

4.1.3 Findings from the analysis of the two case studies
The factor "national goal setting in terms of student outcomes" had some impact on the two case studies. For instance, "the national goals were reflected in the curriculum and the teachers' goals were to ensure that pupils achieve the objectives defined in the 1997 Decree" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 37-38). Meanwhile "the national goals have been
completed by more precise definitions of benchmarks and targets, with formal system of references" (ib: 27 & 38). However, the key problem was that, besides the Inspectorate, there was no other evidence of national or community control, testing, feedback, and reinforcement system to guarantee how to achieve the goals defined. According to the Belgian ESI team, neither standardized national testing nor unified regional testing was applied to schools at any levels (ib: 42). The quality of schools differed a lot. The evaluation instruments proposed by the French Community were not obligatory (see Appendix part).

The factor "national goal setting in terms of school improvement" was mirrored in the implementation of a School Plan, preventing early dropouts and encouraging schools to take part in the pilot projects launched by the European Commission. Little information was available in either of the case studies about the assessment of the School Plan. As for the impact of this factor, the two case studies directly resulted from the national educational goal and policy of preventing early dropouts in compulsory education or from the national goal on more effective teaching and learning in mathematics. In this sense, the factor "national goal setting in terms of school improvement" has played an initiating role in the two case studies. The weak point was "teachers and schools will neither be rewarded nor punished for participating in an improvement project" (ib: 11 & 38). As no hard measures were taken to guarantee the realization of the national goals for school improvement, the impact of the national goals of school improvement has been diminished.

Regarding the factor "central steering and empowering ESI", the case studies mentioned that since 1994 the government of the French-speaking Community of Belgium has "offered all the facilities to introduce school improvement projects" (ib: 37), including structurally, legally, practically and financially steering and empowering ESI (see details in the Appendix). Its 1997 decrees set up standards, which must be achieved at the second and the sixth year of primary education and the second year of secondary education. From the case studies, we couldn't find evidence of strong central/community intervention in failing schools and no "hard measures" have been taken at any levels. Moreover, the funding of so-called "positive discrimination" did not steer nor empower effective school improvement because such funding did not reward the "winners" of the ESI schools but rather supported and even carried some (if not all) "failing" schools "which had to meet objective criteria relating to the number of pupils lagging behind in their studies" (Eurydice, 2000: 316).

One of the contextual level factors, which fostered ESI in the French-speaking Community of Belgium, was the external agent (see details in Appendix). In Belgium, school improvement programs followed the top-down model and were initiated and carried out by university researchers and evaluated by the Inspectorate. Nevertheless, "they were commission by the Ministry, not at the behest of the schools or teachers" (ib: 38). External agents exercised pressure and support for the two programs. As the case study analysis shows the external agents had been regarded as "the driving force" and "the director" of the process. They regularly assessed, monitored, evaluated and gave feedback to the schools involved. The case studies stated "the innovation project met its objectives as long as the University took care of it". Otherwise, "the innovation 'set up' is at risk of being dropped by the teachers" (ib: 32).
Market mechanisms were not favored in Belgium (Fr) (see Appendix). "The absolute freedom to choose a school and to change from one to another each year has never been in favor of educational quality" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 33). On the other hand, if parents in Belgium (Fr) had absolute freedom in choosing schools, a kind of market or semi-market among schools is in operation, as there would be some competition among schools to attract students and parents. Therefore, the question whether the impact of market mechanisms in French-speaking Belgium is totally negative or not requires some further investigation and research.

With respect to school accountability, Demeuse, et al., (2000: 8) particularly points out that "our educational system is not familiar with such concepts as evaluation related to objectives or accountability. Even the English concept of ‘school accountability’ does not exist in French". However, "since 1998, schools must have a ‘School Plan’ … This could be a lever to introduce the concept of accountability and to increase the pressure in favor of school improvement" (ib: 38 & 44).

Let's look at the factor "adequate time, financial and human resource support for ESI". Although the French-speaking Community of Belgium had twice allocated special funding for improving schools in the last decade (in 1995 and 1997), such funding was to support the failing schools. Meanwhile, the researchers complained that limited research funding increased the difficulty in planning a complete and coordinated project. Our research posed the question: what kind of national funding is more effective and more stimulating for ESI? If only support without pressure is offered can the schools really be improved? Meanwhile in the two case studies, human resource support from the university researchers and inspectors greatly overshadowed the financial support, and the direct support from the national level was much less evident.

As for the factor "local support", no information was available in the case study. The fact that these two case studies have been initiated and carried out by university researchers for implementing some innovations may well explain why local support remains unknown.

The two case studies mentioned the negative impact of "offering schools some autonomy" on effective school improvement (see Appendix) based on the facts "each school may have its own curriculum, no national or regional testing at any levels" (ib: 8, 28, 42), "each teacher may assess his/her pupils on the basis of his/her own aims. Schools are quite autonomous in the processes while they are not held accountable for student outcomes" (ib: 9 & 28) and so on. In addition, the Belgian team mentioned that it was very difficult to find school improvement programs in Belgium. According to Demeuse, et al. (2000), too much autonomy in the French-speaking Belgian schools has strongly impeded effective school improvement in schools.

The absence of the factor engendering a culture in support of ESI is evident in the case studies (see details in Appendix). An absence of this factor is expected to be rather negative for ESI. Although policy makers have introduced some new concepts such as the School Plan and external evaluation and have made some related criteria into laws since 1994, the lack of pressure, obligations, hard measures, an assessment, feedback and reinforcement system has meant their efforts were in vain. On the other hand, the traditional culture which "has very little interest for students’ outcomes" (ib: 37) and the beliefs that "appointing somebody to help or to welcome a critical friend seems quite
strange in the system" (ib: 37) probably need to be changed. This is a great challenge to the central/community government, which is the product of a culture as well as an "atomic nucleus" in shaping a new culture. Engendering a culture in support of ESI is a part of shaping a new culture, which may help to change the old beliefs, routines and traditions.

Table 3 shows the contextual level factors which have positively or negatively influenced ESI in the two Belgian case studies. To save space, the findings from the case studies concerning the indicators of the 10 ESI factors are assembled in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.

Table 3 The factors at the contextual level which influence ESI in the two French-speaking Belgian case studies (foster, hinder or no information)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level</th>
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<tr>
<td>• External evaluation and external agents</td>
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<td>• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adequate financial and human resources support</td>
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<td>• National goal setting in terms of school improvement</td>
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<td>• Strong centrally steering and empowering ESI</td>
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<th>The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Market mechanisms</td>
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<td>• Too much school autonomy</td>
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<td>• The weak national monitoring, evaluation, feedback and reinforcement system</td>
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<td>• Lack of culture in support of ESI</td>
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<td>• Lack of school accountability</td>
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<tr>
<th>Factors without information in the case studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Local support</td>
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4.2 The Dutch case studies

4.2.1 Introduction/Context
Bordering on the North Sea, the Netherlands is a lowland country in western Europe. People living in the Netherlands have the right to establish schools on the basis of their own religious, ideological or educational beliefs. Surprisingly, all schools whether public or private, are funded by the government. “70% of primary schools and 80% of secondary schools are private” (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 160). Around 65% of all school children attend privately run schools. Education is compulsory between the ages of five and 16 (ib: 160). “The affluent status of the country created a well-resourced educational system, which currently takes about 15 per cent of the annual government budget” (Swint and Creemers, 2002). The freedom to organize teaching means that schools are free to determine what is taught and how. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science does, however, impose a number of statutory standards in relation to the quality of education. These standards prescribe the subjects to be studied, the attainment targets and the content of national examinations. There are also rules about the number of teaching periods per year, teacher training and teaching qualifications, the rights of parents and pupils to have a say in school matters, and the planning and reporting obligations of schools. “In all types of secondary school, there is a final examination with two components: a national examination for all schools of each type; and an examination set by each school. Those who pass receive a national diploma in the appropriate type of education” (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 165). Teacher in-service training is available for all
teachers, but not compulsory. All teachers, in private as well as in public schools, are classified as civil servants. The Education Inspectorate is responsible to the Ministry of Education for the inspection of all primary and secondary schools (ib: 173).

In recent years, many central government powers have been transferred to schools or to the local municipality. Government control is increasingly confined to policy-making and providing funding. Owing to the fact that “almost 4 per cent of the pupils between 4 and 19 years old studied in special education schools in 1995” (Peschar and Meijer, 1997), the official policy of the Dutch government aimed to decrease the number of pupils moving from primary to special education (de Jong, et al., 2000c). In order to reduce the number of pupils slipping into special education, two measures have been taken: changing the organizational and financial structure and using adaptive instruction in primary schools. Meanwhile, the government stimulated school choice by making school outcomes publicly known and developing accountability by publishing examination results and efficiency measures for each school on the Internet since 1998. Economic growth and information technology created higher demands on the schools as well. Since the late 1990s schools were forced to implement the Common Core Curriculum formulated in legal requirements. The three Dutch case studies are embedded into such a national context. The first and the second case studies concern enhancing students’ outcomes with effective teaching strategies, particularly by using an adaptive teaching approach, frequent external evaluations and feedback. The third case study describes the implementation of the national Common Core Curriculum in lower secondary education. The following are the brief descriptions of the three case studies.

4.2.2 Brief introduction to the three Dutch case studies

1. **The effectiveness of using "Phonics instruction" to teach reading (LPS)**

The aim of this case study was to enhance student outcomes with effective teaching strategies, particularly by using "adaptive teaching" and the "phonics instruction" to teach reading. The project lasted three years (1991-1994), and involved 11 schools, 5 counseling institutes and two universities. Pre-and-post-tests with a control group were used. Data were collected in Group 3 (pupils of 6 years old) regarding achievement and implementation (of adaptive instruction) measures. The pupils’ characteristics such as IQ, SES, reading pleasure and an auditive synthesis (pre)-test were used as co-variables. One year after the project, the achievement of the experimental group was measured again and compared with the national average. The project showed the improved school outcomes in reading in comparison to control group and to the national average. The conclusion was "the improvement factors were related to goal formulation, frequent diagnosis of achievement and direct instruction" (De Jong, et al., 2000:307). However, the experiment effect disappeared when the treatment (specific goals, external support, monitoring of the behavior of both counselors and teachers) was not continued.

2. **Raising the students' outcomes of language and arithmetic (KEA)**

The KEA program aimed to enhance ethnic minority pupils' achievement in Dutch language and arithmetic up to the national average level. It started in 1991 in Grade 1 when pupils were 4 years old and continued until 1999 when the same groups of pupils were in Grade 8. 1206 students (more than 80% ethnic pupils) of 4 inner city schools were involved. Pupils' achievement was assessed by means of eight different standardized tests (which were part of the national pupil monitoring system). The test scores at the end of grade 3 of the KEA-cohort were compared to the test scores of "pre-
The empirical analysis of the 31 ESI programs showed that in 7 out of 8 tests the "post-KEA" cohorts scored nearly equal to or even higher than the national average score (ib: 326). The project showed moderate effects and had a striking added value to the low SES pupils. It concluded that an evaluation culture had been developed in schools. In addition to the clear goals, intensive external monitoring, evaluation and feedback, the improved pupil caring system, class observations and a more coherent team vision were the main effective factors (ib: 327).

3. "The Common Core Curriculum" (The CCC)
This case study was about the Dutch national reforms in changing the national curriculum and school structures of the lower secondary education (1993/1994 school year). It aimed to apply "the CCC" for all students at the lower secondary education. Two new subjects and two more teaching periods were added to the new curriculum. The student track selection was postponed until 15 years old and four different tracks were combined into three. The CCC reform was positively valued by most of the teachers, especially the new mathematics textbooks. The CCC reform has brought in organizational changes in Dutch secondary schools. The newly added teaching periods and subjects brought forth the changes in subject departments and the school organizational structure, introducing new textbooks, new teaching approaches, testing and an extra time investment into schools. It was a typical example of using a top-down model to implement overall reform in lower secondary education.

4.2.3 The findings of the analysis of the three Dutch case studies
Regarding the factor national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, in the Netherlands the central government set out the main goals which were specified into more detailed goals by the SLO\(^1\) for each subject (around 60) and for schools to achieve them. The publishers developed textbooks based on these detailed goals (or national guidelines). The CITO\(^2\) Institute developed different kinds of tests in line with these goals to measure the attainment of the national goals, including tests for monitoring, for periodical evaluation, for national assessment at the end of primary (not obligatory) and secondary education (obligatory). The four different organizations (the SLO, the CITO, the Inspection and the publishers) performed different roles in the process of detailing and controlling the accomplishment of the national goals. It made the assessment of the national goals more objective compared with those countries which had only one organization carrying out all the functions. However, the Dutch national goals were not totally prescriptive, they were not obliged to accomplish the goals at a given period of time (by a certain age, for instance). An interesting phenomenon mentioned in the case studies was that the Common Curriculum Core was originally defined (1986) and documented in highly specific achievement targets which were a part of the law and schools were obliged to conform to these rules. The then government (the third cabinet of Prime Minister Lubbers) did not attain sufficient political support for these kinds of targets. They had to be transformed to more globally formulated core curriculum goals (De Jong, et al., 2000: 334). This begs the question: what is the relationship between the desire of a society and its national goals or targets? What are the relationships between national culture (especially its values), the readiness for change, and the national goals?

With respect to national goal setting in terms of school improvement, the three case studies have provided the following information: implementing the CCC reform, reforming senior secondary schools, decreasing the number of pupils moving from

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\(^1\) The Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development

\(^2\) CITO is a testing and measurement company of international repute located in the Netherlands.
primary education into special education by offering remedial help for learning problems at an early stage, encouraging school accountability by publishing examination results on the Internet since 1998, fusing schools, increasing school autonomy, introducing information and computer technology and so on. The three Dutch case studies resulted directly (the 3rd) or indirectly (the 1st and the 2nd), from such national initiatives. The involved schools were steered by these school improvement goals with the direct influence and assistance from external agents.

Regarding to strong central steering and empowering ESI, three strategies to steer and to empower ESI showed some positive influence on the three case studies (see more in Appendix). Legalization of the reforms (e.g. the CCC) made the change and implementation of the CCC reform across the country possible; internationalization of the educational system brought a new vision into the Dutch culture and educational system which was a harbinger of more openness towards change; the financial support which was offered to the involved schools and the external agents enabled the reform and the programs to be carried out. "In international studies (TIMMS3) Dutch pupils perform well in the beta sciences. The efficiency of secondary education is improved. Schools with different tracks have been integrated. Pupils lose less time (grade retention has decreased) and the amount of pupils in the highest two tracks (HAVO/VWO) has increased. The Inspection is satisfied with these outcomes" (ib: 338). The case studies clearly discovered that it was almost impossible for all the schools to manage the changes caused by the CCC reforms without centrally steering and empowering the reforms at the national contextual level and without its formulations in legal requirements. This couldn't be done by any external agents or Inspectors. However, we could not find any reinforcement at the national level in the Dutch case studies, the authors of the case studies argue: although the Dutch government aims to stimulate schools in achieving the targets, because of the tendency to increase the autonomy of schools the educational system does not have many reinforcement possibilities" (ib: 336).

Relatively speaking, the contextual level factor "external evaluation and external agents" was quite an apparent factor in all three Dutch case studies. As the case studies showed, the external agents had played a rather important role in initiating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the LPS and the KEA programs in schools. The major external agents mentioned in the Dutch case studies were the different counseling institutes and researchers. The total time the counselors spent on the LPS program for improvement was on average 138 hours, which resulted in considerable pressure for improvement. Moreover, the university researchers monitored both the teachers’ and the counselors’ time and activities in the program. This was a rare phenomenon (monitors being monitored) in most SI programs. The contribution from the external agents to the success of the KEA-project consisted of frequently diagnosing, testing and giving feedback to teachers about their pupils' performance, frequent observing classroom instruction (per group 30 times), offering additional care for students-at-risk. However, one crucial problem associated with the impact of the external agents was the ownership of ESI. In the 1st case study, the ownership of the ESI program was always in the hands of the external agents as was the case in Belgium (Fr). Without their control, monitoring and intense treatment, the effectiveness disappeared. As the first case study stated: "many counselors took over the function of the head teacher. The head teacher was not explicitly trained in keeping the project on track in his/her school at the

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3 The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study)
moment the work of the school counselors was finished" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 320). In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study, the ownership of the ESI program has gradually turned from the external agents into the hands of the participating schools and teachers because "after 8 years all teachers have received an intensive and direct support in the classroom and a strong educational leadership is fostered as well as a safe and orderly climate. The principal stimulates, checks progress and creates conditions for improvement" (ib: 331-332). Thus, the stability of the program's effectiveness (for 8 years) lasts much longer than that of the 1\textsuperscript{st} case study. The authors of the Dutch case studies argued that "improvement is not something that can be forced upon schools. If schools cannot envision the benefits of SI, they will not continue to be involved in a long run" (ib: 319). This has partially explained the disappearance of the effectiveness of the 1\textsuperscript{st} case study. Strong pressure from the external agents had led to some short-term effectiveness however such effectiveness was not stable. "If the intensity of the (external) treatment is not maintained, the results decrease" (ib: 319). Thus to help schools gradually hold the ownership of ESI would be a real empowerment. In addition, the different qualities of the counseling institutes had different impacts on the SE programs. This point of view has been mentioned in the 1\textsuperscript{st} and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case studies as well (ib: 332). For instance, the Institute in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study had a reputation for good performance in improvement programs for low SES schools. Based on its experience of what worked and what didn't work, it was much easier to develop a coherent strategy for improvement and to implement such a plan in a consistent way.

With respect to market mechanism, conflicting opinions emerged. On the one hand, market mechanisms did exist in the Netherlands in the form of the total freedom for parents to choose schools for their children and to change from one to another, in the form of making the schools' results publicly known. However, the issue of equality rises in the form of "black" (with almost all pupils coming from immigrant minority families) versus "white" schools in some big cities.

Regarding school accountability, the case studies showed that school accountability was an increasing tendency in the Netherlands, with the publication of the student outcomes of each school (with mean comparisons) on the Internet and the School Year Report informing parents about the curriculum they offered and the results they achieved. However, there was no information about the reinforcement (rewards or sanctions) in the case studies.

The three case studies have showed the influence of the factor adequate time, financial and human resource support. The financial support has been stated in the three case studies, typical example being the average of 200,000$ (US) which the central government allocated to each secondary school during 1990-1996 for implementing the CCC reform. Meanwhile, the SLO, the CITO, Inspections and research institutions were financed as well by the central government to design and to monitor the process and the results of the implementation (ib: 336). Human resource support was treated in the external agents’ section above and in Appendix as well. Regarding the "time" issue, the schools involved in the 1\textsuperscript{st} and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case studies had adequate time for implementing the programs (three years and eight years respectively). Lack of time was mentioned in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} case study "for the implementation of the CCC reform" (ib: 345). In addition, the instability of the school staff and the school counselors had negative influence on ESI in the 1\textsuperscript{st} case study.
With respect to local support, it was not the major concern of the three selected Dutch case studies. Nevertheless, from interviews with Dutch teachers and researchers, discover that the Dutch municipal authorities were responsible for the maintenance and quality of the school advisory services. They had a specific duty for the publicly run educational institutions in their areas.

With respect to offering school some autonomy, the 3 Dutch case studies clearly showed that schools in the Netherlands had sufficient autonomy to decide what to teach, how to teach, when and what kind of tests the students were going to use (but students at the end of the secondary education are obliged to participate in the examinations organized at the national level). Schools also had autonomy in the aspect of finance. Teachers experienced autonomy over their classroom: regarded as their domain with head teachers feeling "embarrassed to interfere" (De Jong, et al., 2000). Although there was a tendency of increasing school accountability in the Netherlands, schools and teachers seemed to have no expected increased points of their student outcomes per year at the time when the case studies were written.

In the respect of engendering a culture in support of ESI, in recent 10 years, at the national level efforts have been made in the perspectives of clarion calls, establishing new laws for reforms, introducing new vision, concepts, norms, new practice into Dutch schools and educational system (e.g. the CCC reform). Extra money (NLG 12 million per year from 1997-2000 plus additional 1 million in 1997-1998) was allocated to the "Culture and Schools" program (ib: 354). Concerning engendering a school culture in support of ESI, the 2nd case study argued that before the KEA project there was no evaluation culture in the schools. It was the KEA program, which introduced the internal counseling system and the evaluation culture into the participating schools (ib: 329). The 3rd case study showed that it was the CCC reform which not only changed the subject departments, school organizations, textbooks and teaching approaches but also brought in new ideas and new concepts to students, teachers and schools (through new textbooks for mathematics, languages, and other subjects).

Table 4 summarizes the contextual level factors, which have fostered or hindered ESI in the Dutch case studies. The findings from the case studies concerning the indicators of the 10 ESI factors are assembled in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.

Table 4 The factors at the contextual level which influence ESI in the three Dutch case studies (foster or hinder or no information)
4.3 The Finnish case studies

4.3.1 Introduction/Context
Finland is a country on the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe. There is a national Ministry of Education (MoE) in Finland, but it is concerned only with general policy. Detailed policy on schools and vocational education, including the curriculum and evaluation, is devised by the National Board of Education (NBE) (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 53). There is no National Inspection department for schools in Finland (www.edu.fi/english, 2000). About 90% of the costs of education are met by government – three-quarters of this from local and one quarter from national government. The municipal boards supervise schools. Education is compulsory between the ages of seven and 16. Public education is free. Pupils in the comprehensive schools during the compulsory education period are entitled to free daily meals and to free transport. Finnish higher education lasts many years. The normal age for students to get their master degree is around 27 and the normal age for getting a Ph.D. is around 37 (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 60-64). Guidelines concerning the subjects to be taught and the minimum time to be allocated to them are laid down by the NBE, but the municipalities and individual schools have some autonomy in implementing them. Students must pass a national matriculation tests but this does not guarantee a university place, there are usually university departmental entrance examinations (ib: 53-60).

At the beginning of the 1990s Finland was faced with an economic depression. Given the dwindling of its resources in recent years, the educational sector in Finland has had to commit itself to increasing the cost-effectiveness of its operations. This has been achieved by closing down and merging schools. Since 1993, the number of comprehensive schools has been reduced from 4200 to around 4000 (Nikkanen, 2000: 179). Since 1999 all schools in Finland have been obliged by the new school law to collect self-assessment information, including present curricula and their implementation, educational materials, teaching tools, working methods and school industry. There has been further training all the time; nearly all teachers have taken part in a 5-credit further pedagogic training course. Finnish teachers can apply for a leave of absence (4 months) for in-service training, during which the National Board of Education pays their salary. A teacher can run the project while a substitute takes care of his/her classes (Nikkanen, 2000).

4.3.2 A brief introduction to the four Finnish ESI programs
1. Teacher Training Primary School of the University of Jyväskylä (ERC&S)
This case study focused on the Experimental and Research Project on the Content and Structure of Comprehensive School with 15 participating municipalities. It was an innovation in organization, structure, curriculum and contents. It started in 1997 and ran till the year 2000. It was coordinated, supported and evaluated by the National Board of Education. The national goal of this project intended to make comprehensive schools a safer and more stimulating learning environment and more responsive to the pupil’s individual needs and talents. Another focus of the project was to enhance the pupils' self-esteem. The project involved all the teachers. No data were available for student outcomes.

2. Voionmaa Secondary School (VSOP)
"Studying independently of year classes in comprehensive school" was the theme of this program. It was an innovation on school curriculum and the implementation of a non-
graded system in a secondary school. It was assumed that allowing students to construct and regulate their own study programs would have a positive effect on their motivation. It aimed at finding new ways to diversify teaching as well. This kind of non-graded schooling needed a well-structured timetable and a renewed school curriculum. The years 1995-1998 were an experimental period with full implementation of the scheme since 1998. In the school year 1998-1999, 75.4 per cent of the aims set for the core areas were reportedly achieved. Although the project has already finished, the school is continuing the non-graded schooling system.

3. Kilpinen Secondary School (LUMA)
This case study was about the Developmental Project for Math and the National Sciences (LUMA project). At the national level the goals were to persuade as many students as possible to take the science subjects (Math, physics, chemistry, biology, geography) in the “Matriculation Examination” (national exams) and to raise the level of students' Math and Science to the best quartile of the OECD countries. The experiences gained from this project would be a significant resource in the process of preparing the next Finnish curriculum guidelines. The final outcomes would be visible only in the year 2010. The project was coordinated, supported and evaluated by the National Board of Education. A survey carried out by the NBE revealed a growing interest (from the students) in these subjects and positive attitudes towards science.

4. The Vitikkala Elementary School (PEDANET)
Creating an on-line learning environment for schools (15-20 schools were involved) was the aim of the program. A particular goal was to improve the quality of learning environment in small and rural schools. Another aim was to explore the potential of modern information technology for enhancing self-regulated learning and authenticity learning. Curricula were designed on the Internet, which enabled parents to access the school curriculum and the pupils' achievements. New instruction materials (on-line) replaced the textbooks. Teachers had to use the new material and to improve teaching methods by utilizing telecommunication networks in teaching. The case study stated "the goals set for this project have been achieved" (Nikkanen, 2000: 214).

4.3.3 The findings from the analysis of the four Finnish case studies
Regarding the national goal setting in terms of student outcomes in Finland, the case studies revealed that although the national goals were the same for all the schools in Finland, however, the final decisions about the school syllabus were made jointly by the local authorities and the school itself. "The school’s curriculum follows the national curriculum, but it also has a part called “municipal curriculum”. They have a lot of freedom in the implementation" (ib: 186). There were evaluations, feedback in the school improvement programs. There was no regular national testing, evaluation, feedback and reinforcement at the primary and the lower secondary education levels. The only national standardized test was at the end of secondary education. Moreover, there was no national inspection in Finland. Although new curriculum guidelines came into force in 1999, the major evaluation still focused on student self-evaluation for each course and the teachers' written assessment report. The Finnish team points out that "even if the improvement programs are well planned, more emphasis should be put on planning how the activities are in closer connection to better student outcomes. More enhanced effectiveness is needed in the direction of pupils' outcomes" (ib: 215).
Regarding the **national goal setting in terms of school improvement**, in recent years various centrally initiated school improvement programs have been carried out in Finland. Among them, two were particularly mentioned in the four case studies: the 1999 new School Acts reform and the LUMA project (see details in Appendix). The case studies have shown that three of them resulted from the centrally initiated school improvement programs such as the 1999 new School Acts reform and the LUMA project. For instance, the 1\textsuperscript{st} and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case studies were initiated by the 1999 new School Acts reform, while the 3\textsuperscript{rd} case study was initiated by the LUMA project. Some other SI programs were going on in Finland too. For example, the Teacher Training Primary School of the University of Jyväskylä alone was carrying on four SI projects at the same time and every teacher of the school took part in at least one SI program (ib: 182-184).

Regarding **central steering and empowering ESI**, special central financial support was mentioned (see Appendix). In addition, three out of the four Finnish case studies were the results of the initiatives from the national level. The national curriculum was commented by the case studies as stimulating and the new law has made teaching independent of year classes possible (ib: 198). To steer and empower the LUMA program, the MoE has appointed a LUMA Support Group to encourage various stakeholders to take part in implementing the program, to monitor and to support the realization of its goals, and to participate in organizing the evaluation of the program. The 1\textsuperscript{st} case study stated that the project was coordinated, supported and externally evaluated by the National Board of Education, which arranged meetings, workshops and seminars. The national standards defined for the projects were used as criteria in the evaluation (Nikkanen, 2000: 180-209). Concerning the LUMA project, the NBE carried out an evaluation of the ninth-graders in 2000.

The influence of the **external agents and external evaluations** was undeniable. This point of view was supported by the 1\textsuperscript{st}, the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and the 4\textsuperscript{th} case studies (e.g. the strong influence from the Department of Teacher Education of the University of Jyväskylä, the Department of Teacher Education, the central Finnish PEDANET project team, etc.) but not by the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study (see Appendix). Here, we need to point out that there is no national Inspector system in Finland. The external agents mentioned in the case studies were mainly for helping to implement some innovation programs and for teacher pre-and-in service training. From interviews with some practitioners, we got to know that the teacher training system in Finland has played a rather important role in guaranteeing the high quality of the teachers.

Regarding **market mechanism** in Finland, parents have a considerable degree of free school choice. Pupils are allocated a particular school by the public authorities but parents have the right to apply for another school depending on the places available. In addition, parents play a rather important role in school daily activities and in the School Board. The Chairman of the school board is elected by the parents. The headmaster is the secretary of the board (ib: 187). In Finland, "parents are an important educating factor and resource for the school. Active parents can have an influence on different school choices and also contribute to different matters in every Finnish school" (ib: 212). Therefore, the Finnish case studies argued that market mechanism, although it might have negative effects, had a positive influence on effective school improvement in Finland.
School accountability in Finland was mainly reflected in the School Year Plan, the school curriculum, and the published student achievement (school self-evaluation) on Internet (see Appendix).

Concerning adequate time, financial and human support for ESI, some special funding, time and human resource support for ESI were mentioned in the 1st case study and especially in the 4th case study. The financial support mentioned in the 4th case study was ample (FIM 120,000 from the National Board of Education) – and made it possible for a teacher to take a leave of absence, to devote their time and energy fully to the project (see more in Appendix). But this was not the case in the 2nd case study. Lack of time, funding and human resource support was found in the 3rd case study which stated that "the following three factors, which were the most inhibiting factors for ESI: a) time, b) economy, c) human factors partially hamper the implementation of the project" (ib: 207). Regarding the time issue, the teachers could apply for leave of absence (4 months) for some in-service training (salary would be paid by the National Board of Education). A teacher could run the project while a substitute took care of his/her classes. Apart from these supports, special support was mentioned namely support from the industry companies. Their expertise in information technology was very important, according to the case studies, for the success of the school improvement programs. In addition, the case studies argued "there is a lot of power in networking. Teachers have been more motivated when co-operating with colleagues from other schools" (ib: 217).

The factor of the local support has played an important role in Finnish case studies. In Finland, the provision of compulsory education was the responsibility chiefly of the municipality, which was also in charge of re-allocation of the state subsidy and funding. Given the autonomous position of the municipalities in Finland, allocation of money within the municipal educational service depended largely on the general attitude that a municipality had towards education (ib: 179). As the case studies showed that some municipalities had given the ESI programs the financial and human resource support (as shown in the 3rd and the 4th case studies) (ib: 204, 214). While in the 2nd case study, the ESI program received neither spiritual nor financial nor human resource support from the local municipality. "The school feels loneliness" (ib: 199). Therefore, the attitude of the local municipality towards ESI was quite important. The different attitudes resulted in "the growth of inequality. There has been discussion about a return to earmarked government subsidies to ensure that the municipalities will not wreck Finnish compulsory education" (ib: 222).

Concerning offering school some autonomy, the Finnish system has provided schools an easy access to ESI programs. Apart from the school autonomies in curriculum and pedagogy, schools in Finland could initiate SI programs by themselves. For example, the innovation on school curriculum and the implementation of non-graded system was initiated and designed by the Voionmaa Secondary School itself. Therefore, the school has held the SI ownership from the beginning to the end of the program. With such autonomy and the ownership of ESI programs, internal change agents have played the most important role in the four case studies. "School autonomy was important and favorable for the success of school improvement efforts of a school in Finland" (Reezigt, ed. 2001: 58).

Engendering a culture in support of ESI revealed its importance in the Finnish case studies. The Finnish central government has created new visions through: a) "the new
School Acts that schools have to evaluate how effective, economic and impressive they are" (Nikkanen, 2000: 209); b) through the LUMA project which was oriented to raise "the children and young people’s mathematical and scientific literacy to the best quartile of the OECD countries" (ib: 200-201, see more in Appendix). In the respect of engendering a school culture in support of ESI, the 2nd and the 3rd case studies showed that a positive and encouraging culture enabled the school improvement programs to achieve success more easily. The more open, positive, and innovative the culture of a school, the more able the school was to achieve its goals and objectives (ib: 216). However, the lack of evaluation culture in Finland was also mentioned in the case studies. "There is not yet such a culture to get the teachers collect data for feedback and for follow-up of SI. We do not have that kind of 'management culture' now after the common decentralization and demands for self-assessment it is quite obvious that change is needed" (ib: 215).

Table 5 summarizes the contextual level factors, which have positively or negatively influenced ESI in the Finnish case studies. The findings from the case studies concerning the indicators of the 10 ESI factors are assembled in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.

Table 5 The factors at the national contextual level, which influenced ESI in the four Finnish case studies

| The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level | • Offering school some autonomy  
• The local support  
• External agents and external evaluations  
• Engendering a culture in support of ESI  
• Adequate time, financial and human resource support  
• Strong central steering and empowering ESI  
• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes  
• National goal setting in terms of school improvement  
• Market mechanism  
• School accountability |
|--------------------------------------------------|
| The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level | • Not enough attention to student outcomes in national goal setting  
• Lack of time, funding and human resource support in some case studies  
• Lack of evaluation culture |

4.4 The Greek case studies

4.4.1 Introduction/Context
Situated in the southeast of Europe, Greece is a country with a highly centralized educational system. The Ministry of Education is the main center for decision-making and the formulation of educational policies. It decides on almost all the issues that concern teaching, personnel administration, expenditure, school operation, etc. (OECD, 1997). Educational policy is determined in detail by the national government (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 107). According to Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al, (1998, 2000), the MoE is responsible for the development of curricula, textbooks and teaching timetables for all subjects taught in schools. It is also responsible for choosing and distributing textbooks (one for each subject per grade) and deciding upon the duration of studies. Teachers are centrally selected and centrally placed.
Education in Greece is compulsory for nine years between the age of 5.5 and 15. A very striking feature is that public education at all levels (from primary to university level) – including the provision of textbooks – are free. Private schools however, receive no state funding. The private sector is small and declining (4% private schools). Assessment of student outcomes is by teachers, by oral and written tests. For admission to university education, candidates must hold a “lykeion” (secondary education leaving certificate) and also take an entrance examination, which accounts for 75% with 25% of the result dependent on graduation marks from the lykeion (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 108-117). Teachers at all levels of school are required to take in-service training courses every five or six years. These last three months and most teachers can expect to take them three or four times in their career. There is no Inspectorate, since 1982 Greece had school advisers based in the educational directorates or offices of each prefecture, their duties are more related to giving advice. School advisers must have at least 15 years’ experience of teaching or related employment in education and many also hold postgraduate degrees (ib: 120).

An important attribute of Greek schools is the uniformity and the rigidity of teaching content and practice (Bouzakis, 1991; 1994). There is also a common goal, among the Educational Acts, for decentralization of the decision-making and emphasis on vocational training. The MoE has noticed the backward educational status of the Greek system, it has pointed out "the uniformity of the content of teaching and learning is provided for in the national curriculum, one textbook for each subject. There is no widespread use of equipment, such as PCs, slide or video projectors, to aid the teacher in supporting his/her teaching practice. Finally, each class has its own classroom where all subjects are taught. These features are deemed old-fashioned and are considered in need of change. The Greek schools have to catch up with the developments on teaching and the modern educational practice" (The Greek Ministry of Education, 1997: 231). Another problem mentioned in the case studies was the need of multicultural education owing to the increase of immigrant populations since 1980's, mainly from the former Soviet Union and other eastern European countries. Subsequently, the educational administrative bodies, primarily the MoE, had to take decisions. Questions on the issue of multicultural education were thus raised extensively (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al, 2000: 237). The three Greek case studies are embedded in this wide national context.

4.4.2 A brief introduction to the three Greek case studies

1. The 1st case study (Fire prevention education) - Aharnes
Belonging to the national program on improving environmental education and information technology, this program aimed to familiarize the students with certain environmental issues, particularly about fire prevention and the use of computers to develop a forum to exchange information about fire prevention through the Internet. It involved six schools - two primary and four secondary schools. The pupils have learned to report humidity and temperature curves for wooded areas. The program led to several innovations that affected school life and teaching practices. The project had implications for pupils and parents. The most important effect was that it helped the teachers to alter their teaching practice and to foster the school's capacity to pursue the process of change.

2. The 2nd case study (restructuring classrooms) - the 13th Gymnasium of Patras
The 13th Gymnasium of Patras is a junior secondary school with 290 students, located at the outskirts of the urban center of Patras with low SES inhabitants. The main goal of this
The Empiric Part - Analyzing the 31 ESI programs

3. **The 3rd case study (Multicultural education) - Aspropyrgos**

Three schools participated in this program (1997-98). They were located in areas inhabited by predominantly low SES families. The percentage of their immigrant students was more than 45% of their total student population. The aim of this program was to produce new teaching materials, to inform teachers how to manage cultural diversity and to facilitate communication among people from different cultures actively, to engage the non-Greek students in classroom participation. It turned out that it had partially changed the teaching practice in the schools, especially for teaching Literature, History and Geography. Furthermore, the teachers started to relate their teaching to the prior knowledge and experience of their students. The relations between students of different ethnic origins, as well as relations between teachers and pupils improved. The outcomes of the students have been enhanced (ib: 239). Although the program has completed, all the participating teachers were demanding its continuation.

4.4.3 **The findings from the analysis of the three Greek case studies**

Regarding the factor of national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, this was mainly reflected in the highly centralized and prescriptive national curriculum, the centrally determined textbooks for each subject as well as the test worksheets used for evaluating students in all schools in Greece. From the Greek case studies, we got to know that "the goals of the Greek National Curriculum were very vague and at a high level of abstraction" (ib: 224). The only national assessment was the “Pan-Hellenic Entrance Examinations” at the end of secondary education. There were no national exams in between, nor Inspections existing in Greek schools to guarantee the achievement of national goals. The teachers in the 3rd case study stated that in the last ten years only one school counselor visited their school (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides and Papadiamantaki, 2001: 71). "Even these centralized exams will be replaced by a new legal framework following educational reform: entrance to university and Institutes of Technological Education now depends on the results obtained in the leaving certificate awarded by the unified senior high schools. This procedure will apply for the first time in the case of students in the first and second class of the senior high schools during the 1998/1999 schools year" (Eurydice, 2000). The three case studies also showed that although the educational goals and textbooks were set at the central level, individual teaching practices left ample room for teachers to teach something they considered suitable for their students (e.g. their own workbooks, quiz-sheets, photocopies) which deviated from the framework of the centralized curriculum. Therefore, national goal setting in terms of student outcomes missing external monitoring, assessment, feedback and reinforcement about the realization of the goals was one main feature of the Greek current educational system.
With respect to national goal setting in terms of school improvement, the three case studies have provided some information that mirrors national goal setting in terms of school improvement (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al., 2000: 224 & 229). For instance, information technology and environmental education (fire prevention) were associated with enriching the national environmental education curriculum. Restructuring the classrooms, which involved all the high secondary schools across Greece, was linked to changing the structure and learning environment of schools and teacher in-service training for updating the using of teaching technology. The multicultural education project aimed to produce new teaching materials, to inform teachers how to manage cultural diversity and to facilitate communication among people from different cultures actively, to engage the non-Greek students in classroom participation. Although the major feature of the national goal setting in terms of school improvement in Greece were the non-cognitive goals, “it turned out that the students cognitive outcomes were improved” (ib: 239-240). This indicates that school improvement has the potential to influence and enhance the ultimate student outcomes.

Strong central steering and empowering ESI in Greece was mainly reflected in the establishment of new laws (Educational Acts of 1976-1977; Educational Acts of 1981-1985 for educational reforms), setting up the SEPIE (the three Greek studies were all initiatives of the SEPIE), funding school improvement programs and so on (see more in Appendix). Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al. (2000: 256) argue that "the MoE appears very eager to reform the educational system. However, if effectiveness and improvement in an educational system are the stated goals of the education policy, … we could argue that the Greek education system is in constant pursuit of school improvement and effectiveness". However, ESI is definitely not so simple. “The policy makers seem to believe that passing a Reform Act as legislation is the most important step towards improving educational practice regardless of the resources facilities available for their implementation or the plausibility of the proposals involved (The Greek MoE, 1997)” (ib: 257). If the Greek central government wanted to empower the ESI programs, the provisions of the MoE regulating time allocation per teaching content, time on task had to be at least relaxed. The regulation of one unified textbook for each subject should be abolished. More autonomy should be offered to schools (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al., 2000). In addition, the school self-evaluation system should be changed. A strong external evaluation and monitoring system is absolutely necessary. The Greek authors argue that within a highly centralized country like Greece, innovations and changes in schools can be introduced only if provided for by centrally designed programs, school improvement was strongly dependent on the actions of the MoE. Therefore, "the focus should be centered on the MoE, and the institutional structures around it... Within a centralized education system the MoE holds the decision-making power and the responsibility regarding the elements and processes of school effectiveness” (ib: 260). “The role of the administrative system at the central government level, i.e. the Ministry of Education, is decisive in five respects: permitting, initiating, implementing, financially supporting and evaluating improvement programs” (ib: 244). Given these, strong central steering and empowering ESI became more important in Greece.

The information about the external evaluation was rather limited. No information was available about the external evaluations of the ultimate student outcomes across Greece except the only centralized examination for entering university at the end of the secondary education. No national inspection existed in Greece until the case studies were written (1999). Apart from these, according to the case studies, there is no effective
teacher evaluation in Greece (see Appendix). Regarding external agents, particularly the P.I. deserves a mention as they have a very special position compared with the other external agents in Greece (see more in Appendix). It functioned as a kind of "representative" of the MoE and an external agent as well. As an external agent, it designed, organized, monitored, implemented and partially evaluated (the final evaluation was carried out by independent external evaluators) the three school improvement programs in Greece (see De Jong, ed. 2000: 224, 226, 233, 239). In addition, it also provided the MoE with information, concepts, and research findings for Greek national policy-making (ib: 224).

Concerning market mechanisms, there was no information in the case studies. However, in other sources, we found that in the public school sector, parents had no freedom of school choice and students were allocated to schools according to their residence by the director of education or regional school service (Eurydice, 2000; European Commission, 2000). But this did not hold for the private school sector where schools competed with each other. In addition, the private schools showed a far larger capacity and interest in using SI strategies (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al. 2000: 247).

There was no information about school accountability available in the case studies. In addition, no information circulated publicly on schools (Eurydice, 2000).

Regarding the factor of adequate time, financial and human resource support, there was financial and human resources support for the three case studies from the Greek national contextual level. The case studies showed that the Greek national contextual level as well as the European Union had co-funded the SEPIE programs. Moreover, all the programs of the P.I. were exclusively financed by the State (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides et al., 2000: 246). Meanwhile, the human resource support mainly came from the central government, particularly through the P.I. Two out of the three Greek case studies have complained about the time issue - they did not get the funding for equipment on time. The delays (for approval of the programs and funding. See Appendix) from the national contextual level have delayed the whole process and the accomplishment of the ESI programs. Another negative element was that teachers involved in the ESI projects faced a dilemma: to keep track with the national curriculum, the allocated teaching time from the MoE and at the same time to carry out the innovations initiated and designed by the school improvement program.

Concerning local support, although little information was available about the role of the LEAs, the case studies did disclose that the local Fire Department provided the information and data on issues under its jurisdiction (ib: 230) and the parents supported the programs in any way they could (ib: 243). Meanwhile, the local communities benefited from school purchasing equipment for classroom reconstruction, computers for network construction (fire prevention), etc.

Concerning offering schools some more autonomy, the three case studies have revealed a clear lack of school autonomy in the domains of curriculum. The MoE made all the major decisions. "It is rather important that at least part of the curriculum is free, so that teachers can fit in additional activities, which could potentially lead to school improvement" (ib: 245). Lack of autonomy in hiring teachers was mentioned in the case studies too. In Greece, schoolteachers are recruited and selected by the central government according to certain quota. Every two years, recruitment for new teachers is
some candidates wait for 10 years because of the limited offer of positions and competition is quite strong (OECD, 1997b). However, once they are recruited, they receive permanent tenure. "The public schools have no autonomy to hire or to fire teachers. The MoE decides the transfer of teachers from one school to another. Schools have no authority and no supervisory control over teachers" (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides & Papadiamantaki, 2001: 53-54). In addition, the fact of teachers remaining at the schools only during their teaching hours does not allow them to develop a spirit of collaboration. This means that they should remain on the premises longer and should not be transferred frequently from school to school, so that they have the time and the interest to develop shared vision and goals (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 245). Offering schools some autonomy in the areas of school decision-making and teacher employment is a key issue in a highly centralized country like Greece. However, offering autonomy alone does not lead to ESI. As mentioned in the previous part, within the classroom, teachers had ample autonomy as long as they do not offend the School Council, their colleagues and the community. The head teachers had no authority and no supervision control over teachers. Therefore, offering school some autonomy needs to be accompanied by implementation of school accountability and teacher responsibility at the school level and the classroom level.

Regarding the factor of engendering a culture in support of ESI, we can speak of symbolic acts. One symbol was that the Greek Ministry of Education (1997) started to realize the backward situation in Greek schools and expressed that “Greek schools have to catch up with the developments on teaching and the modern educational practice” (ib: 231). This was a kind of vision that the MoE put into the public and called for school improvement and innovations. Another symbol was to use goal sharing in the form of a SI contract to guarantee the implementation of the school improvement programs. The written declaration stating that at least 2/3 of the school’s staff had accepted the program goals or targets has created, to a certain extent, a goal sharing among participants and has made it easier to implement the programs, to facilitate the collaborations among all the participants, to achieve the program goals. This was a useful strategy for ESI. Concerning engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, the Greek case studies showed that the ESI programs had, to a certain degree, changed the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and practices of the school principals, teachers and students. It has increased the connection between the schools and their communities, changed teachers’ attitudes towards certain social issues and changed the pupil's attitudes towards fellow pupils from immigrant families (ib: 239-240).
Table 6 The factors at the Greek national contextual level which influence ESI in the three Greek case studies (foster or hinder or no information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level</th>
<th>The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level</th>
<th>The factors without information in the case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• External evaluation and external agents</td>
<td>• Lack of strong centrally steering and empowering ESI</td>
<td>• Market mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National goal setting in terms of school improvement</td>
<td>• The weak national monitoring, evaluation, feedback and reinforcement system</td>
<td>• School accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes</td>
<td>• The current teacher employment system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adequate financial and human resources support</td>
<td>• Too little school autonomy (in decision-making, school curriculum, teacher employment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engendering a culture in support of ESI</td>
<td>• Too little time for ESI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The local support</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.5 The Italian case studies

4.5.1 Introduction/Context

Italy is a southern European country where education is described thus: “Italy’s education system is centralized and bureaucratic with considerable emphasis placed on educating the best students” (OECD, 1998: 104). Compulsory education starts from the age of 6 to 15. It may take place in public or private schools, or at home. Compulsory education is free in state schools, which cater for more than 90% of pupils at every level. But fees are normally charged in upper secondary schools. Lower secondary education was reformed at the end of the 1970s and primary education in the latter half of the 1980s. The structure of upper secondary education has not been altered for several decades. There is a strong emphasis on oral examinations at all levels of Italian education. To become a permanent teacher in Italy, the candidates must, after obtaining the academic and teacher training qualifications, pass a national competitive examination for their chosen level of school. To become a principal/head teacher or inspector, teachers must have been in the profession for a specified period (five years for a principal/head teacher, nine years for an inspector) and succeed in further written and oral examinations on the educational and administrative duties involved. The Inspectorate is part of the MoE. Their role is partly to advise schools, especially on in-service training and innovations. The inspectorate also produces an annual report on education in Italy (Mackinnon, et al., 1997: 139-156). Despite its rich culture and economic development, “Italy had lagged behind other countries in terms of educational outcomes” (OECD, 1998: 103). There has been no thorough overhaul of the education system since the 1920s, causing an extraordinary accumulation of unresolved issues and problems (ib: 9). Education reform was long awaited. No national assessment and evaluation services were provided until 1996. Since 1996, the Italian school system has been involved in an overall reform process including vocational training, labor market, regional and local autonomy and so on. The main spurs urging this reform were probably the lack of competitiveness of the Italian production system. The Italian Government’s undertakings to accomplish school system reform was based upon an important agreement drawn up in 1996 and signed by most
labor unions and the association of employers. The most relevant device provided in this document was approved by the parliament on June 24, 1997 (D'Arcangeli, et al., 2000).

4.5.2 A brief introduction to the two Italian case studies

1. The secondary school reforms in Italy

The first ESI program concerned the Quality evaluation in 9 secondary schools in the northern, the center and the southern parts of Italy. The number of participants of each school ranged from 5 to 11. The key issues were how self-evaluation can benefit schools and can enhance learning and teaching. What makes a school good? The instruments (questionnaire, interviews, and learning achievement tests) have been used in each school's self-evaluation. The project was carried out between August 1997 and Sept 1998. The European Centre of Education (CEDE) carried out a continued guidance and counselling to the schools involved during the program realisation and the external evaluation.

2. Primary school reforms in Italy

The reform of the primary schools was established by law in 1990 and aimed at satisfying two main requirements: to create the organisational framework which would be necessary for the effective application of the 1985 national curriculum and to generalise the significant experiences accomplished in the innovations during the 1970s and the 1980s (ib: 289). Apart from that, it was the first time in the history of the Italian educational system that a control device (monitoring system) has been introduced for educational reforms and for verifying the effectiveness of the innovation and the outcomes of school improvement. Although the aims of this reform were quite general and indefinite, the transformation tendency from the previous primary school curricula was very strong.

4.5.3 The findings from the analysis of the two Italian case studies

National goal setting in terms of student outcomes in Italy was mainly reflected in the national curriculum which included the national general goals of education, the specific learning objectives for each subject, the time for the school year, the general guidelines for students evaluation and the introduction of new concepts of external assessment and external evaluation into the Italian educational system. However, even in the altered assessment of student outcomes (in 2000), it still emphasized the optional school self-evaluation, with the instruments developed by the ADAS\(^4\) (ib: 281). Grugnetti and Villani (March 2001) described, “In most cases, high schools lasted five years and concluded at the end of grade 13 with a national final exam (called Esame di maturità or more officially - State Exam)”. The weak point of this reform was that "it didn't define the methodological issues of evaluation procedures, not in the law nor in the application circulars" (D'Arcangeli, et al., 2000: 274). The major evaluation approach was not compulsory. Schoolteachers could freely decide whether to use the national evaluation service tests or not.

National goal setting in terms of school improvement was featured by introducing school organisation and instruction changes (e.g. three teachers in charge of two classes),

\(^4\) School Assessment Techniques Archive for School's self-evaluation
improving school conditions and the learning environment (audio-visual instruments, computer lab), improving school climate, etc. The series of educational reforms initiated by the Italian central government have been carried on over the last two decades. The failing schools were supplied with financial support as well as the opportunity to participate in the improvement programs. One of the important issues of the 1996 reform was the ministry’s promotion of recurrent surveys of school quality meant both as products and processes. National goal setting in terms of school improvement had some impacts on the two Italian ESI programs. The 1st case study resulted from the initiatives of both EC and the Italian national contextual level. The second case study directly resulted from the central initiatives on primary school reforms. The case studies stated that "the reform of primary school was valued as very important in Italian teachers' and educational researchers' opinion" (ib: 274).

**Strong central steering and empowering ESI** has been revealed particularly by the strategy of drawing support from all the important pillars of Italian society (e.g. the agreement to accomplish the educational system reform signed by most labor unions and the employers' associations which was approved by the parliament later and became a law). This has made the overall reforms in Italian school system legally possible. Another ESI strategy applied by the central Government was to set up a "National Committee" acting as a steering organization and organizing national seminars for members of the involved schools to deal with the most important issues and the difficulties of the project (ib: 286) and to set up a Technical Committee which has distributed questionnaires and achievement tests (in language and math) to final year students. To assess the effectiveness of schools, in the year 2000 the central government established the National System for the Quality of Education (and its important service organization ADAS) to prepare for the survey of the school achievement in subjects such as literature, history, foreign language, mathematics, etc. They supply revised instruments for the assessment of learning achievements (mainly for the schools' self-evaluation at any level). In addition, the central government has also tried to fund and to push failing schools to participate in the improvement projects. It offered schools more autonomy and introduced a monitoring system. The authors of the two case studies also mentioned "over 150 official programs were carried out at these different levels, from 1989 till today in secondary schools" (ib: 278).

Regarding the factor external agents and external evaluation, we agree with the Italian case studies authors who report that "the role of external agents was underlined in most of the case studies of the partner countries. We didn't find evidence about their role in the analysed Italian programs, but nowadays the reform implementation process shows the relevance of their action. Today Italian schools often need the work of external agents to implement the same reform devices and become autonomous". From the Italian case studies, we can see that the dominant external evaluation was the national/state exam at the end of the secondary schooling. The external evaluation for the SI programs was mentioned by the CEDE, however, most evaluations for student outcomes at schools were carried out by the school teachers' team without any rules or control from higher or external authorities. Regarding the external agents, the "critical friends" were mentioned in the 1st Italian case study. They mainly mentored, stimulated and provided strategies to the participating schools for their problem solving. Hopefully, some information about the external evaluation was found in Eurydice (2000: 348) which stated that in 1999 a decree established the National Institute for Evaluation of the Education System, which was responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the system and studying the causes of
school dropout. The aim was to abandon the until then dominant notion of self-assessment in favor of one of external evaluation by conducting national evaluations with respect to international norms. If this has been put into practice, it may have an impact on Italian schools and their ESI.

There was no information available in the case studies about market mechanism and school accountability. Such information is partially available from other sources.

Regarding the factor adequate financial and human resources, the two case studies showed that the school reform and improvement programs were rewarded with extra funding and a financial incentive was awarded to those teachers who participated in the SI programs. The failing schools were supported with a wide range of improvement initiatives. In addition, the SNQI and the Ministry have helped them to identify the causes and to start the improvement actions that were funded by the Ministry, the European Community and other private sponsors. Concerning the human resource support, the case studies have mentioned the support and backing from the pillars of the society in 1996. In addition, the support from the National Committee (NC) as a steering organisation was evidenced in the case studies as well. The NC has organized three national seminars where the most important issues and the difficulties of the project were dealt with (D’Arcangeli, et al., 2000: 286). Moreover, the CEDE has supported the implementation of the ESI programs by means of offering human support (two consultants for each participating school). The human support was available as well. However, more time was needed to accomplish the pilot projects.

Regarding the local support, the municipalities in Italy played a considerable role in setting up or closing primary and lower secondary schools, the organization of the school system, planning provision for schools, even drawing up the school timetable and supporting private schools. “One of the most relevant points of the Italian school system reform is the integration of educational resources and participation of local community” (ib: 295).

Regarding the factor offering schools some autonomy, schools in Italy have become increasingly autonomous since 1974. This includes instructional autonomy, organisational autonomy, research, experimentation, and development autonomy, school net autonomy, etc (ib: 279). Reading between the lines of the two case studies, we get the impression that there is a surfeit of autonomy in Italy, especially in the aspect of assessment and evaluation of student outcomes: schools and teachers can choose and decide their own evaluation form and contents though evaluation procedures used in schools are generally traditional.

Regarding the factor engendering a culture in support of ESI, the case studies revealed that at the national contextual level, some efforts have been made to create a social climate in support of ESI (e.g. The 1996 agreement which involved all the labour unions, see Appendix). At the school level, “any work groups strongly perceived their own isolation, due to the widespread opposition of large number of the school teaching staff toward the change and evaluation processes” (ib: 286). The cultural conflict was harder in some schools where, while analysing the quality of teaching, research touched the ‘heart’ of teachers’ traditional culture: the invisibility of the teaching dimension that is expressed in the ‘myth of the freedom of teaching’. In addition, the term ‘evaluation’ was perceived as something threatening, intruding (ib: 286-287). On the contrary, in schools where “the
dominant culture is co-operative and willingness to take risk”, the SI project did not meet with problems” (ib: 289). These descriptions indicate the importance of engendering a co-operative and encouraging culture in support of ESI at the national level, the local level and the school level for effective educational reforms and school improvement.

Finally, the case studies mentioned that there was no accountability and rewarding system for teachers and it is necessary to arrange a system of guarantee of fairness and accountability in the teachers’ evaluation procedures (ib: 294). As a conclusion, the Italian case studies predict "the idea of ESI is becoming strategic and important in the design of the Italian school system after the reform and the school autonomy" (ib: 282).

Table 7 summarizes the contextual level factors, which have positively or negatively influenced ESI in the Italian case studies. The findings from the case studies concerning the indicators of the 10 ESI factors are assembled in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.

Table 7 The contextual level factors which influence ESI in the two Italian case studies (foster or hinder or no information)

| The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level | • Strong central steering and empowering ESI  
• National goal setting in terms of school improvement  
• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes  
• Offering schools some autonomy  
• External evaluation and external agents  
• Adequate financial and human support  
• The local support  
• Engendering a culture in support of ESI |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level | • Too much school autonomy  
• Lack of school accountability  
• Lack of rewarding system for schools and teachers  
• Lack of school culture in support of ESI |
| The factors without information in the case studies | • Market mechanism  
• School accountability |

4.6 The Portuguese case studies

4.6.1 Introduction/Context
Portugal is a country located in the extreme southwest of Europe. It has a highly centralized educational system. Compulsory education in Portugal lasts nine years and is free of charge. However, material support, such as school meals, free transports, books and materials, is provided only to the most needy pupils (Mackinnon, et al., 1997). According to Eurydice (1997 and 2000), in Portugal, pupils are normally allocated to a particular school by the public authorities with exceptions sometimes possible. There is no information circulated publicly on the characteristics of schools. There is no autonomy of decision-making in primary and lower secondary public-sector schools in determining the amount of education provided. However, the schools can freely decide teaching methods and school textbooks. The 1st stage of basic education has decision-making autonomy in deciding the number of hours devoted to each subject while the 2nd and the 3rd stages have no such autonomy. Schools have no autonomy for the recruitment of teaching staff. A comprehensive Law for the educational system (1986) has introduced global reform in Portuguese education and reorganized the Portuguese education system. In 1989, a new Act established a general framework for curricula in Basic and Secondary
Education. This Act gave rise to the so called "curriculum reform" which began in 1991. This reform was supplemented by a reform in the assessment systems of the pupils in basic and secondary education (Act nr 98-A/92 and nr 338/93) and by a reform in school governance and management (Act nr.115-A/98) which was being implemented at the end of the 1990s. High rates of early dropout posed a great problem in Portuguese schools. The research of Climaco & Araujo (1995) revealed that only 27 per cent of students were found to have completed nine years of basic education in nine years. 35 per cent of students were found to be one or two grades behind, 14 per cent were still further behind and 24 per cent were found to have dropped out of school. The two case studies were embedded inside such a national context.

4.6.2 A brief introduction to the two Portuguese case studies

1. The 1st case study (Tagus Secondary School)
Tagus secondary school is located in a small town near Lisbon. The school had 1200 students mostly from low socio-economic backgrounds with diverse nationalities (from former Portuguese colonies). This program aimed at evaluating the adjusted national syllabus for mathematics and at supporting the implementation of this syllabus. According to the research data, there was an improvement in students' outcomes after the implementation of the adjusted syllabus. However, the schoolteachers regarded this adjusted national syllabus as a one with double discriminatory effects in students' achievement. The positive element seemed to foster the study and the ultimate outcomes of the best students. The negative element seemed to worsen the study and the ultimate outcomes of the less prepared and less able students.

2. The 2nd case study- Education for All (Campo Verde Lower Secondary School)
In the year 1997-98 this school had about 700 pupils with around 44.7% of the pupils from lower-income families and 33.5% of them entitled to free meals. It participated in the "Education for All" program, which lasted six years (from 1992-1998). The intention was to prevent early dropout in the lower secondary education and to enhance the access to a successful twelve years of schooling. The ESI indicators such as monitoring the change process, self-evaluation, the devices to gather information and so on have been introduced through this program into this school. Parental and local community involvement was evidenced. There was no evidence about the improvement of student outcomes but there was evidence of a decrease in early dropouts from this school.

4.6.3 The findings from the analysis of the two Portugal case studies
Concerning the factor of national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, the information is provided that the national goal setting in terms of student outcomes in Portugal was part of a “clear planning process”: educational objectives, contents, national syllabi for each grade and for each subject matter were all in place. Both informative and summative assessments were carried out in Portugal. The former was to inform parents while the latter one (the national exam) was to select higher educational candidates, which took place only at the end of secondary education (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 356).

Concerning the factor of national goal setting in terms of school improvement, the central government established new laws or Acts for Compulsory Education and for school structure in organization, governance and management. It introduced a new curriculum and syllabus in basic education as well as special programs (e.g. preventing early
dropout) for primary and secondary education. In addition, it introduced school self-evaluation, monitoring process and new educational technologies. All these had some impact on the school improvement programs in Portugal. For example, the control of early dropout became the priority goal of the 2nd case study which involved 68 schools in 1992/93 and quickly increased to 1192 schools in 1997/98 (ib: 368).

The factor of central steering and empowering ESI was shown in the central initiatives of educational reforms, the financial support and the human resource support. The reforms include establishing the Comprehensive Law in 1986 and a general framework for curriculum reforms in Basic and Secondary Education in 1989, carrying out the curriculum reforms in 1991 and the changes in school structures and its organization, governance and management. In addition, a special team was appointed by the Department of Secondary Education in Portugal to introduce some adjustments to the new syllabus. This team worked closely with a National Committee - involving representatives of various academic associations and also of the Department of Basic Education and the Institute of Educational Innovation. Together, they provided consultative roles and supportive strategies. The first case study was directly initiated and funded centrally. The 2nd case study was initiated and funded directly under the central initiatives to prevent early dropout. However, the impact of this factor seemed larger on the LEAs and on the schools rather than on the individual teachers in the case studies.

As for the external evaluation and external agents, the help from the local agents has been mentioned in case studies but none of them referred to external evaluation except the pressure felt from the only national exam at the end of secondary education. The authors of the Portuguese case studies declared that "there is no influence from external agents due to the fact that teachers didn’t accept the role and action of these agents" (ib: 366). Having carefully analyzed the case studies, we found that the authors of the Portuguese case studies did not take the help of the external agents at the local level into consideration such as the help from the local educational services, local tutors (ib: 357). This is probably due to the concepts of external agents differing from country to country.

Concerning the factor of market mechanism, the only information was that in some of the secondary schools, competition to attract students existed due to the decrease of the birth rate. Generally speaking the students were allocated to the schools closest to their residence or their parents' place of work.

School accountability was limited to self-evaluation of the school performance in the School Year Report in Portugal.

Concerning the factor of adequate time, financial and human resource support for ESI, the governments allocated extra funding to those schools whose "school improvement plan" had been accepted. The five main supporting strategies of the government to support the implementation of the adjusted national syllabus were informative, including teacher training programs, setting up a local guidance system, a common free period of time for teacher training, brochures dealing with specific contents or with strategies for classroom teaching, an Internet web-site and a newsletter to encourage teachers to interact and communicate. This seems to indicate that there was adequate support at the central and the local contextual level. However teachers tended not to use the strategies or only attended the local guidance meetings at the very beginning of the program. The reason for this may be more related to extensive school/teacher autonomy and the system
of how teachers have been employed, evaluated and rewarded. In addition, a lack of time was mentioned in the case studies (ib: 361).

Regarding the contextual level factor the local support in Portugal, in addition to carrying out the tasks given by the Ministry of Education in providing guidelines, co-ordination and support for non-higher education establishments, managing human, financial and material resources, providing school social support, the LEAs also supervised school physical education and sports. Moreover, they provided additional financial means (apart from the national budget) and human resource support (e.g. six Young Volunteers for Solidarity and two assistants from the Local Employment Center were sent to the school to support the SI program in the 1st case study) within their area. Furthermore, they guided the school improvement process (e.g. providing resources such as contents and teaching strategies, facilitating local guidance meetings, etc). It seemed that there was adequate local support both financial and human resource for ESI in Portugal, however, there was insufficient pressure and assessment for achieving the goals.

Regarding the issue of school autonomy, although the national curriculum and the syllabus for each subject are highly centralized and prescriptive in Portugal, "teachers are totally free to decide whether to use the new curriculum or not: there is no control and no evaluation" (ib: 362). These descriptions lend an insight that teachers in Portugal are real "kings" in their classrooms. Why did they have so much autonomy in implementing the national curriculum and the school improvement programs? We consider that the arguments given by Lopes da Silva et al (2000: 363-376) are rather revealing. According to these researchers, in Portugal, the Ministry of Education centrally recruits and places teachers, so schools do not have the capacity to engage teachers or to keep them if they want to move. Schools had no power in teachers’ placement or teachers' promotion neither in their career nor in other positive or negative reinforcement for their performance. Furthermore, no professional benefits for teachers taking part in ESI programs were provided. In Portugal, “until very recently, school leaders were elected only by teachers. Even the election procedures have changed recently and the influence of school leaders in the classroom processes is limited by a heavy resistance from the teachers who are used to being totally free in their classrooms. The procedures in use for teachers' placement, teachers' advancement in the career or other rewards of teaching performance do not facilitate the role of school leaders in these matters either" (ib: 376). The two case studies showed that too much teacher autonomy, which resulted from the national teacher recruiting system and lack of evaluation, feedback and reinforcement on teachers' performance, had a quite negative impact on effective school improvement in Portugal. In short, offering schools some autonomy should go hand in hand with well-established responsibilities at different levels. The two Portuguese case studies showed us an important example that when a formal highly centralized country attempts to give schools more autonomy, well-established structures for decision-making and responsibilities at different levels are a precondition.

The lack of culture in support of ESI was obvious in the two case studies. Since 1986, the Portuguese governments have made some new laws, new educational goals and policies that mirrored their visions and that were in favor of educational reforms and school improvement. However, traditional culture was strong and there was "no school culture and tradition for teamwork among teachers and even less of communication among different curriculum departments" (ib: 362). However, the two case studies showed some efforts to change this situation in the schools, particularly in shaping new visions, new
routines and new practice for helping students (e.g. the "support room"), for strengthening relationships with local primary schools (e.g. sharing high school library facilities with the primary school pupils) and for shaping a self-evaluated school culture (see details in Appendix).

Table 8 The factors at the contextual level, which influenced ESI in the two Portuguese case studies (foster or hinder)

| The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level | • Local support  
• Adequate time, financial and human resource support  
• Strong central steering and empowering ESI  
• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes  
• National goal setting in terms of school improvement  
• Engendering a culture in support of ESI  
• Market mechanism |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level | • Lack of external evaluations, feedback and reinforcement  
• Lack of a school culture in support of ESI  
• Lack of school accountability  
• Lack of time  
• Lack of the school autonomy in recruiting/dismissing teachers, in teacher evaluation and promotion  
• Lack of strong leadership at the school level due to the headteacher election system |

4.7 The Spanish case studies^5

4.7.1 Introduction/Context
Situated in southwest Europe, Spain is a country with a constitutional monarchy. According to Eurydice (2000), parents in Spain have the freedom in the choice of a school, with the proviso of intervention by the public authorities where schools are at risk of overcrowding. There is no information circulated publicly among schools on the characteristics of schools. In primary and lower secondary public schools, there is no autonomy of decision-making in determining the amount of education provided and no autonomy in the recruitment of teaching staff. There is limited autonomy in deciding teaching methods and school textbooks.

In the late 1990s, the Spanish education system underwent a deep process of overall reform which affects administration, autonomy and management of schools, structure and curriculum, organization of the teaching staff and other elements (CIDE, 1996; UNESCO, 2000). According to Muñoz-Repiso et al (2000), this process can be traced back 20 years ago under the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which defined a new political and social model that had an effect on all areas. The three core guiding principles in this new constitution were the right to education, school community participation in teaching management, and the establishment of a decentralized education system. Therefore, three laws have been enacted to regulate the basic educational system: the LODE^6 in 1985, LOGSE^7 of 1990 and LOPEG^8 of 1995. Generally speaking, the main influence and initiatives of the Spanish national context "which have fostered improvement in Spain

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^5 This part is based on Sun et al (submitted)  
^6 Law on the Right to Education  
^7 The Law on the General Organization of the Educational System  
^8 The Law on Participation, Evaluation and Administration of Educational Establishments
are: the reform of the secondary school by LOGSE and its previous experimental phase; and the PAM proposed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC)" (Muñoz-Repiso et al., 2000: 379).

LOGSE sets out new structures for Spanish education with the extension of compulsory schooling (from 8 to 10 years) and changes in the curriculum (Eurydice, 2001: 333). LOGSE is a top-down initiative, aiming at reforming the Spanish educational system with an implementation of the new curriculum. It proposed to restructure the secondary education system, organizing it in two cycles: compulsory comprehensive education (14 to 16) and post-compulsory education (16-18 years of age, two alternatives: academic branch and vocational training branch). Consequently, the overall changes include curriculum, subjects, tracking system, contents, teaching methodology, assessment, school and department organizations, and administrations. In 1991 this new system started to be implemented in the lower grades and will finish in 2002. In the year 2000, this new system had already been implemented in more than 75% of the grades at the non-university level, although the former system was still in effect (UNESCO, 2000: 137).

According to Muñoz-Repiso et al, (2000: 385), since 1996 the MEC has publicly proposed PAM\textsuperscript{9}. The MEC awarded 1,000,000 pesetas to those educational centers that had developed the best school improvement programs for a school year. Up to 2000, "there have been three calls for PAM corresponding to the school year 1996/97, 1997/98 and 1998/99. The number of schools taking part in this initiative increases from year to year: from 268 in the first call to 782 in the last call (ib: 388). According to the Spanish MEC, the PAM plan must have the following general characteristics:

- An explicit diagnosis should precede the school's initial situation focusing on high-priority areas. It should be oriented towards those organizational aspects, which are strictly educational.
- The identification of improvement areas must be objective and based on facts or results rather than on subjective tests or mere appearances.
- Improvement objectives must be realistic, concrete, and measurable in a school year and adequate for a several-year improvement plan.
- It should define the objectives, procedure, performance and timetable, together with the resources and required support for its implementation. The plan should also establish the people responsible for its monitoring and evaluation.
- It should involve the school community (e.g. management team, inspections, teachers' council, etc), so that they participate in the plan. Moreover, the school head should be the driving force and the effective leader of the plan.

The five Spanish case studies are fully embedded, more precisely, have been initiated by this wide national context.

4.7.2 A brief description to the five Spanish case studies

1. The 1st case study - Students learning improvement in the first cycle of compulsory secondary education - Rosa Chacel (Colmenar Viejo, Madrid)

The 1st case study belongs to the PAM program at a secondary school. It started the PAM program at a school facing a sudden increase in students (from 400 to 900). An important feature was that school problem diagnosis went before identifying the improvement areas. The program goal was to develop students general aptitudes, involving strategies of adapting the curriculum, re-organizing the school timetable, flexibly regrouping students for mathematics or foreign language classes and using small class formats for pupils with

\textsuperscript{9} The Annual Plan of Improvement for Public Educational Centers.
special needs. The student outcomes included "significant advance in the acquisition of capacities, curricular competence level, classroom atmosphere, individual working habits" (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., p. 389).

2. The 2nd case study - ESI program in Mathematics - Ikastola Ander Deuna (Sopelana, Basque country)
The 2nd case study belongs to the LOGSE program, focusing mainly on the innovations in mathematics teaching. Guided by a school counselor, the school began with the use of new textbooks and materials for mathematics teaching. The student outcomes obtained both in the internal and external evaluations show rather convincing results. "The average of the school is over the average of the Federation of Ikastolas. In a quite balanced way, improvements were attained in the areas of statistics, numeration, mental arithmetic and problem-solving, and geometry" (ib: 401). In addition, a school evaluation culture has been established at this school and the teachers feel quite satisfied with this program.

3. The 3rd case study - The reform of the reading and writing process at a Rural Grouped School Teruel I (Perale del Alfambr, Teruel)
The 3rd case study belongs to the PAM program. It describes an effective school improvement project in a geographically dispersed school comprising 9 isolated rural schools. The improvement program covered two areas: Spanish language and literature and library resource management. It focused on improving reading ability based on the belief that "reading favors other types of learning". Various strategies have been used such as distributing students over flexible groups, restructuring school timetables, establishing a "traveling library", etc. The students' level of effective reading, spontaneous reading and orthography has highly improved (ib: 407). This case study is a clear example showing that high quality schools are not necessarily large nor need unreasonable resources but can carry out improvement process and can better themselves despite adverse conditions.

4. The 4th case study - Open Reading Groups --- Nuestra Senora de La Vega (Haro, La Rioja)
The 4th case study belongs to the PAM program. It concerned school improvement in a public primary school with many underprivileged students and focused on literacy. Open Reading Groups were established at five different levels with books recommended for each level. This program has involved the school's counselor, teaching staff and non-teaching staff and was supported by many parents. The students' involvement was mentioned as a core aspect. The students' reading speed and comprehension have been improved more than expected and a positive attitude towards reading has been developed. The whole teaching staff is still involved in this program which is established as a part of the school culture and is developed as a common activity.

5. The 5th case study - The new compulsory secondary education teaching and the attention to diversity in the Educational Center Padre Piquer (Madrid)
This case study belongs to the LOGSE program. It took place at a Jesuit private secondary school. The project stressed discovery learning and paid special attention to student motivations. The school used various approaches such as allocating the most motivated and specialized teachers to the students at risk, making curricular adaptations, offering new optional subjects, improving parental involvement, etc. The results show that the number of the students who obtain the Secondary Education Certificate has increased to above the national average while the percentage of dropouts has decreased. It
is a typical example of using deep reform of the educational system to optimize the school’s improvement process and outcomes.

4.7.3 The findings from the analysis of the five Spanish case studies
Concerning the factor of national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, there are some clues in the case studies as to the impact of the national standards in each subject for the ultimate student outcomes. The minimum core curriculum was determined at the State level but communities and schools can adapt the curriculum to their own context. Some complaints about the criteria were mentioned in the case studies such as "lack of common criteria when using the textbook at the different cycles and levels" (ib: 397). The curriculum and assignment of resources appeared not to fit the characteristics and needs of the rural schools. Many of the curricular elements do not take the rural educational context into account (ib: 414).

As for the national goal setting in terms of school improvement, the five case studies argue that they are all the consequence of the two big national initiatives: the LOGSE and the PAM. It was the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture that has proposed and developed both of them (ib: 379 and 384). In this sense, either the LOGSE or the PAM can be regarded as a kind of nationally initiated educational reform. They are the reflections of the national goal setting for school improvement. The Spanish team has praised PAM as "the most important institutional initiative developed in the last three years for school improvement in Spain" (ib: 387). As for the goals of school improvement, one case study argues that "this program pursued the same educational goals as the PAM of the MEC" (ib: 388). While the 4th case study states: "This school agreed to take part in the PAM due to the fact that its initiative offers some useful guidelines and support for the school. The school staff has used this call to improve reading and to foster positive attitudes towards reading, which also has an impact on all the other subjects" (ib: 415). The case studies did argue that "the emphasis is put more on the rate of improvement from a disadvantaged situation to a better one, than on the academic achievement itself" (ib: 433). In other words, the goal setting was focusing more on school improvement rather than on the ultimate student outcomes. But the improvement efforts have, more or less, led to optimization of the ultimate student outcomes as the case studies showed.

The most apparent factor, which fostered ESI at the Spanish contextual level, seemed to be the strong central steering and empowering ESI. It has been evidenced in two case studies through LOGSE and three case studies through PAM programs. The Spanish central government used various ways to centrally steer and empower school improvement: the new laws (LOGSE) to legalize the reforms, the method of public calls (e.g. PAM) and the publication of the well-designed PAM projects to advocate school improvement; offering special financial support (e.g. 1 million Spanish pesetas for each well-developed School Year Plan) to steer and empower ESI; using the Inspectors to monitor and evaluate the school improvement programs. Moreover, “the school has enough autonomy to carry out its projects as the Educational Administration has not hampered the improvement plan but rather has supported its development, favoring its success and the development of new improvement experiences" (ib: 413). "The existence of an external stimulus or pressure to develop an improvement process is a common element in the five selected case studies" (ib: 435).
The external evaluation and agents exercised some pressure and support for the success of the five programs, however, the pressure and support varies in degree and perspective. For example, the 1\textsuperscript{st}, the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and the 4\textsuperscript{th} case studies have evidenced more pressure and support from the Inspectors while the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study rather mentions more about the pressure and support from the external counselor. The special features of the Spanish Inspectors were that they did not only evaluate the school quality, but also suggested, initiated, monitored the school improvement programs (see the Appendix for more detail). This differs from the functions of the Inspectors in some other countries like the Netherlands and Belgium. Another external agent, which had more impact on the case studies, was INCE\textsuperscript{10}. It is in charge of evaluating the general functioning and outcomes of the Spanish educational system, including evaluating the structure, scope, and results of educational reforms and innovations. It performs three main types of activities: a) Analyzing the efficacy and efficiency of the education system; b) Developing a national system of educational indicators; and c) coordinating Spain's participation in international assessments. Although INCE has evaluated both primary and secondary schools, because of its sample characteristic and lack of feedback to the schools, these evaluations have some effect on the state and the regional administration, but not directly on schools" (ib: 381).

Market mechanism was not an issue in Spain. The case studies argued that market mechanism was not favored in Spanish culture. Owing to the lack of places in most public schools, the competition for attracting students was not obvious. However, "competitiveness was higher in private and urban schools, and very strong in some concrete situations" (ib: 381).

There was no information about school accountability in the case studies.

As for the factor of adequate time, financial and human resources support, the 1 million pesetas awarded for each of well-developed and achieved PAM program were a special financial encouragement for effective school improvement in Spain. Besides this the economic resources provided by the local administration were mentioned in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and the 4\textsuperscript{th} case studies (see more in Appendix). Regarding human resource support, two external agents were positively valued by schoolteachers - the Educational Inspectorate and the Center for Teachers and Resources which provided economical resources and support seminars. The influence of the external counselors was described in detail in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study (see Appendix). Lack of time has been repeatedly mentioned in the case studies (see Appendix).

The available information about the local support states that "the Autonomous Communities expand the state standards, exercise both the executive-administration and the full educational responsibilities" (ib: 380) and "the Federation of Ikaastolas offered itself to evaluate the program and the students' achievement in English and Basque Language. It develops a yearly evaluation of pupils from different schools at the end of Primary Education. Information is gathered about different dimensions of their achievement, using it to make a report, which is given back to the school. This report shows the individual results of each student and of every classroom compared with the other groups. The overall results of the school are also compared with those of the other schools of the Federation. Moreover, the results of the school itself are compared with

\textsuperscript{10} the National Institute for Quality and Evaluation
those of the years before. On the other hand, the Federation of Ikastolas also searches for outstanding results at each area. On the basis of that, the Federation fosters the exchange of experiences among those school with better and worse results, which favors the comparison between experiences and the optimization of the improvement processes of the schools” (ib: 401).

Concerning offering schools some autonomy, one surprising finding in the case studies is that schools have considerable autonomy with respect to administration, curriculum, teaching time and the school organization structure which differs from the background information found from the Eurydice report. A very interesting finding associated with school autonomy is that “Principals are elected by the School Council composed of representatives of teachers, students, parents, etc. The advantage of this system is that the headmaster is an accepted natural leader in the school who knows what works and who can more easily initiate ESI and mobilize the staff within the school” (ib: 381). “The disadvantage is that since he/she was one of the teachers and will be so again after four years, thus he/she may not be “tough enough” to use his/her position/influence to develop the change process” (ib: 435). In addition, the case studies have pointed out the importance of school autonomy in recruiting teachers. “The way of appointing teachers appears to be negative for ESI. Schools have no decision-making power in teacher development and recruitment” (Murillo, 2002: 91). Only after some years in a temporary posting, can teachers in public schools obtain a permanent job. The length of time of this temporary posting varies and is longer in secondary education. "The delay in awarding definitive posts makes it possible that 50% of the staff in a school changes every year" (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., 2000: 436). This has great negative influence on the continuity of the ESI process.

The factor engendering a culture in support of ESI has been evidenced by bringing new national visions and new values into the public through central public calls and advocacy (via various media, publishing and rewarding the well-developed PAM school year plan, etc.) and through establishing new constitutions and laws for change (LOGSE). As a matter of fact, these were also the indicators of the changed culture in Spain because it was possible only after the death of Franco. "After his death, Spain entered a phase of major political transformation. Followed by the establishment of a democratic regime influenced by a climate favorable to socialist and interventionist ideas, the educational authorities slowly moved from the very doctrinaire approach towards a more programmatic conception of school management" (Eurydice, 2000:330). In this sense, LOGSE and PAM can be seen as not only "a stimulus for change, and the development of the educational reform, an external pressure for change" (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., 2000: 435), but also a way of engendering a culture in support of effective school improvement. Concerning the change of the school culture, "the most important result may be the setting-up of an innovative culture at school and the concern for continuous improvement" (ib: 402).

Table 9 summarizes the contextual level factors, which have positively or negatively influenced ESI in Spanish case studies. The findings from the case studies concerning the indicators of the 10 ESI factors can be found in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.
Table 9 The factors at the contextual level which influence ESI in the five Spanish case studies (foster or hinder or no information)

| The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level | • Strong central steering and empowering ESI  
• The adequate time, financial and human resource support  
• Engendering a culture in support of ESI  
• External evaluation and external agents  
• National goal setting in terms of school improvement  
• Offering school some autonomy  
• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes  
• The local support |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level | • Lacks of autonomy in teacher recruitment  
• Teacher temporary posting or changing every year |
| The factors without information or no influence on the case studies | • Market mechanisms (no influence in most public schools)  
• School accountability (no information) |

4.8 The UK case studies

4.8.1 Introduction/Context
Situated in the western Europe, United Kingdom (UK) consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland though the case studies in this section were all English contributions. The mission of education in the UK is “to give everyone the chance, through education, training and work, to realize their full potential, and thus build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy” (Department of Education and Skills, 2002). The strong focus on building a competitive economy has tuned the national goals and the strategies of the UK. According to the Eurydice data (2000), parents in the UK have the freedom of school choice with intervention by the public authorities only where there is risk of overcrowding. Information has to be circulated by the public authorities on all schools, particularly the Inspector’s Report. In England and Wales, regulations cover the minimum hours of lessons a week. Schools have decision-making autonomy in teaching methods, school textbooks, and the number of hours devoted to each subject. In England and Wales, schools have the autonomy in the recruitment of teaching staff as well.

Since 1988, schools in England and Wales have been brought increasingly into the front line of education reform. The message from successive governments has been a consistently economic one: in order to compete in the twenty-first century there is a national need for a highly skilled and educated workforce. There has also been a consistent assumption this goal could only be achieved through the twin pressures on schools of increased accountability for performance (to national government and to parents), and a more centralized approach (Wikeley, F. et al., 2000: 45). The increased accountability for student performance emphasizes national goal setting in terms of student outcomes and school improvement. The pressure of increased accountability for student performance has not only been put on schools but also been put on Local Education Authorities (LEA), the teachers, the students and even the parents. The more centralized approach was expressed in the updated national curriculum, the OFSTED\textsuperscript{11}.

\textsuperscript{11} Office for Standards in Education
reports, and the publication of the League Tables and the benchmarks. The 10 English case studies were fully embedded into this national context.

4.8.2 A brief introduction to the ten UK case studies

1. Cathedral Primary school (LEA program)
Cathedral school was a large primary school with a high degree of social deprivation and culturally diversity. 48 per cent of the pupils were entitled to free school meals (FSM\textsuperscript{12}). This case study concentrated initially on improving student behavior and the physical environment, factors that could be dealt with quickly and could produce obvious results. The improvement strategies used were to improve student attendance and behavior, to introduce literacy and numeracy strategies, to improve methods of assessment and record keeping. The student behavior improved significantly as a result of this initiative. A positive school climate was formed and the capacity within the staff was built so that they felt confident to undertake improvement projects in a variety of areas. The results in English at the end of Key Stage 2 showed recent improvement (57% in 1996, 63% in 1997, 64% in 1998) in national assessment while those for Key Stage 1 showed a more steady improvement (80% in 1997 and 81% in 1998 compared with the local average of 76% and 77% respectively). Attendance rates also showed increase from 76% in 1995-96 to over 90% in 1998-1999.

2. Churchdown primary school (LEA program)
About 60 per cent of pupils were eligible for free school meals in the Churchdown Primary School. The school was invited to take part in the LEA’s School Improvement Planning Project (SIP). Specific targets were set such as tackling the problem of long-term staff absence, literacy and numeracy initiatives and the "New Outlooks" behavior program. The key to the success of the school’s improvement was raising the expectations of the staff and hard measures were taken (e.g. teachers who did not want to embrace the new direction had to leave the school). The school leadership was very effective, according to the comments of the OFSTED team. The school focused on the content of lessons and on targets for individuals, groups and the whole class. The whole class teaching approach was used. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 were targeted for mathematics and English. The student outcomes in English, Mathematics and Science at Level 2 and Level 4 were increasing in four years running from 1995 to 1998 (ib: 68). The school won the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark for Primary Schools in 1998. The successes of the project have become embedded in the school's practice.

3. Royalbere primary school (LEA program)
This was a primary school with 420 pupils, among whom 17 per cent were eligible for free school meals. This case study revealed the school chose four immediate priorities (quick fixes): improving environment, getting the curriculum right, improving resources and raising teachers' expertise and expectations. Afterwards, it focused on literacy and writing. Development of new skills in numeracy was developed through a hands-on cascade model. Staff worked well together to monitor and review their subject areas. The target setting was specific and precise, for instance, the target for Year 4 was “long term increase percentage of children reaching Level 4 and above in English from 57% to 65%, thereby maintaining recent improvements in school SAT\textsuperscript{13} results”. Moreover, targets and

\textsuperscript{12} School Effectiveness researchers in the UK use "free school meals" as an important indicator of the input of a school with how many percentage of lower SES students when measuring the added-value of a school.

\textsuperscript{13} Scholastic Assessment Test
lesson objectives were shared with pupils. At the end of KS1, attainment was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and science, and at the end of KS2 above average in English and mathematics and in line and often above in science. It was also a school with an improving culture.

4. Simpson School (LEA program)
The school was a mixed comprehensive school with a high proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (about 51%). The trigger for school improvement appeared to have been the 1995 OFSTED inspection. The school started with the students’ behavior. It focused on specific initiatives such as attendance, behaviors, the Discipline for Learning scheme (DfL), the appropriateness of classroom work, and target setting. It had a system for good attendance, behavior and outcomes. It showed that the LEA’s goals for SI matched the school's goals. The school plan was integrated into the department plans. The "tough-tender" approach (pressure and support) was used. The GCSE\textsuperscript{14} examination results showed "an upward trend" and the proportion achieving 5 or more A*-C grades were slightly above average when compared to similar schools. There was a clear year-on-year improvement.

5. Sweetacre secondary school (LEA program)
The Sweetacre School was a secondary school with 1100 pupils. Among them 25% were entitled to free school meals. One of its school improvement priorities was to tackle the problems of student behavior and to improve their attendance. After a period of adjustment, the school focused on learning gains for all pupils by developing the individual target setting initiative. Using data for target setting was performed at both the school and the individual level. The school continued to encourage student attendance until the target rates for attendance and unauthorized absence were reached and sustained; and continued to ensure that the necessary support was provided for non-native English speaking pupils.

6. Gabriel Secondary School (LEA program)
This school was located in the center of the city with 67% pupils being eligible for free school meals. The preconditions required appeared to have been improved morale from the building program. With these conditions in place, the teachers began with more able students at GCSE and then allowed the focus to develop and to involve many other aspects of the work of the school, for example, revision clinics, homework clubs, before and after school opening of the library, identified and targeted groups and literacy, training of teachers, a behavior intervention program, mentoring reading and literacy programs, building a positive attitude to learning, etc. The average GCSE results of the school were continuously increasing from 22.2 in the year 1993 to 26.2 in 1995, then from 30 in 1997 to 32.5 in 1998. When context was taken into account, matching FSM to GCSE points scored, the school was third in the city out of 77 schools.

7. Ashleigh Secondary School (IQEA program)
The school was a well-equipped comprehensive secondary school near a small city. There were 1058 students on roll and 14% of them were entitled to free school meals. A lot had been done to create a climate favorable to learning before having the school embarked on the process of improvement. The school established a consistent approach and policy to disciplines, school uniforms and improving the attendance. It focused on

\textsuperscript{14} General Certificate of Secondary Education
the following four areas at the school level: independent learning; teacher behavior; whole class teaching; group-work and homework. Twenty-two teachers were directly involved and divided into four teams, each of the teams had researched its own chosen area during the Spring term then shared its findings with all the staff so that they could be implemented in September 1999. It was an improving school, however, the improvement was still at a relatively early stage and no hard data were available yet.

8. Avon Place Secondary school (IQEA program)
The school was a comprehensive secondary school with an enrolment of over 1000. In 1998, the free school meal rate was in line with the national average. The major strategies used were “top driven” and “quick fixes”. The head teacher announced to the staff what they were going to do and then transferred responsibility for implementing it. He focused on those aspects, which could be quickly fixed and which could make an immediate difference, e.g. uniforms, homework, school diaries, behavior, and parental involvement. One of the school's great strengths was the dedication of its teachers. After quick fixes were in place, the school was able to focus on improved teaching and learning. Targets were set including an increase in the number of A*-C grades (from 23% to 35%, and then to 45%). Though the attainment of pupils at entry was below national averages, by the end of Key Stage 3\textsuperscript{15}, it was in line with national averages in mathematics, science and English. At the end of KS4\textsuperscript{16}, GCSE results were close to the national average in mathematics, below them in science and above them in English.

9. Grassacre Secondary School (IQEA program)
This school was built in the 1980s. 38% of its students were eligible for free school meals. The school had the reputation of being “caring and sharing,” but not as being academically oriented. The low achievement in the school was often linked to teachers having insufficient expectations for the work of pupils. Since student behavior was the major concern of the staff it became an early focus for improvement. Once the items that could be dealt with quickly were under control, the school focused on the more complex issues such as improving students’ academic outcomes, providing a supportive learning environment and improving the profile of the school in the local community. The staff spent 18 months on planning how to improve teaching and learning. A staff development session was held every five weeks including "show and tell" sessions. The "train the trainer" approach seemed to work well. Those who did not go along with the head teacher's vision had to leave the schools. The GCSE examination results increased from 79% in 1993 to 89% in 1999. The KS3 assessment results increased from 27% (English), 24% (Mathematics) and 22% (Science) in 1996 to 59% (English), 42% (Mathematics) and 42% (Science) in 1999 respectively.

10. Hillside Secondary School (IQEA program)
Hillside secondary school is a comprehensive school for girls. Approximately 50 per cent of the students were eligible for free school meals. The project concentrated on fewer achievable goals, fully costed and with measurable success criteria so as to raise student academic achievement through effective teaching. The IQEA approach helped teachers to focus on teaching methodologies, teamwork and observations of good classroom teaching. The school established a number of specific, quantifiable targets to be achieved by the year 2000 (ib: 158). The focus on teaching and learning, on progress and outcomes involved the sophisticated use of data for target setting, at both the school and individual.

\textsuperscript{15} Age 14.
\textsuperscript{16} Age 16.
level. Data were collected and examined within departments. Accordingly, action plans were developed to improve the teaching practice and to meet the students' learning styles. Departmental action plans fed into the whole school development plan. The school's academic improvement was obvious.

### 4.8.3 The findings from the analysis of the ten UK case studies

Given the fact that the UK central government set its vision for education as an economic one, this had major implications for all the goals and targets in its educational system. To achieve this goal, strategies for increasing school accountability, tighter central control and a stronger push for school improvement have been adopted. Target setting underpinned all levels. At the national level, targets clearly focused on student academic achievement, particularly on literacy, numeracy, ICT and Science. It envisioned that by 2002, on average 80% of 11 year olds should be reaching the standard expected for their age in English and 75% in mathematics and by 2004, 75% of 14 year olds would be expected to reach Level 5 in English, Mathematics and ICT, and 70% in Science. By 2007, ministers wanted to see 85% of pupils achieving Level 5 in English, Mathematics and ICT, and 80% in Science. With the backing of the whole system of national testing, feedback and reinforcement, national goal setting in terms of student outcomes in the UK has a great influence on the 10 English case studies. The 10 case studies clearly linked their targets on their student outcomes to those of the national government. Their priorities "are totally coherent with the national education targets: raising achievement" (ib: 158). In England, at the local level, LEAs had their targeted schools. At the school level, schools had their targeted departments or subjects matters. Each department had its targeted points for each teacher. Teachers targeted their individual students to raise their grades. Each student had to set up his/her future targets (see details in Appendix and Wikeley, et al., 2000). The intense central monitoring, assessment and feedback strategies resulted in the timely use of the nationally available data for targets setting, planning and self-evaluation by the schools, teachers and even students themselves. "Individuals have their own development plan, which integrate with departmental and school planning" (ib: 97). Therefore, it was a striking feature revealed in the ten English case studies of using data for target setting at different levels. Handling data became very familiar to the involved schools. Teachers used a variety of national available assessments to inform their work, for example, the results of SATs, QCA tests, Literacy & Numeracy project tests and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Shown in the 3rd case study, "the planning, monitoring, review and the use of data underpinned the improvement process in school integration of these dimensions occurred at classroom level in a weekly cycle as well as at the whole school level annually" (ib: 81-82). However, many teachers expressed some discouraged opinions about the restrictive nature of the national goals reflected in the curriculum. They declared that they were “much stress, pressure, and resentment” and the enjoyment of working in the school had declined (ib: 153).

With respect to national goal setting in terms of school improvement, according to Wikeley, et al (2000: 46), in 1998 its White Paper, 'Excellence in Schools' (DfEE, 1998), the Labor Government foreshadowed a substantial increase in central government powers. Schools are now required to set improvement targets, and in September 1998 all primary schools introduced a literacy hour. A similar numeracy strategy would be introduced into schools in September 2000. These national school improvement goals have their impact

\[17\] The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
on the 10 case studies mainly directly through one of the two programs - "Raising Standards of Achievement in LEA-maintained schools in the City of Birmingham" (the LEA program) and "Improving the Quality of Education for All" (the IQEA program). Among the 10 English case studies, six belonged to the LEA program and four belonged to the IQEA program. The LEA improvement goals were focusing on three aspects: developing a robust culture which included sharing vision, expectations, attitudes, beliefs, a common language, knowledge base; monitoring and measuring the student outcomes among the schools within the area; developing the leadership and partnership (see details in Appendix). The 4th and the 6th case studies declared that all those asked agreed that the (above mentioned) LEA's goals for school improvement matched the school's goals (ib: 99 and 120). The 2nd case study stated "the national policy framework had had an impact on this school, especially through OFSTED inspections and public accountability for pupil test results. More recently, the literacy and numeracy initiatives had been implemented (ib: 75). The focus on school improvement goals as a way of promoting the student outcomes was also evidenced in the schools involved (see details in Appendix). The case studies revealed much more improvement in management conditions and teachers' practice. All the indicators of the factor "national goal setting in terms of school improvement" (see Table 11 at the end of this chapter) were evident in the ten English case studies - although to a varying degree.

The influence of strong central steering and empowering effective school improvement has been voiced in most of the English case studies. The UK central government has used different strategies to centrally steer and empower school improvement in the perspectives of updating the national goals and curriculum; strictly applying the National Standardized Tests (at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16); publishing the League Tables; implementing OFSTED inspections (see more in Appendix); carrying out increased accountabilities for student outcomes (test results) at all levels (including target-related responsibilities, performance related payment for teachers, closing failing schools, legalizing homeschooling contracts, etc). Concerning the response to the OFSTED reports, in more than half of the case studies “several areas were identified for immediate actions” (ib: 57). Concerning carrying out the accountability at all levels, the Labor Government has increased the pressure on LEAs for their own accountability. Each LEA had to draw up a development plan indicating how it would work with schools and how it would plan to help them establish 'robust mechanisms for self-evaluation'. They were also expected to intervene and work with schools in inverse proportion to the schools’ success. The LEAs, like schools, were subject to national inspection. In late 1999 after ‘failing’ the inspection process, the administration of one LEA was handed over to a private company. In January 2000, three others were also under consideration for takeover. In addition, national standards for teachers are being introduced by the Teacher Training Agency (including an advanced skills teacher grade and numeracy tests for those embarking on initial teacher training), and a General Teaching Council would be developed to 'regulate and promote' the profession. Aspiring head teachers needed to have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) prior to appointment (ib: 46). All these have put substantial pressure on schools and teachers, have resulted in increased stress level, evidenced in all the case studies interviews (ib: 176). As for the support and empowerment, various types of support have been implicated as well, such as special funding for school improvement programs, national and local rewards (e.g. Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark for Primary Schools, Aim High Award, Business Partnership Award, Awards for Environmental Education, Awards for outstanding head teachers, “Plato” or “Teacher Oscar” awards - £25,000 - to an outstanding teacher and his/her
school) (Wikeley, F. et al., 2000 & www.news.bbc.uk/1/hi/education/). Compared with the pressure and support from the central government, the pressure seemed stronger than the support in the 10 case studies. According to the interviews and feedback from the teachers, the pressure mainly came from publishing the league tables, benchmarking data, the value added comparison between similar schools, the "naming and shaming" strategy, the circulation of the OFSTED reports, the closure of both the failing schools and the failure LEAs, performance-related teacher payment and so on. However, the strong central steering and empowering ESI was not always unproblematic. "Staff work long hours, including supervising many after-school and lunch time activities, sometimes I feel that the SMT (school management team) doesn’t recognize the effort put in. I love the school, staff and students, but at times the pressure put on to us reaches a breaking point!" (ib: 166). A group of interviewed teachers in the 8th case study were concerned that things tended to be forced on to the staff, “pushed on the staff with some degree of overkill” (ib: 135, see more in Appendix). The question arose: what should be the proper degree of pressure? What is the best balance?

Regarding the factor of external evaluation and external agents, the most important external evaluation measures in the English case studies seemed to be the OFSTED reports, the League Tables, the national GCSEs, the A-level and the SAT tests, and the evaluations carried out by the LEA (e.g. pre-inspection review and after-inspection review). These forms of external evaluation have played a rather important role in the 10 case studies. The quotes in the Appendix part of this dissertation have shown vividly how the external evaluations triggered school improvement in the case studies. Regarding the external agents, the important external agents that performed a considerable role in the English case studies seemed to be the OFSTED (in all case studies) and the university researchers in the IQEA (in four case studies). As the case studies declared that they dared not ignore the OFSTED inspections, they planned everything corresponding to the OFSTED reports. The National Inspector can trigger school improvement and can provide the focus of what should be improved for schools in the planning stage. While other external agents such as university researchers or consultant institutions could provide means, methods and strategies for schools to use during the school improvement process, the National Inspectors had stronger influence on schools according to the English team (see more in Appendix). With regard to the influences of IQEA, the case studies argued that IQEA had helped staff to concentrate on teaching and learning and they saw a direct relationship between the IQEA initiative, departmental plans and the school development plan. Teachers felt that the school was able to achieve central government targets by using IQEA methods (ib: 137). Moreover, the IQEA program has had a clear impact on teacher professional development and INSET (ib: 128-129); on supplying tools for assessment, feedback and planning (ib: 137); on helping schools lift off the plateau (ib: 137); on helping schools emphasize on teaching and learning by using various new teaching approaches (ib: 150). The teachers suggested that involvement in the IQEA project had fostered a greater degree of openness, sharing and co-operation among the members. The schools were now less insular. Teachers were able to meet with colleagues from other IQEA schools who taught in the same subject areas. There was more co-operation between schools, which meant they were able to share good ideas that worked (ib: 173). As the case studies declared “many, although not all, staff have become committed to improvement in teaching and learning through the IQEA approach. In essence, the IQEA program works on what Hopkins and colleagues (1994: 171) refer to as a loose-tight coupling: tight on goals and looser on the means to achieve them. Where IQEA extended a partnership with LEAs, there a considerable boost to ESI efforts was
Chapter 4

provided. However, the use of an external change agent as a stimulus was not in itself unproblematic (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 172). The main problems were the ownership of school improvement and the expectations that the schools had for the external agents. For schools enduring the many centrally imposed initiatives prevalent in the English system, ownership was viewed to be an important element.

Regarding the factor of market mechanism, its influence has been strongly evidenced in all the English case studies. It is closely linked to the academic success of a school in England (e.g. student enrolment from 850 decreased to 350 in the 9th case study, see Appendix). Apart from academic reputations, school choice also depended upon some other factors such as a school's local reputation, religions, behavior, attitudes, school uniform, the distance from home, caring for pupils, and so on so forth, as shown in the 4th case study (ib: 100-101), the 9th case study (ib: 151) and the 10th case study (ib: 165 and see more in Appendix). The English case studies argue: "School choice is important because this includes what people say about our school and other schools. We want to be the best" (Stoll and Wikeley, 2001: 146). On the other hand, market mechanism was not only reflected on the way parents choosing schools but also on schools selecting their students and teachers or vice versa (Wikeley, et al., 2000). Accompanied with school choice, information provided from schools to parents was regarded as important (ib: 84 & 97). However, the negative opinions about market mechanism were voiced in the case studies as well. For instance, "the head teacher spoke about being more aware of market forces. Much about current systems of assessment were abhorrent to her (e.g. the publication of the League Tables)" (ib: 75).

School accountability has a substantial impact on the 10 English case studies. As part of an accountability drive characterising many aspects of the public sector, a national framework has emerged with certain centralised aspects. These include the introduction of a national curriculum in 1988, with accompanying national testing at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 years; an external inspection system led by the Office for Standards in Inspection (OFSTED) since 1993; and the publication of annual school performance tables (e.g. the League Tables of pupil performance which include information, such as attendance rates as well as results on standard assessment tasks and external examinations) now features regularly in both national and local newspapers (ib: 45). Concerning carrying out the accountability at all levels, according to Wikeley et al (2000: 45-47), performance related teacher payment, home-school contracts, and homework have all been the subject of legislation. Not only individual schools but also LEAs have targets across the schools in their areas (see previous part). As the 6th and the 10th case studies showed in schools, departments and teachers were given responsibility points. Their improvement plan was based on measurable success criteria. The key strategy used to guarantee the student success was "sharing learning objectives with the children" meaning using data with pupils to set targets at the individual level (ib: 73). The involvement of the pupils in keeping their own records of achievement and setting future targets was a particular strength recommended by the case studies (ib: 137). Besides, hard measures were used in two case studies, if teachers "could not embrace the new directions, they had to leave the school" (ib: 73). Another strategy to guarantee the realization of the accountability was that all the ESI programs were "based on a contract between the staff, an IQEA research team, and any other support agency (e.g. the LEA) involved with the school. The aim of the contract was to clarify expectations and ensure the conditions necessary for success. The contract also ensures that the project impacts on all levels of the school organization" (ib: 51). In brief, the 7 indicators of school accountability all “had their places” in the
English case studies: the School Year Report was offered to parents. The OFSTED reports were published which concentrated the minds of all practitioners (see more in Appendix). The responsibility targets setting for student outcomes was done at all levels. The League Tables were published with value added comparison, revealing the national assessment results. Positive and negative reinforcement (soft and hard measures) were reflected in the higher level intervention in failing schools. For example, by September 1997, 340 schools had been designated as having failed the OFSTED process, and as requiring 'special measures'. Such schools were given two years in which to raise the quality of their education being offered to an acceptable standard. 14 schools have subsequently been closed and 40 have been taken off special measures. When it came in to power, the current Labour Government adopted a policy of 'naming and shaming', and within two weeks had named 18 of these 'failing' schools in the national press as targets for radical action, including the possibility of closure and reopening with new headteachers and staff. Meanwhile, the winners (the LEAs, top schools, outstanding headteachers and teachers) in the national assessments were strikingly awarded (see Appendix).

Regarding the factor adequate time, financial and human resources support, the UK government did provide funding for ESI (e.g. funds for Excellence in Cities program, Single Regeneration Budget Projects urban areas), so did the LEAs (e.g. funding for collaborative work in all schools and financial support for new school buildings, etc.). In addition, some universities provided some funding for participants of SI projects (e.g. Nottingham University). The importance and the impacts of the financial support (for new school buildings, for INSET and so forth) on school morale have also been described by the 3rd and the 6th case studies as "a significant precursor to other improvement, partly because they affected morale" (ib: 114). Human resource support from the LEAs and from the IQEA project has been evidenced in two aspects: the concrete support and the spiritual support. The former one included providing opportunities to join ESI projects, setting networks to facilitate the shared language about ESI, providing assessment, feedback and data in “school family groups”, providing training and practical advice, advising staff in defining objectives, supporting teachers with materials, courses, working alongside teachers, to mention just a few. The latter one referred to the CEO visiting schools, writing letters of congratulations and buying cakes for teachers after OFSTED to celebrate successes, etc (ib: 64, 74, 86, 99, 110, 121). Although the financial and human resource support has been mentioned in all the English case studies, issues repeatedly mentioned in several case studies were the shortage of time for ESI, insufficient funding to buy in cover for ESI, to repair the old school buildings, etc.

Regarding the factor of the local support, Stoll and Wikeley (2001:137) argued that school improvement in the UK was highly nested in the initiatives of their LEAs. Their relationship was therefore very dependent on local circumstances. The influence of the LEAs was reflected in its support for school leadership - its political representatives participating in the school governing body, which was common in all state schools in England and Wales. Most head teachers in the case studies expressed their appreciation for the role of the LEA while the appreciation from the teachers was much less. Between the LEA and its schools "there was a strong sense of affiliation" (ib: 176). Schools acknowledged that the LEA was the "key partner" or “a catalyst” in school improvement endeavor (ib: 99 & 120) providing not only the funding but also inspiration as well as raising aspiration within the community (ib: 86). In addition, LEAs have responsibility
for direct intervention where a school was found to have a major problem and also they were charged with working with schools in setting targets and helping schools carry out their own improvement plans. In five case studies, the entire school improvement plan was constructed around the LEA's seven SI steps (see Appendix, mentioned by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th case studies). The LEA committed itself to providing schools with: the entrance to ESI programs, special financial support for school improvement projects, detailed target setting, structure and comparative data for "school family" (free school meal data and the final GCSE result data), a drive to empower and to steer school improvement (see details in Appendix part), expertise in changing teachers' practice (e.g. the local numeracy adviser demonstrated lessons to the school coordinator, then observed the coordinator's lessons and gave advice. Then the coordinator demonstrated lessons to key stage teacher at his/her school), a network to encourage exchange of good practice; pre-and-post review of the National Inspection, assistance and advice to governors on the selection process for new head teachers; and training for governors using the MIC model (Monitoring, Improvement and Change) and so on (ib: 63, 74, 86, 99, 109, 121). Apart from the LEA support, other forms of local support have been evidenced in the case studies, for instance, the support from communities and companies (e.g. Rover, Brother Alan, The Franciscans, and McDonalds). Some discouraging effects have also been mentioned. For instance, due to the increased accountability put on LEAs by the UK central government to improve the failing schools, LEAs could not offer the same support to those schools that had already improved. In addition, we need to keep it in mind that the Birmingham LEA was well known in England for being innovative. Several of its initiatives and ideas were now enshrined in central Government policy (Wikeley, et al. 2000). We cannot expect all the LEAs in the UK to perform the same way as the Birmingham LEA did. Furthermore, the success depended upon the quality of the people involved, especially the CEO, the LEA advisers and trainers.

Regarding the factor offering school some autonomy, the 1996 White Paper (DfEE, 1996) which formed the basis of legislation in 1997, set out national expectations about schools and supported a strong line of individual school autonomy (ib: 46). Autonomies in the dimensions of school curriculum (e.g. the 6th, the 9th, the 10th case studies), personnel (in hiring or firing teachers and staff), the ownership of SI programs (choosing from whether, when and where schools access ESI, e.g. the 6th and the 9th case study), the focus of ESI (see Appendix), and the external agents, to mention just a few. With respect to school autonomy in teacher training, it seems that schools in the UK had the autonomy to decide the way, the time and the approaches for their INSET 18 (e.g. the 10th case study). INSET days in the school were often conducted by colleagues from within the school, with teachers from other IQEA schools sometimes invited. For instance, the staff voted to decide whether to become involved in the school improvement project (ib: 150). Moreover, in some schools (the 9th case study) students were invited to participate in the interview panel for selecting new teachers for the school. This creative hiring was said to be very important for the success of SI program. The case studies point out “Clearly, creative hiring has been important in the school’s improvement efforts” (ib: 149).

With regard to engendering a culture in support of ESI, at the national contextual level the main evocations in recent two decades have been mirrored in engendering the values, changing the rituals and in awarding the "heroes" (e.g. outstanding head teachers and teachers). The typical examples were: establishing new laws for educational change,

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updating education goals and curriculum (e.g. the new curriculum 1989-1996), the implication of OFSTED (1993), the publication of League Tables with value added measurement, offering schools some autonomy while carrying out school accountability, closing failing schools, sensitizing the whole society's awareness of the significance of ESI through public calls, advocacy, using data for setting up ESI targets, etc. All these intended to create new visions, new values, new rituals and even new images (heroes) for the whole nation. All these were trying to nurture a kind of climate to let the whole society care about educational quality. Regarding engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, the 10 English case studies have provided us some concrete examples, for instance, the 1st and the 7th case studies showed how to involve all the stakeholders to create vision, the importance of classroom observations and using both qualitative and quantitative data; how to build up a suitable school climate in favor of teaching and learning. The 5th, 7th and the 8th case study revealed the changed attitudes of teachers towards students (e.g. "not valuing students is no longer acceptable") as a result of the changed culture. While the 2nd and the 10th case studies showed how the changed physical environment influenced the morale of the pupils and staff and let them felt more valued. In addition, school routines are a part of a school culture. The schools' routine changes were noticed in the contents of the department and school meetings (the 10th case study), in the focus of such meetings (the 9th case study), in the observation of teaching (the 2nd case study) and in collaborative work. These are important indicators of a clear change in school culture. Another issue which unfolded in the English case studies was that schools needed a "climate setting" period which required some "quick fix" strategies (involving a system of rewards and warnings, which was also based on the concept of 'three strikes and out') to attack the immediate issues that concerned teachers most. Unless this was done the teachers felt they would not be able to teach properly. The quick fixes mostly included establishing discipline, school uniforms, the absence of teachers and students or the student behavior problems (e.g. the 1st, the 2nd, the 4th, the 5th, the 7th, the 8th and the 9th case studies), homework, buildings/environment (e.g. the 1st and the 6th case studies), resources, school diaries and parental involvement. The case studies argued that it was important that these issues were tackled first and successfully for raising the morale and aspirations for ESI. It was not only a pre-condition but also a process of ESI. Establishing an improvement culture in schools is not only important for current success but also for schools’ maintenance of improvement (ib: 176).

Table 10 summarizes the contextual level factors, which have positively or negatively influenced ESI in the English case studies.
Table 10 The factors that have influenced ESI in the ten English case studies (foster or hinder, positive or negative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The factors fostering ESI at the contextual level</th>
<th>The factors hindering ESI at the contextual level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School accountability</td>
<td>• Too much pressure, too many initiatives and lack of cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong central steering and empowering ESI</td>
<td>• Government policy of the LEA involvement being in inverse proportion to the success of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National goal setting in terms of student outcomes</td>
<td>• The unbalanced local support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National goal setting in terms of school improvement</td>
<td>• Not sufficient time and financial support for ESI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market mechanism</td>
<td>• Offering school some autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The local support</td>
<td>• External evaluation and external agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External evaluation and external agents</td>
<td>• Offering school some autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering school some autonomy</td>
<td>• Engendering a culture in support of ESI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engendering a culture in support of ESI</td>
<td>• Adequate time, financial and human resources support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adequate time, financial and human resources support</td>
<td>• Adequate time, financial and human resources support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Summary

The table below summarizes the findings of this chapter and the influences of the ten contextual level factors and their indicators on the 31 case studies in the eight European countries. It should be noted that the findings in the table include information from other sources as well.

Table 11 The influences of the 10 contextual level factors & their indicators on the 31 case studies in the eight European countries

Notes:
- + means a positive answer
- - means a negative answer
- 0 means nonexistent
- +/- means controversial answers, both positive and negative answers can be gathered from the case studies or from other sources within the same country.
- blank means no information available in the case studies.
- # stands for no national exams but the upper secondary education certificate has been externally ratified.
- * stands for no centrally organized national exams but there are unified exams organized by Autonomous Communities at the end of secondary education. Some universities conducted their own entrance exams.
- N stands for no.
- YA means information available from other sources.

B: Belgium (Fr) D: Dutch F: Finland G: Greece
I: Italy P: Portugal S: Spain U: UK
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>The Indicators</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National goal setting in terms of student outcomes</td>
<td>The national goals &amp; objectives reflected in national curriculum or guidelines</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The national specified increased academic points for each subject</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The numbers of national tests during the whole schooling</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of National Inspectors</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The national assessment, feedback and reinforcement system</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National goal setting in terms of school improvement</td>
<td>The new laws or national curriculum reforms</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Improvement Plan or school self-evaluation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>YA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focusing on Literacy or Mathematics or Sciences instructions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focusing on improving the learning environment</td>
<td>YA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>YA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging schools to take part in school improvement programs at home and abroad</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong centrally steering &amp; empowering ESI</td>
<td>Giving directions and putting pressures on schools to improve through central intervention</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directly or indirectly initiating school improvement programs</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Providing time, financial and human resource support</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual empowerment to school improvement programs</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation &amp; external agents</td>
<td>The time spent by the external agents on SI programs</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The role of the external agents in the SI programs</td>
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<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The quality of the external agents</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>Market mechanism</td>
<td>The freedom in school choice</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>YA</td>
<td>+/-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The positive influence of school choice</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The negative influence of school choice</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The information provided for school choice (published or not)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School accountability</td>
<td>The School Year Report to parents</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The published National Inspection reports</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>Responsibility targets setting for student outcomes at all levels</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td></td>
<td>League Tables (added value comparison)</td>
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<td>+/-</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback of national assessment results</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive and negative reinforcement for the national assessment</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measures taken at failing schools</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>+</td>
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## Chapter 4

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate time, financial &amp; human resource support for ESI</td>
<td>Financial support for ESI programs</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
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<td>Financial support for schools and students</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate time allocated for ESI programs</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
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<td>Human resource support for ESI</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual support</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering school some autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomy in personnel policy (in recruiting/dismissing teachers &amp; staff members, improving their quality) in the public school section</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy in financial management</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy in school curriculum &amp; textbooks-chosen</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy in classroom instruction</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The ownership of SI programs</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The local support</td>
<td>Additional financial support</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision and expertise for school improvement programs</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access provided for schools to participate in SI programs</td>
<td>-/A</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-/A</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information (evaluation data, network provided for schools)</td>
<td>-/A</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-/A</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engendering a culture in support of ESI</td>
<td>New vision, concepts &amp; systems introduced into the national culture (new laws, new curriculum, data information, new evaluation system, etc.)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared vision &amp; goals at all levels (accountability at all levels, etc)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using both soft &amp; hard measures to engender cultural change</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A collaborative and a supportive school climate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changed attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and practice in schools</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Sources

The 31 school improvement programs, including other sources such as Education in Western European – facts and figures (1997), OECD (1997, 1998), Eurydice (1997, 2000, 2001), tapes and interviews, Internet websites, etc.