Appendix 1 Comprehensive Framework for Effective School Improvement (in Reezigt ed. 2001)
Appendix 2  The detailed analysis of the 31 case studies

The analysis of the two Belgium (Fr) case studies

1. The national "Goals" setting in terms of student outcomes

In Belgium (Fr.), the factor "national goal setting in terms of student outcomes" was mainly reflected in its national (French Community) curriculum guidelines. The available information derived from the case studies is below:

"Pupils are assessed with references to core skills. The Government of the French Community of Belgium set out the "Socles de compétences", i.e. a "Formal system of reference that sets out, in a structured way, which competencies must be exercised until the end of the first eight years of compulsory education for which ones proficiency must be attained at the end of each stage: the 2nd year and the 6th year of primary education and the 2nd year of secondary education. This system of reference is in force in every school since September 1, 1997" (Demeuse, et al., 2000. p. 9 and p. 27).

The "socles de compétences" are a group of reference points, which give shape to the concept of the level of instruction. It serves as learning guides and assessment safeguards. These general objectives are identical for all types of schools and supplement the traditional curricula, which in turn indicate the learning required attaining these "socles de compétences". It covers both cross-curriculum competencies which are gradually acquired to ensure the personal development and progress of the student, and subject-related competencies taught in class" (ib:10, 43).

The information below was obtained from the opinions of the Belgium ESI team:

"The first attempt to take students' outcomes into account was related to the dramatic grade retention rate occurring in the system and generated by too individual certification mechanisms based on teacher's decisions without any other common references or mechanism of moderation or harmonization between schools, classes and teachers" (ib: 9).

"Since 1998, schools must also have a School Plan that lays out pedagogical options and specific, concrete actions, which the education team of a school intends to implement in order to achieve the goals and objectives defined in the curriculum and in the 'Socles de compétences' and 'Competences terminales' documents" (ib: 38).

"The teachers' goals are to ensure that pupils achieve the objectives defined in the 1997 Decree (article 6) and the 'socles de competences' which has given a better definition of general educational aims, completed by more precise definitions of benchmarks and targets" (ib:37, 38).

From the quotations above, national goals in terms of student outcomes may exist in the curriculum of the French-speaking Belgium Community. This has been confirmed by another international research carried on by Hofman, et al (2002), they state that "the Belgium French Community has its own official curriculum. Administrative authorities that do not have their own curriculum have to use the official curriculum of the French Community". Demeuse, et al., (2000: 28) pointed out that "in Belgium, there are no national assessments. Evaluation instruments are available at the French Community but they are by no means mandatory. Thus, teachers can draw up their own examinations, as they find most suitable. Quite often, the examinations are hardly comparable from one school to the next, because the level of difficulty greatly varies". They went on

"The French Community proposes methodological and evaluation instruments but they are by no means mandatory" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 37).

"The weak national monitoring, evaluation and reinforcement system due to the fact that the proposed methodological and evaluation instruments are not mandatory, moreover, there are no national examinations and no admission examinations at any level" (ib:42).

"In practice, no control exists to verify the pupils' achievement except on samples and when someone argues against a school decision. There is no reward structure for teachers and their salary is based on academic training level and seniority. Moreover, school funding is not linked to evaluation. The goals and reward structure have no impact on ESI" (ib:37).

If these statements were true, one would assume that the national goal setting in terms of student outcomes in the French-speaking Belgium before the year 1999 (the time of writing the two case studies) had little impact on its effective school improvement.

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement

Regarding the factor "national goal setting in terms of school improvement", the two case studies have offered little information. Some relevant information was found in other resources such as education system of Belgium (Fr) and the OECD articles and reports.
"Since 1994, particularly since an OECD report on national education policies was issued, the French-speaking Belgium has achieved steady progress by attempting to set up an effective system of monitoring devices through a number of initiatives that have become the subject of several decrees (Demeuse, et al. 2000, pp. 43-44):
- To set up a Council for Education and Training (each year, the Council must present a report on the situation of education and training in the French Community);
- To define the missions of schools more accurately (Decree defining the priority missions of education and secondary education and organizing the structures designed to achieve those);
- To draft out a system of references for the competencies relevant to the whole of compulsory schooling (from 6 to 18 years of age);
- Implementation of the School Plans and obligation for every school to issue an annual progress report;
- Creation of monitoring committees and assessment tools;
- Implementation of a purposeful support policy, directed at those schools that welcome students from an underprivileged environment (positive discrimination)"

Since 1994, the French-speaking community began to define the priority missions of schools more accurately and to organize structures to achieve those missions (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 9).

"And since 1998, schools must have '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).

"The French Community of Belgium surmised that its education expenditure could be cut by around 10% if the practice of repeating grades was abolished… A new approach for helping slower learners is the system of two or three-year 'cycles'. In this method, repeating (grades) is not allowed, except to some extent at the end of a cycle" (Kovacs, 1998: 1).

"School Plan" in Belgium was similar to school improvement plans in some other countries. They allow considerable scope for flexibility (Stoll, et al., 2000) and for school self-assessment. But no information was available in the two case studies about how School Plan was implemented and assessed. The 1st case study aimed to improve the identification of the difficulties students encountered during the course of their learning process. One of the intermediate outcome was "the most surprising fact concerns the weakest students: they were at first very reluctant to work on the proposed kind of activities, because they were able to answer the questions" (ib: 22). The 2nd cast study was totally conducted under the central initiative - to abolish the system of students repeating years/grades, a priority of the Belgian educational policy. It appeared that "School without Failures worked well at first glance but, in fact, it is a memory for 4 years out of 6!" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 35). In brief, the two Belgian case studies were "commissioned" by the French-speaking Community of Belgium, influenced by the EC initiatives, directed and organized by the university researchers and inspectors, and carried out by the teachers and students.

3. Strong central steering and empowering effective school improvement

Most of the information concerning strong central steering and empowering ESI is contained in the above section, the indicators included:

- Structurally, setting up the monitoring device system and establishing the Monitoring Committee and the assessment tools; organizing the structures designed to achieve the priority mission of education since 1994.
- Legally, the issue of decrees defining the priority missions of compulsory education more accurately; drafting criteria for the competencies relevant to compulsory schooling.
- Practically, obligating schools to have a School Plan and an Annual Report for parents since 1994.
- Financially, implementing a purposeful support policy (positive discrimination) and funding the SI programs since 1994.

Apart from these, the French-speaking Community of Belgium has encouraged the schools to take part in the EC school improvement projects.

"Three schools from the French-speaking Community of Belgium and 98 other schools from 17 countries have taken part in the 1997-1998 pilot project, launched by the European Commission within the framework of SOCRATES. This project proposes a general framework that would enable every school to develop its own (self-) assessment method…" (ib: 44).

However, the authors of the two Belgian case studies declared, "it should be pointed out that the researches were commissioned by the Ministry, not at the behest of the schools or teachers" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 38). "The pressure on schools to improve their quality is weak and they are not systematically supported. External interventions are usually perceived as disruptions in a normal functioning and researchers are not always welcomed. The tradition to appoint somebody to help or to welcome a critical friend seems quite strange in the system" (ib:37).
"The Belgium educational system offers all the facilities to introduce school improvement projects. But it seems that an insufficient interest for pupils' outcomes and the weakness of the system to increase this kind of interest could limit its capacity for change. The large freedom of actors coupled with the lack of permanent support for improvement processes seems also to handicap the system" (ib:39).

The French-speaking Community of Belgium failed, so far, to succeed in implementing the accumulated knowledge gathered by educational research. The rather fragmented structure of its education system, which is linked to its history, and the actual or potential conflicts threatening it, have never facilitated a systematic and generalized assessment of truly established educational practices, of their efficiency and their effectiveness (ib:41).

The above information revealed, on the one hand, the central steering and empowering ESI in French-speaking Belgium increased after 1994, particularly in the aspect of national goal setting in terms of student outcomes (conceptually about the criteria for each subject). However, besides the School Plan proposed to schools and encouraging schools to take part in the EC projects, very little evidence showed national goal setting in terms of school improvement, let alone "how" and "how frequently" the national goals and intermediate goals were assessed or reinforced.

4. **External evaluation and external agents**

In Belgium, the two main external evaluations and external agents mentioned in the two case studies were university researchers and the Inspectorate. According to Demeuse, et al. (2000. pp. 38-39), "the 'directors of the improvement process' are essentially the researchers in charge of the project… The external change agents are the driving forces in terms of obtaining results from the work that was put into motion". The two case studies provided the detailed information about how the external agents (mostly the university researchers) exercised pressure (and support as well) to the schools:

(The 2nd case study) The work done during meetings (researchers, the Inspectors and the teachers) consists of:

- A presentation of the results for diagnostic assessment tests (by the research team);
- An overall analysis of the said results (by the research team);
- An analysis of the pupils' most frequent errors (by the research team);
- Proposals for remedial teaching activities (by the research team and the teachers);
- A discussion of the diagnostic assessment tests, which were developed by the research team and submitted to the Inspectors before the meeting (by the research team and the teachers) (ib:27).

"They (researchers) proposed the didactic sequences or the methodology to the teachers. They conducted the formative and summative assessment, corrected these sequences during the various sequence evaluation. They elaborated the pupils assessment tests, analyzed the results and reported them to the teachers" (ib: 38).

"The university research team was present and active at every stage. It even performed a number of tasks on behalf of the teachers e.g. drawing up the assessment, correcting them, error analysis of the assessment tests, etc. Once the university stopped monitoring the teachers, the innovation 'set up' is at a risk of being dropped by the teachers" (ib: 32).

The case studies also mentioned that the researchers "set up a formative assessment framework once a month" and "meeting with the teachers of the experimental group at a rate of one meeting a month" (ib: 17-18). Such frequent meeting, class observing, testing and feedback did create some pressures and support to ESI. The teachers of the 1st case study said "Formative assessment on a regular basis enabled us to keep track, in a comprehensive way, of the development of the students' understanding of algebraic structures" (ib: 16). The two case studies concluded, "the innovative project met its objectives as long as the University researchers took care of it" (ib:35). In the respect of the role of the Inspectorate in Belgium (Fr), the case studies described:

"He (the Inspector) followed the whole process and was present during the meetings between teachers and researchers… it was the Inspector who proposed the names of the volunteer teachers to the research team" (ib: 38).

"He participated in all consecutive steps. His role is that of an organizer and activity leader during meetings, encounters, etc. In addition, he supports the educational team, he makes sure that everything is set up, encourages, stimulates… his intervention was also required with regard to deciding whether a pupil would be retained or not (ib: 28).

The 2nd case study clearly showed that in the French-speaking Community of Belgium, every Inspector has his/her own schools as their charges within a district.
5. Market mechanisms

According to the two case studies, market mechanisms had a negative impact on ESI in French-speaking Belgium. The following evidence supported this statement:

(The 2nd case study) "It is important to underscore the mobility of pupils during the program. Actually, in 1997 for instance, less than 40% of the initial pupils are monitored from the beginning because they have left the pilot schools in the meantime. In Belgium legislation permits that parents choose the school which they seem most appropriate for their child, and they are free to transfer their children to other schools if they wish to do so. " (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 33).

In the 2nd case study, during the period of the "School without Failures" project (1993-1999), 155 pupils left the pilot classes (over 60%) and there were 171 newcomers. From this data, one could imagine the mobility and the degree of public choice in the French-speaking Belgian schools. Moreover, Demeuse et al. (2000: 8) pointed out 'however, the parents are not really in an open market system because they are not well informed about 'goods'. No national exams or school audits are organized to offer them sufficient transparency to decide to which school they really want to send their children". Therefore, the negative impact of market mechanisms actually hindered effective school improvement.

6. School accountability

Regarding school accountability the quotes below were the only available information in the two case studies.

"Since 1998, schools must have '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).

"Our educational system is not familiar with concepts as evaluation related to objectives or accountability, perhaps because it is built on the parents' free choice" (ib: 8).

7. Adequate time, financial and human resources support for ESI

The information below was found either from the comments of the Belgium ESI team or from the Eurydice articles.

"Financial budget allocated to each school depends on the number of pupils that are enrolled" (ib:37).

"Schools will be neither rewarded nor punished for participating in an improvement project" (ib:38).

"The 1995 French Community Decree offers supplementary operational funds for certain schools which had to meet objective criteria relating to the number of pupils lagging behind in their studies, the number of foreign pupils and pupils from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. These funds could be allocated for operational purposes, facilities and equipment and human resource (Eurydice, 2000: 316).

"French Community Decree of 24 July 1997 introducing certain innovations in school funding. It made it possible, for example, to take social and cultural background of pupils into account (positive discrimination)" (ib: 316).

Although the information about supplementary funds for certain schools to improve (1995) and the funding of the "positive discrimination" (1997) was mentioned, no details were available especially on how they had influenced ESI. On the contrary, complains from the researchers about the lack of funding for effective school improvement were available:

"The annual or quasi annual and limited funding of educational researches increases the difficulty to plan a complete and coordinated project, involving theoretical researches, pre-test, test, follow-up on a long period, replication in other contexts…" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 38).

The human resource support was mentioned frequently in these two case studies, particularly the support from the university researchers and the Inspectors (see below).

Given that the initial “contract” guaranteed the teachers that they would be safeguarded from any additional workload due to the research, the University research team took care of marking the formative assessments and shared the results to the teachers with tenure during the meetings. Besides marking the tests, the research team undertook the analysis of the errors made by the pupils. On the other hand, the interpretation of the data and the elaboration of learning activities, remedial teaching activities and perfecting activities are carried out together with the teachers during the meetings (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 33).

"The objectives of this unit (Observation and Monitoring Unit) are to collect as much information as possible on field actions conducted by educational teams and to try to make a statistic analysis of the results of students enrolled in schools maintained by the Community. It also provides help to the schools in working out the school plans" (ib:44).

8. The local support

No information was available in the two case studies.
9. Offering schools some autonomy
Schools in the French-speaking Belgium were quite autonomous in decision-making (teaching methods, choice of textbooks, testing, and evaluation methods) except the decision-making for recruiting teaching staff in the public schools. The authors of the two Belgium case studies further argued:

"In Belgium schools are quite autonomous in the processes while they are not held accountability for outcomes" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 9).

"The 'school wars', strong oppositions between catholic and anticlerical parties, since the national independence, have left the State unable to really control the system and the schools. As in centralized countries, we were used to systemic reforms but, because of the total freedom of parents and the great freedom of schools and their organizing bodies, reforms were mainly financial and global decisions with very limited impacts on everyday life in the classrooms" (ib: 8-9).

9. Engendering a culture in support of educational improvement
An absence of the factor (engendering a culture in support of ESI) can be seen as a hindrance to ESI. As we stated previously, engendering a culture in support of ESI includes two parts: engendering a national culture as well as engendering a school culture. Norms, traditions, routines, visions, concepts and values all belong to the domain of culture, while climate, routines, heroes and symbols belong to the surface level of a culture. The first two quotes below were directly contributed from the two case studies. The third quote was chosen from the background information about the education system of French-speaking Belgium.

From up until the early 1990s, "its educational system is not familiar with concepts as evaluation related to objectives or accountability" (Demeuse, et al., 2000: 8).

"As one may judge, this system is not ideally suitable for assessment, neither internal (teachers often remain isolated when facing their students), nor external (at the end of the day, the schools do not report so much to users or 'persons-in-charge' of the system) (ib: 41-42).

Concerning engendering a national culture in support of ESI, the quotes in "national goal setting in terms of school improvement" and in "strong central steering and empowering ESI" revealed that since 1994, the French-speaking Community of Belgium has attempted to introduce some new concepts (e.g. School Plan, external evaluation, etc.) into its educational system. Apart from these, it has also made the criteria for the competencies relevant to the whole compulsory schooling into laws and established new monitoring structures for school improvement. Since almost nothing was obligatory (except the School Plan) and no hard measures nor reinforcement were used at all, the pressure from the central level seemed too mild and weak, and exerted little influence in changing its traditional culture which has "neither interest to student ultimate outcomes" nor interest in national tests, national feedback or national reinforcement. If lack of a culture in support of ESI may hinder ESI, thus engendering a culture in support of ESI is important and it may help to change the beliefs, routines and old traditions of a nation. The two Belgium case studies, from a reverse angle, have provided us an opportunity to see such an importance.

The analysis of the three Dutch case studies

1. National goal setting in terms of student outcomes
Information associated with national goal setting in terms of student outcomes have been revealed by the 3 Dutch case studies.

(The 3rd case study) "For each subject, the Ministry has formulated core goals (knowledge and skills pupils need to possess). These core goals are stated as aspirations (e.g. "The pupils have knowledge on consumer rights and obligations") and not as proficiency levels to be attained by the pupils (Werf, et al., 1999). There are no formally and centrally stated attainment standards1. At the end of the period of basic secondary education, pupils are assessed to see whether they have acquired the knowledge and skills defined in the attainment targets. For each subject, apart from Physical Education, pupils have to sit at least one final test (set nationally). Schools may also supplement these tests with their own examination papers. The stage at which tests are taken can vary from one subject to another. One part of the curriculum may be completed after two years, while another takes three years to complete. It is up to the school to decide. The tests do not lead to formal qualifications, but provide a basis on which to assess the progress of pupils towards achieving the core goals. The tests are supplied by the

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1 Boersma (2000) gives a short summary of the long history of the Common Core Curriculum (CCC). CCC was defined originally by the Scientific Advisory Board of Government Policy (1986) as a common curriculum for the first years in secondary education. The common curriculum was documented in highly specific achievement targets. Achievement targets are a part of the law and schools are obliged to conform to these rules. With the third cabinet of Prime Minister Lubbers there was not sufficient political support for these kinds of targets. They were transformed to more global formulated core curriculum goals. These core goals have a function as demands for the curriculum contents. A global specification of curriculum goals was part of a policy in which the schools have more autonomy. A global formulation leaves discretion to the schools to translate the goals to their pupils and to local school situation.
The changes especially related to the factors of time, curriculum and testing" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 339).

The 3rd national reinforcement system in the three Dutch case studies. There was no information available about the added value comparison) for parents to choose schools. Meanwhile, many other reforms mentioned in the case studies, were carrying on in the same decade in the Netherlands, there were two nationally organized tests during the whole period of compulsory education: one was not obligatory at the end of the primary education (85% of all Dutch schools participate in this yearly national test. The final score is related to a specific track (ib: 333).

The following information was derived from the Dutch case study concerning national goal setting in terms of school improvement. From the above information, we can clearly see the different functions of SLO, CITO and the publishers in the process of national goal formulation, specification and evaluation. Finally, the inspectors evaluated the schools' qualities. In the Netherlands, there were two nationally organized tests during the whole period of compulsory education: one was not obligatory at the end of the primary education (85% of all Dutch schools participate in such tests) and another was obligatory for all secondary school-leavers. The outcomes of the tests were available on the Internet and in newspapers including a mean comparison (but not an added value comparison) for parents to choose schools. There was no information available about the national reinforcement system in the three Dutch case studies.

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement

The following information was derived from the Dutch case study concerning national goal setting in terms of school improvement.

The official policy of the Dutch government aims to decrease the number of pupils moving from primary education to special education (4% in the Netherlands compared with 1% in some other European countries), twin general measures have been adopted - changing the school organizational and financial structure (e.g. for 25 primary schools, only 2 special needs schools in a regional network) and using 'adaptive instruction' in primary schools (ib: 296-297).

"Both projects (the 1st and the 2nd Dutch case studies) have a lot of characteristics in common. Their aim is to prevent or re-mediate learning problems at an early stage in pupils' development. The implementation of adaptive instruction is considered to be an intermediate outcome. The ultimate aim is to raise the achievement of young pupils in core subjects, especially those of at-risk pupils" (ib: 297-298).

(The 3rd case study) The Common Core Curriculum (CCC) offers a common learning content to all pupils in the first stage of secondary education. This reform is based on three social-political aims: improvement of the general quality of education; strengthening and enlarging common knowledge and skills, adapted to technological and socio-cultural developments; postponing the moment at which pupils have to make decisions about their further educational career (ib: 334).

The 1st, the 2nd and the 3rd Dutch case studies resulted from the above mentioned initiatives respectively. The 3rd case study mentioned, “the CCC reform has brought in overall changes in the school organization. The changes especially related to the factors of time, curriculum and testing” (De Jong, et al., 2000: 339). Meanwhile, many other reforms mentioned in the case studies, were carrying on in the same decade in the Netherlands under the initiatives of the Ministry. Examples were: fusion of secondary schools from 1454 in...
1992 to 650 in 1998; the implementation of lump sum financing (1993-1996); a publication of 'the learning school' (1995); a program for the implementation of information and computer technology (1997); introduction of the second revised versions of core goals for the CCC reform and the start of a new reform in senior secondary schools; the development of accountability by publishing examination results and efficiency measures for each school on the Internet since 1998 (ib: 336).

3. Strong central steering and empowering effective school improvement

The Dutch government has tried to stimulate and empower effective school improvement mainly through three strategies: the first one was to initiate school improvement through the top down model (e.g. making the reform into law; obliging schools to implement the reform):

"Schools were forced to implement aspects of the CCC reform formulated in legal requirements such as the introduction of new subjects and the extra time investment. Schools felt a pressure to implement the CCC indicated by the large amount of schools buying new textbooks, teachers following in-service training, etc" (ib: 344).

The second strategy was to internationalize its educational system more towards the UK and the European dimension (e.g. a common core curriculum for all, integration some of the tracks, the postponement of student track time) and

"...considerable efforts are being made to internationalize secondary education. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has placed the task of internationalizing education in the hands of intermediary organizations. In the case of primary and secondary education and teacher training, the European Platform was set up to strengthen the European dimension of education and promote internationalization. To achieve this, the European Platform administers a number of national and international subsidy schemes" (ib: 354).

The third strategy was to finance schools and external agents to initiate or to carry out SE programs. "The central government financed a lot of research studies and research institutions such as "SLO", the "CITO", the Inspection, and the Steering Committee" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 345).

(The 3rd case study) "The inspection not only collected data at the class level but also at the school level and the pupil level. The inspection has collected data in the school year 1997-1998 about the implementation and effectiveness of the reform. They performed the following activities:

* Teams of eight till twelve inspectors visited a representative sample of 120 secondary schools (± 10% of the schools).
* The teams observed ± 7300 lessons in all subjects and all school types and talked with a lot of principals, teachers, departments, pupils and parents.
* A questionnaire was sent to 7600 pupils, 6400 parents and 3000 teachers of the sample of schools (ib: 337-338).

In addition, it was the grants and financial support from the central government, which made it possible to carry out the improvement programs with the help of the external agents (see details in section 7). It was almost impossible for all the schools to manage the changes caused by the CCC reforms without central steering and empowering the reforms at the national contextual level and without its formalization in legal requirements (introducing new subjects and the extra time investment). This couldn't be done by any external agencies or by Inspectors.

4 External evaluation and external agents

External agency and external evaluations have played a vital role for ESI in the Netherlands. For instance, they have designed the LPS program (the 1st case study) and the KEA program (the 2nd case study) respectively. Moreover, they were not only the designers, implementers but also the monitors and evaluators of the whole process in the two programs.

(The 1st case study) "The total time the counselors spent on average during three years (on the eleven schools) exceed the minimal planned 80 hours to a large extent. The time spent for improvement is on average 138 hours. Most of the time is spent to the principals of the school (52%). The meetings with the school team take on average 32% of the time. Time spent on individual support is compared to the other target groups lowest (16%). Individual support is divided about equally between discussions (7.8%) and class consultations (8.6%). The time data are all averages. Large differences between the time spent by counselors can be observed. At one school, the total time spent is just below the minimum (79.8 hours) and at another school more than three times the minimum is spent (260.2 hours)" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 310).

"The meetings (of the counselors) with the director could have increased the pressure as well as the meetings with the whole school team. Regular feedback given by the counselors about the implementation of the teachers could have led to some pressure to improve" (ib: 318).
In the past, institutes for school counseling were founded to assist schools. There were about 40 of these institutes in the Netherlands, the School Counseling Institutes work to a large extent with primary schools in their region (ib: 301). There are counseling institutes in the region which have a fixed amount of schools they are expected to assist (ib: 319).

The 2nd case study mentioned "direct classroom observation”. "Teachers were frequently observed (by the counselors) during the arithmetic and language lessons. Per group 30 classroom observations are made. Instruction, learning time, and classroom management is mainly focused on” (ib: 325). " Teachers receive intensive KEA-method of class consultations (every two weeks). The instruction behavior is rated every month by a research instrument” (ib: 325). "The 70 times on average the counselors had a meeting at the schools must have resulted in a pressure to improve” (ib: 318).

5. Market mechanism

Market mechanisms were not often mentioned in the 3 Dutch case studies. The total freedom parents to choose schools and the publication of school outcomes in recent years were reflections of the impact of market mechanisms. For instance, the 3rd case study mentioned:

"Parents are more act to a higher degree as consumers, the government stimulates consumerism by making school outcomes public” (De Jong, et al., 2000: 336).

However, market mechanism was not fully appreciated. One of the arguments against them was that they were held responsible for the division of schools into 'black' (children from immigrant, low-income families) and 'white' schools (children of Dutch parents) in the big cities (De Jong et al., 2000).

6. School accountability

Schools were responsible for students attaining national goals. The tests developed by CITO were used by schools to evaluate student outcomes. Publishing the students' examination results of each school on the Internet since 1998 was a major reflection of school accountability. In addition, "schools produced a school prospectus to inform parents about the curriculum they offered and the results they achieved” (De Jong, et al., 2000: 336). Meanwhile, "economic growth and information technology create higher demands on schools. Schools in the Netherlands have to learn how to cope with increased accountability” (ib: 337).

7. The adequate time, financial and human resource support

Schools in the Netherlands received funds from the government not only according to their enrolled student numbers but also funds earmarked for quality enhancement, training and advice (ib:301). For instance, the Dutch government took several measures to assist schools financially in carrying out reforms and school improvement programs.

"Between 1990-1996 the MEC has stimulated the implementation of the CCC reform by financing on average 200.000 $ (US) for each school during this seven year period. It finances a process management steering committee; it finances the reform in general (the SLO, the CITO, research studies to monitor the improvement process and results and the inspection for evaluating the reform)” (ib: 336).

Besides, schools receive funds from the government for quality enhancement, training and advice (ib:301).

(To strengthen the "Culture and School" education) The Dutch government provided an extra sum of NLG 12 million a year for the period from 1997 to 2000 and plus an additional NLG 1 million guilders in 1997 and 1998 for the regional training centers in order to improve the co-operations between schools and cultural institutions (ib: 354).

After 8 years, all teachers have received such support from the external agents in their classroom teaching (ib: 332).

External research agents, inspectors and school counselors were available for school improvement programs. With the help of external agents, a student caring system and an internal counselor system were established in the involved schools.

(The 1st case study) "The experimental schools were assisted by 8 counselors from 5 different institutions. A project board was monitoring the improvement process. Members consisted of counselors, staff developers from a National Pedagogical Center and researchers from two universities” (ib: 302).

Since the general skills and disciplines were too new for teachers, the external agents did almost everything for the involved schools by gathering data, analysis, evaluation and presentation, by developing new teaching curricula, integrating individualized programs and tests in curricula and by coaching teachers each year (ib: 320).

On the other hand, the instability of the school staff and the counselors was evident in the Dutch case studies too.

"The staff instability might have had a negative influence on the ESI project, almost half of the teachers in grade 3 were replaced. This has a negative consequence for the intensity of the individual
support. Also some of the consolers had to be replaced which is a negative factor for the speed of the development" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 320).

Regarding the time issue, the 1st and the 2nd case studies had adequate time for implementing the programs. Lack of time was mentioned in the 3rd case study. "Lack of time for the implementation of the CCC reform" (ib: 345) and "not enough time and resources were available to make the new reform aspects routine in the schools" (ib: 344).

8. The local support
There is no information available concerning local support in the 3 case studies. The reason might be that the case studies were mainly carried out by external agents and university researchers with local support not being a major concern.

9. Offering schools some autonomy
The 3 Dutch case studies showed that schools in the Netherlands have extensive academic and financial autonomy, which means they have autonomy in choosing textbooks, teaching materials, instructional approaches and when and what kind of tests were going to be used for their students (except for the obligatory final national examination at the end of the secondary education). They also had autonomy to decide whether to participate in the SE or the SI programs or not. Even if they participated in the top-down reforms, "they have a large autonomy in relation to how the reform goals will be accomplished" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 345). Not only schools but also teachers had a lot of autonomy. "In the Netherlands teachers are very autonomous and will only act on outside pressure if they believe it is worth trying and when it does not take too much energy" (ib: 318). In the respect of finance, schools "receive finance for professional development and can decide how to use it" (ib: 345). Since it was up to the schools to decide the stage at which the students to take the national tests and the tests taken varied from one subject to another (ib: 335).

10. Engendering a culture in support of ESI
Some information regarding engendering a national culture in support of ESI was found in the Dutch case studies. The clarion calls from the national level for educational reforms and the efforts to institutionalize the CCC reform in legislation are evidence for this. As a matter of fact, this reform introduced new concepts (e.g. new textbooks, new subjects, adaptive instruction and so on) and new systems (e.g. new tracking, time allocations), new vision (new targets, new tasks, etc.) into the Dutch culture and educational system. Moreover, the national government has done the following in recent years to strengthen the relation between schools and culture.

"The government memorandum on Culture and Schools (1996) is aimed at improving co-operation between schools and cultural institutions. One aim of the project is to encourage schools to integrate cultural activities in areas of the curriculum outside the arts. Another is to encourage cultural institutions to direct more of their activities at young people, in this case via the schools. The emphasis is on a decentralized approach designed to encourage joint initiatives between schools and cultural institutions at regional level. Spending priorities are: activities relating to the cultural heritage, projects which increase awareness of the multicultural nature of contemporary Dutch society and - finally - those types of schools and colleges which have previously done relatively little about cultural education" (De Jong, et al., 2000: 354).

Regarding engendering a school culture in support of ESI, the 2nd case study mentioned "before the KEA project there was no evaluation culture in the schools... After the start of the KEA project the function of internal counselor was introduced" (ib: 329). Therefore, it was the KEA program, which has introduced the evaluation culture into the involved schools.

The analysis of the four Finnish case studies

1. National goal setting in terms of student outcomes
The four Finnish case studies have provided us some information of the national goal setting in terms of student outcomes.

"The school subjects are determined by the Parliament and the distribution of classroom hours by the Council of State. While the National Board of Education is responsible for the development of educational objectives, curriculum guidelines, contents and methods. It prepares and adopts the core curricula and is responsible for the evaluation of the Finnish education system. But the final decisions about the syllabus are made for each school jointly by the local authorities and the school itself" (Nikkanen, 2000: 215).
Concerning the questions regarding the national testing and evaluation system and which way to guarantee the realization of the national goals, the case studies declared:

There is no selection process between the lower and the upper stage of comprehensive school (Year 1-9): all pupils are moved up automatically… General upper secondary school (provides 2-4 years of general education to pupils aged 16 to 19+ and) leads to the national Matriculation Examination giving general eligibility to all higher education" (ib: 221).

The National Board of Education issued new curriculum guidelines that came into force on August 1, 1999. According to existing legislation and curriculum guidelines, the forms and methods used in developing the pupil's self-evaluation skills are defined in each school's own curriculum. Every course includes self-evaluation where students evaluate themselves and also their teachers (Nikkanen, 2000: 192).

Since no information was available in the Finnish case studies about the national Inspections, we tried to find information from Internet and other sources.

"There is no separate inspection department for schools in Finland. Feedback concerning the operations of the education system is collected by means of statistics and evaluations" (www.edu.fi/english, 2000).

Finland had the same national goals for all schools, which were developed and formulated into the national curriculum including all subjects to be taught in classrooms. The National Board of Education was the crucial "heart" not only responsible for the development of educational goals, curriculum guidelines, contents and methods but also responsible for the quality of all the schools. There were no national tests at the end of the primary education and no national Inspections to evaluate the quality of schools in Finland.

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement

Nikkanen derived the following information from the descriptions of the Finnish educational reforms in 2000:

A new set of educational Acts came into force at the beginning of 1999, launching a general reform of Finnish educational legislation that covered all levels of the educational system from pre-school education to higher education. The existing Acts, about 50 in number, were replaced by 10 new Acts. Among the objectives of the new school legislation was closer integration within comprehensive school through the abolition of the administrative distinction between its lower and upper levels. The new school legislation reinforced the trend of the late 1980s and the early 1990s towards greater school autonomy (Nikkanen, 2000: 180).

According to the new School Acts the Finnish schools have to evaluate how effective, economic and impressive they are. The National Board of Education has planned for schools a guide system which uses evaluation as a tool… Interim evaluation took place in 1998. The results of the final evaluation will be published in 2002. The national objectives set by the Ministry of Education and the standard defined for the projects as a whole will be used as criteria in the evaluation. An evaluation will be made of present curricula and their implementation, and of educational materials, teaching tools, working methods and school-industry (ib: 180-209).

Since the case studies were written before 2000, no information was available about how the evaluation of the curricula, teaching materials, methods and so on was carried on. Regarding the LUMA project, the 3rd Finnish case study stated:

"The aim of the LUMA project is to guarantee that every Finnish citizen will be able to reach an adequate level of basic education in maths and the natural sciences...On national level the goal is also to persuade as many pupils as possible to take the LUMA subjects (Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography) in the Matriculation Examination. Children and young people’s mathematical and scientific literacy must be raised to the best quartile of the OECD countries. (ib: 200-201).

The aim of the LUMA project was to "meet the challenges of the information society, ensure the supply of a qualified workforce, promote entrepreneurship based on high-level competence, satisfy the information needs involved in political and economic decision-making, and guarantee sustainable development" (ib:201).

The experiences gained from the project will be a highly significant resource in the process of preparing the next curriculum guidelines. The National Board of Education will have an evaluation of the ninth-graders in the Spring 2000. The tests taken by the flexible stream indicate that there has been distinct improvement. There have been some 5 meetings yearly with the teachers taking part in LUMA (ib:202). A survey carried out by the NBE for example reveals a growing interest from the students in these subjects (ib: 202-203).

"In this school, every teacher took part in at least one school development team" (ib: 184).

3. Strong central steering and empowering ESI
According to Nikkanen (2000), the Finnish educational system was featured by "centralized steering of the whole - local implementation". The 2nd case study said, "there is more collaboration on the national level than on the regional level. The national curriculum stimulates. New legislation has made it possible to start teaching independently of year classes" (ib:198). While the 3rd case study mentioned the steering and empowerment from the Ministry of Education, "The Ministry of Education which has appointed a task force 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 in 1998 and 2002. The Ministry of Education’s LUMA project reports regularly on its progress" (ib:200). Financial support for the programs has been mentioned, "without program resources the ideas could not have been turned into an on-line format" (ib:213). However, such empowerment cannot be found in the 2nd case study, "it has received no outside financial support and no publicity from the National Board of Education" (ib:199), mainly because it was a bottom-up innovation (initiated and implemented by the school itself).

4. **External evaluation and external agents**

According to the Finnish case studies, external evaluation and external agents were regarded as an effective factor but not as important as the internal agents. When the involved schools were asked to list the three most important factors which had influenced their school improvement programs, only the 1st case study mentioned external change agents, but ranked it in the third place (ib:189). However, the case studies did mention some influences and support from the external agents.

(The 1st case study) "The Department of Teacher Education of the University of Jyväskylä has a strong influence on the school’s activities because it provides many good ideas. The NBE and the Department of Teacher Education are important external change factors. Other schools also exert an influence (e.g. the network of LUMA schools). … The University serves as a source of a great deal of stimuli and provides direct contacts with the MoE for example" (ib: 188).

(The 4th case study) "The central Finnish PEDANET project supports the development projects of the educational institutions in helping them create their own innovative ways of utilizing telecommunication networks in teaching" (ib: 208).

On the contrary, in the 2nd case study, when the school principal was asked about the importance of the external change agents to the school improvement program, she answered "there is no specific external person who motivates us, our actions are motivated rather by external needs, for example, the demands of higher or vocational education institutions" (ib: 197).

5 **Market mechanisms and school accountability**

Concerning public school choice, the 1st case study also pointed out:

"In Finland parents are allowed to choose a school for their children to 100 percent. The parents also get information on the schools they may choose to 100 percent. But, if parents choose a school, which is not the nearest to their home, they have to pay for the extra expenses (ib: 187)."

6. **School accountability**

Regarding the factor of school accountability, the available information in the case studies was the School Year Plan and Internet data for parents making choice and access to student outcomes. In the project the parents have had the role of recipients. Network activities have targeted also the parents. Because curricula are being designed over the Internet, the parents, too, have access to the curriculum and to pupil productions (ib: 211 & 218).

7. **Adequate time, financial and human resource support**

In Finland, except the central financial funding for each school according to its enrolled student numbers, some special funding, time and human resource support for school improvement were offered to the involved schools. For example, the 1st case study declared that "the provision of resources (for the program) is quite stable" (Nikkanen, 2000: 188) and the 4th case study pointed out the important impact of the time and financial support from the national contextual level.

(The 4th case study) "Teachers are offered opportunities to disengage from their daily teaching work for a certain period to work in their own PEDANET-related projects. They are also getting financial support from their extra development work" (ib: 208).

"The Pedanet project as a whole is crucial. The same applies to funding, which has been ample (FIM 120,000 from the National Board of Education) - makes it possible, for example, for a teacher to take a leave of absence, enabling them to devote their time and energy fully to the project" (ib: 213). "The teachers can apply for leave of absence (4 months), during which time the National Board of
Education pays their salary. A teacher can run the project while a substitute takes care of his/her classes" (ib:213).

Regarding human resource support, support from both the national level and the universities were evident, in addition, a kind of special human support (termed "interest groups") was mentioned in the case studies too.

"In 1995 the whole teaching staff took part in training. Thanks to the project, just now all teachers have access to training of 3-5 credits if they wish. There is also the training provided by the Further Education Center of the University" (ib:211).

"The PEDANET-schools are encouraged to co-operate with interest groups (e.g. Sonera Ltd). The schools external change agents are experts in information technology and are very important for the success of the program. It is obvious that the school could not get started the project and go on it without the assistance of the experts" (ib:213).

Furthermore, "industry has offered the pupils visiting opportunities where the pupils get into contact with practice. The LUMA-schools are encouraged to co-operate with interest groups. Their experts are asked to hold presentations at schools" (ib: 206). However, not all the school improvement programs received adequate financial and human resource support. Lack of funding and time was mentioned in the 2nd and the 3rd case studies.

8. The local support

The below quote was directly derived from the case study:

(The 4th case study) "The municipality has not obstructed the activities of the LUMA project. It has granted teachers leave of absence and given the school free hands" (ib: 213).

Some information was found outside of the Finnish case studies written by Nikkanen. According to him, "The late 1980s and the early 1990s saw what was known as the free municipalities experiment, a measure preceding a reform of the Local Government Act and devolving decision-making powers to the level of individual municipalities and schools. The provision of educational services has always formed the most central aspect of municipal services in Finland. What happens in the educational service affects the local community as a whole - and vice versa" (ib: 178).

While "The municipalities receive a state subsidy based calculated on the basis of the number of pupils, with the local authorities then delivering the education and taking care of the arrangements needed to comply with the minimum requirements... " (ib:222).

"According to the school headmaster the most influential factor in inhibiting ESI was the local school system level contextual variables. The school feels loneliness. The (local) School Office should show much more interest, understand the school's needs better and provide funds for acquiring materials, for example" (ib: 199).

9. Offering schools some autonomy

Schools in Finland have got considerable autonomy according to the four case studies.

"Since the beginning of 1993, the delegation of authority and decision-making powers brought along by the free municipalities experiment has increased the scope for independent action of all Finnish municipalities and schools" (ib:179).

"The new school legislation reinforced the trend of the late 1980s and the early 1990s towards greater school autonomy... Nowadays schools can freely start school development projects according to their own decision making (ib:180).

In the field of curriculum, Finnish schools had the autonomy to freely decide their municipality-based and school-based curriculum, their textbooks, their teaching methods and even select their students (e.g. the school in the 1st case study). They had the autonomy in deciding what type of student progress system was used, for instance, traditional study dependent of year classes as opposed to credit points in the 2nd case study. They had autonomy in changing timetables in accordance with the requirements of school improvement" (ib: 205).

10. Engendering a culture in support of ESI

Regarding engendering a national culture in support of ESI, the LUMA project can be regarded as a typical example in Finland. It has created new vision and goal for the whole country to raise the level of science and technology education amongst of the whole school population to the best quartile of the OECD countries (Nikkanen, 2000: 201). It gained support both within and outside the schools. As the case studies showed that "the attitudes towards the LUMA project are favorable. The work of the project is being supported in a positive spirit" (ib: 205). In the respect of engendering a school culture in support of ESI,
"From the beginning of year 1999 the schools are obliged by the new school legislation to collect self-assessment information. The idea of evaluation is quite new in our schools in general" (ib: 202).

(The 2nd case study) "According to the results of inquiry for the parents in Voionmaa secondary school the school climate, atmosphere, was positive and encouraging; 61 percent was of this opinion" (ib:193).

As the case studies stated "an encouraging atmosphere makes it easy for staff and pupils to seek satisfaction to their growth needs… " (ib: 216).

**The analysis of the three Greek case studies**

1. **The national goal setting in terms of student outcomes**

Concerning national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, little information was available in the three case studies. The following information was found from the background information about the Greek educational system and its school improvement programs written by Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al in 2000.

"The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the development of curricula, textbooks and teaching timetables for all subjects. It is also accountable for the choice and distribution of the textbooks (one for each subject per grade) and the duration of studies. It is responsible for the recruitment and management of staff " (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 254).

Indirect policy is the centralized examinations for entering University in which eventually all pupils of grades 11 and 12 participate in (ib: 249).

"Heavy concentration on teaching and learning delivered from Ministry of Education to schools through the criteria (ib: 249):

(a) Curriculum (defined centrally in detail),
(b) Textbook distribution (one per subject, per grade, in all schools),
(c) Time allocation per content/task of teaching content (in all schools),
(d) Teaching content (in all schools),
(e) Teaching practice (in all schools),
(f) Teachers' in-service training (out of schools) (ib: 249).

From the above information, it appears that everything is there. Everything was centrally defined and centrally organized. But questions arise: how is it possible for MoE to deliver teaching practice to all schools? How to deliver such practices from the central Ministry into each classroom? Is there any monitoring and control system? Are there any internal and external evaluations, feedback and reinforcement systems? How does the monitoring and supervision system function? Concerning these issues, the three Greek case studies revealed:

The Ministry of Education sets the scale (1 to 10 for primary; 1 to 20 for secondary education) on the basis of which teachers evaluate students. It provides the textbooks, as well as the tests worksheets which teachers use to evaluate pupils (ib:249).

Due to the lack of a monitoring process, teachers have in practice the possibility to self-regulate their practice and this only to the extent that their colleagues or the social environment do not object to such a practice (ib: 245).

"Theoretically, teachers seem to be heavily constrained, by the legislation, in their daily practice. In reality, though, they can practice freely both in schools and in the classroom as long as the School Council in the school or the community do not make an issue out of it" (ib: 256).

"Effective schools (lyceum level) are the ones that manage high rates of admission to higher education for their students, through the so-called Panhellenic Entrance Examinations. It is clear that Primary Education and Junior-high schools are considered to be effective if they provide the appropriate foundations for success in the Panhellenic Entrance Examinations" (ib: 258).

2. **National goal setting in terms of school improvement**

According to the case studies, the common goals of the three ESI programs were more associated with national goal setting in terms of school improvement. These three case studies belonged to an experimental project co-funded by the EU and the Greek State, run by the Pedagogic Institute (P.I.) aiming to improve schools. "The Greek State seeks improvement of the educational practice towards an effective outcome by introducing changes mainly in Initial Teacher Training, National Curriculum, student evaluation and structure of the system (ib: 259). The quotes below disclose how national goal setting in terms of school improvement was reflected in the case studies.

(The 2nd case study) “The design of the program concerning the restructuring of classrooms foresaw duration of three years (from 1997 on). Within the school year 1998-1999 it involved 80 high schools throughout the country. The number of schools was expected to increase the following year (1999-
3. Strong central steering and empowering effective school improvement

Not much information was available which directly mentioned the strong central steering and empowering ESI in the Greek case studies. However, the role of the Pedagogic Institute (P.I.) and the SEPIE project has been repeatedly mentioned. According to Eurydice (2000), the curriculum in Greece is drawn up by the P.I. and approved by the Ministry.

"It seems that within such a centralized education system, where most initiatives are channelled through the MoE and do not lie with the individual schools, the precise steering of an external change agent could direct the efforts of teachers in the desired way. It is important to remember that this specific external agent is an agency of the Ministry of Education itself, since the P.I. is operating at the central level within the MoE." (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 244).

Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides (23 March, 2001) has defined the P.I. as "the affiliated agent of the MoE operating at the central level within the MoE", thus all its steering and empowering ESI program actions can be regarded as that of the MoE. If this were the case, the information below selected from the case studies would show the impact of central steering and empowering ESI from the perspectives of finance, orientation, evaluation, human support and so on.

These programs (the three case studies) are integrated in the SEPIE initiative, an experimental project co-funded by the E.U. and the Greek State, run by the P.I. in an attempt to bring changes in the Greek schools. Within the framework of the SEPIE project, twelve different programs are funded (ib:223). The SEPIE initiative, as well as all other programs of the P.I. are addressed to public schools only, which are exclusively financed by the State. The dissemination of the results (of the S.E.P.I.E programs) however, is available to the whole educational community (ib: 246-247). Another initiative of the P.I. worth mentioning and related to the ESI objectives, was to arrive at a general but complete framework on how to self-evaluate educational practice for improvement purposes. Initial guidelines were presented in a book prepared by the P.I… Part of the framework for the evaluation of the teaching practice has already been incorporated in a Ministerial Decision of the MoE (1998). Recently, several teachers’ unions expressed an interest in the book on the self-evaluation model and a public dialogue on the matter has already begun (ib: 247).

The Greek ESI team also mentioned that "the Ministers appear very eager to reform the education system" (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides & Papadiamantaki, 2001) and the recent development of quality indicators at the Greek national contextual level.

“Recently, a research conducted by the P.I., which operates under the control of MoE, produced indicators of quality of the educational practice. These indicators, appearing for the first time in Greece, may well be used as the Greek criteria of effectiveness within schools. Subsequently, they may serve to further elaborate the government's definition of effectiveness. These indicators refer to resources; curriculum; textbooks; school personnel; administration; climate, relationships among teachers; learning-teaching process; outcomes (Solomon,1999:30).” (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 257).

4. External evaluation and external agents

Among the various external agents in the Greek educational system, the role of the P.I. cannot be emphasized enough. “It bears responsibility for the study, development, definition and orientation of educational processes and procedures. It has been named as a research and development as well as administrative unit” (Mihopoulos, 1994; Tsountas & Hronopoulou, 1995). “In fact it operates as a development and administrative agency under the control of the MoE. While other agencies such as the National School Council, the Education Council of the Prefecture, the Municipal or Communal Education Committee, the School Committee and the School Council have no essential role. The reason of their existence is that they allow some form of participation on the part of teachers and parents representatives within some minor decision-making” (ib:254). The below quotes have shown the impact of the external agents and external evaluations in the three Greek case studies.

(The 1st case study) Detailed planning of the program (fire-prevention) and co-ordination among the agents responsible for the implementation of the program, that is the schools involved and the team of
the Pedagogic Institute which was supporting and monitoring the program… Training seminars were held so that the teachers could get acquainted with "the methods and procedures of the program (ib: 228).

(The 3rd case study) Experts offered in-service training of the teachers on the principles of Multicultural Education… The supporting team, as in all SEPIE programs, presented the teachers with a loose framework, within which the teachers were free to experiment and improvise. Teachers were trained on issues of multicultural education through seminars held regularly at both central and school level (ib: 238-239).

A general but complete framework on how to self-evaluate educational practice for improvement, initial guidelines were presented in a book prepared by the Pedagogic Institute (ib: 247).

According to Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al. (2000: 228), the member responsible for each of the three Greek case study programs from the P.I. supporting team also acted as an "internal" evaluator and handed in reports (usually every three months) and presented information for all the participating schools within that program. However, the information - how the case studies were externally evaluated and which criteria the independent external evaluators used - was missing in the case studies.

A negative element has been mentioned by the case studies was the teacher evaluation system in Greece. “For 30 years, until 1981, teachers were evaluated base on their personal, philosophical, social and mainly political beliefs and attitudes, with no respect to their actual educational practice (Stamelos, 1998). “We should emphasize here that the fact still remains that there is no effective teacher evaluation” (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 256). "Lack of monitoring and evaluation processes for the assessment of teacher’s educational practice was a negative factor for ESI" (ib: 259).

5. Market mechanism
No information was available regarding market mechanism in the three Greek case studies.

6. School accountability
No information was available regarding school accountability in the three Greek case studies.

7. The adequate time, financial and human resources support
Financial support has been mentioned in the three ESI case studies, for instance, the SEPIE project, which was co-funded by the E.U. and the Greek State. "The SEPIE initiatives as well as all other programs of the P.I. are exclusively financed by the State" (ib:246). In addition, "the teachers participating in the SEPIE programs, received as remuneration for their participation an extra allowance. Participation in such a program possibly furthers their opportunities for professional mobility (i.e. enhances their possibility to follow post-graduate studies etc.)" (ib:241). "This partially explains why teachers demand the continuation of experimental projects, which give them a framework and time to experiment with new methods and ideas, as well as a financial incentive" (ib: 245). This was not entirely without difficulty. Delays in the provision of financial support have delayed the school improvement process in the Greek case studies.

(The 1st case study) Since the schools did not get the requisite equipment on time, this was the reason for the duration of the program to be subsequently extended until May 1999" (ib: 229).

(The 2nd case study) The most serious was a delay in the initiation of the program, which was due to the fact that the Ministry of Education delayed the approval of the program (ib: 235).

"The structure and function of the education system prohibited the full implementation of the projects in certain circumstances. (a) It delayed the process of equipping the schools; (b) It forced the teachers to comply with the prerequisites of the national curriculum, i.e. content of teaching and everyday time scheduling. However, the opportunity that teachers have for self-regulation, helped them bypass the majority of those problems” (ib: 242).

With respect of human resource support, the Greek case studies revealed:

The supporting team of the program held seminars at both central and school level regularly, in order to familiarize teachers with the goals of the program. The guidance provided to the teachers was general enough and with no attempt to restrict teachers' practice (Ib: 229).

8. The local support
Concerning local support, we found a little information in the three Greek ESI case studies:

(The 1st case study) Several public services were engaged in various stages of the program like for example the local Fire Department, which provided the pupils with information and data on issues under its jurisdiction (ib: 230). Parents living in the countryside accepted to facilitate pupils measuring
the temperature and humidity of the environment (teacher’s comment). Moreover, they were affected by the use of Information Technology to the extent of considering the purchase of a PC necessary for their children (teacher’s comment). This fact is considered a success of the program (ib:230).

(The 3rd case study) The parents as well as the local communities had at least a positive influence to the programs, supporting them in any way they could” (ib: 243).

We cannot find any information about local administration, local teacher in-service training or locally organized-seminars for ESI programs in the Greek case studies.

9. Offering schools some autonomy

Lack of school autonomy has been repeatedly mentioned from two aspects: curriculum autonomy and teacher employment.

By Constitution, school units in Greece are not allowed to regulate the educational process themselves (Mihopoulos, 1994; Tsountas & Hronopoulou, 1995). All major education related practices fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and some local education agencies (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 254). Schools in Greece do not hold the administrative and decision making power to initiate, comply, and adapt, on their own (ib: 260).

"Within the framework of a centralized education system, where time allocation across subjects is decided by the MoE… Partial freedom from the content/task allocation would allow some teachers to undertake activities for example pertaining to multicultural education or other teaching subjects for which no specific provisions exist in the national curriculum" (ib: 245).

With respect of school autonomy in teacher employment, ”a factor limiting the functioning of improvement programs and rendering the development of a common purpose and shared vision among the school staff practically impossible is related to teachers’ terms of employment” (ib: 245). In this teacher recruiting system:

"Public School teachers’ terms of employment formulate a climate not conducive to the improvement of teaching practice or the creation of a shared vision as motivation is lacking. Although the Law 1566 foresees that Primary and Junior High school teachers should be present daily from 8:00 am to 1:30 p.m., public school teachers actually remain on the school premises only for classroom teaching. Teachers’ terms of employment coupled with frequent transfers from school to school allow very little time of activities in school besides classroom teaching. The employment status of few hours per week is coupled by (fairly) low wages. One could argue that teachers are both paid and employed (in a sense) as part time employees” (ib: 245).

As far as the public schools were concerned, they appeared to have too little autonomy. In reality, teachers had a lot of discretion in the case studies, as there was no monitoring and supervision system as long as their behaviors did not offend their colleagues, School Council or community. The school head teacher had no authority and no supervisory control over the teachers (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides and Papadiamantaki, 2001). Situations differed in the school improvement project such as S.E.P.I.E which offered the participating schools and teachers some autonomy on "whether and how the subject is taught, depends on the teacher’s willingness, determination, and creativity" (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, et al., 2000: 226).

Some negative influences were mentioned in the Greek case studies. As the case studies revealed, "if improvement projects are to function in a satisfactory way, the provisions of the MoE regulating time allocation per teaching content, time on task and teaching practice have to be at least relaxed" (ib:245). The processes (increase in teachers’ school-time, partial freedom from the content/task allocation provided for by the national curriculum, existence of multiple sources of information would allow for more purposeful teaching (ib:246).

10. Engendering a culture in support of educational improvement

The information concerning engendering a culture in support of ESI was the statement expressed by the Greek Ministry of Education which could be regarded as a gesture or a kind of public call towards changing the "old-fashioned" current situation, structure and culture in Greek schools. Another strategy used by the initiators of the school improvement programs was vision sharing. "A prerequisite for the participation in the programs was that teachers accepted the goals set by the design of the program. Only schools that were able and willing to do so would participate in the programs. To ensure this, each participating school had to submit a written declaration stating that at least 2/3 of the staff had accepted the participation of the school in the project (ib: 224). This has created, to a certain extent, a shared vision among participating teachers

2 16 to 24 hours per week according to years of employment.
concerning the implementation of the program and facilitated their collaboration for the achievement of the goals of the program (ib: 243). In the respect of engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, the selected quotes below show, to a certain degree, how SI programs have influenced the school climate, the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and practices of the school principals, teachers and students. Moreover, they show how they have strengthened school co-operation with parents and local communities.

Indirectly, this particular program introduced three kinds of change (ib: 235): 1. It changed the educational practice in schools. This change was effected by the reorganization of the school premises, the creation of classrooms that would address the teaching of particular subjects and the use of classrooms as laboratories where the subjects would be taught with the help of PC's. For example, it made certain teachers incorporate in their teaching practice the use of scientific equipment. Such changes “increased the satisfaction teachers derived from their practice and raised the interest of the pupils in the subjects taught” (teacher’s comment). 2. The teachers had to collaborate as a group and reach an agreement concerning the scheduling of the use of particular classrooms. 3. The program also “altered completely the role of the Principal” (Principal’s comment). He became the mediator with the local community. All the equipment had to be purchased by the school authorities from local providers. The Principal managed the purchase and contributed to connecting the school to the community (ib: 235).

The 3rd case study stated (ib: 240): 1. (The multicultural program) changed the educational practice in the schools, using experimental methods for teaching subjects such as Literature, History and Geography. The program changed the teachers' perspective towards teaching the particular modules. “They gained from their experience in teaching multi-culturally” (teacher’s comment). 2. The program effected changes in teachers’ attitudes towards certain social issues. One Geography teacher for example admitted that before his participation in the program he was feeling almost hostile towards foreign pupils, blaming them for the poor educational achievements of the whole school. At the end of the program he stated that he was ashamed for his former attitude. 3. The program changed the pupil's attitudes towards their differently originated fellow pupils. The program managed to bring closer together pupils originating from different cultures and countries (ib:240).

The analysis of the two Italian case studies

1. National Goal setting in terms of student outcomes
Some information is available about national curriculum reforms, which may indirectly reflect national goal setting in terms of student outcomes.

"(After the 1996 reform) Curriculum will be organized on two levels, on the basis of the competencies commissioned to central power (the ministry) and to the schools. The Ministry defines:

* The general goals of education;
* The specific learning objectives linked to pupils' competencies;
* The disciplines and the activities that constitute the part of the curriculum established at national level;
* The compulsory amount of time of curriculum for every year;
* The quality standard of educational supply;
* The general guidelines for students evaluation, the debit and credits certification" (D’Arcangeli, M. et al., 2000: 280).

The most important innovations introduced by the reform of 1990 are:
* The week schedule changes, from total 24 hours to total 30 hours of teaching activities;
* The study of a foreign language is introduced (before the reform a foreign language was taught only in secondary school);
* Teaching activity is organized on the ground of a modular structure, in which it is not yet provided for a teacher each class, but for three teachers each two classes (or, where this is not possible, four teachers each four classes)

"At the moment (2000), the SNQI (the National System for the Quality of Education) is accomplishing the definitions of instruments to survey the school achievement in subjects (literature, history, foreign language, mathematics, and so on." (ib:281).

These new standards intended to change and to update the old national curriculum, particularly the traditional assessment and evaluation system in Italy which left the choice of using achievement tests to the willingness of the teachers. None national assessment and evaluation service was provided until 1996 (ib:275).
As in the other countries, national goal setting in terms of student outcomes in Italy was mainly reflected in its national curriculum, which contained the goals of education, specific objectives, time, quality standards and general guidelines.

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement
In Italy, national goal setting in terms of school improvement was mainly reflected in the SI projects initiated by the Italian central government. The Italian case studies have revealed:

- Italian primary schools were reformed in 1985 and 1990 (the implementation of this reform started up in the nineties). The reform of primary school introduced several organizational and instructional changes. The main ones were the adoption of the concept of curriculum design and the organizational model of teaching activity which introduced more flexible grouping procedures (ib: 273-274).

- "Improvement perspective related to the introduction of new patterns and approaches of schooling in the old organizational structures (teamwork, active and co-operative learning, new technological supports and tools, audio-visual instruments, new evaluation/assessment issues etc.). The most relevant project of this kind (Ministry initiative) has been the one aimed to introduce in each school computer equipment useful to organize a computer lab (from 1995 still today, especially in low secondary schools)" (ib: 278).

- "The schools which attain low results in terms of process and product quality will be supplied with improvement programs, aimed at solving the troubles that determined the low results" (ib: 281).

- "One of the most important issues of the reform (1996 reform) is the role of the school achievement and school quality survey system. The regulations for school autonomy state that the ministry promotes recurrent surveys of school quality meant both as products and processes" (ib: 281).

3. Strong central steering and empowering ESI
Since 1996 "Italian school system is involved in an overall reform process" (ib: 279). As one of the effective strategies used to centrally steer and to empower ESI:

- "The Italian Government undertakes to accomplish the school system reform in 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 the 24th of June 1997, law n. 196" (ib: 278).

Apart from this, more autonomy was offered to schools including autonomy with respect to organization, instruction, research, development and network building, accompanied by the introduction of assessment instruments to centrally steer and to empower the reform. Among other examples is primary school reform in Italy. According to D'Arcangeli et al (2000: 289), the primary school reforms aimed to satisfy two main requirements: to create the organizational framework necessary for the effective application of new national curricula established in 1985 and to generalize the significant and new educational experiences accomplished during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, it was the first time in its history that a central device (monitoring system) was introduced, aiming to verify the effectiveness of the introduced innovations and to carry out adaptations. The other empowerment mentioned in the case studies were:

The traditional structure of Italian school system became to be taken apart since 1997, when the Parliament approved the law to reform of Public administration, the main elements of empowerment are: the educational supply plan..., instructional autonomy, organizational autonomy, research, experimentation, and development autonomy and schools network (D' Arcangeli, M. et al., 2000: 279)

- "A National Committee acted as steering organization, by means of national seminars (September 1997; March 1998; September 1998), which were attended by members of the schools involved. In these seminars the participants and the National Committee dealt with the most important issues and the difficulties of the project" (ib: 286)

(The 2nd case study) "A Technical Committee was entrusted (by the central government) with the task to monitor the reform. In this Committee were present also representatives of teachers professional associations, trade unions and associations of students' parents. The monitoring started in 1991 and the first general results were presented and published in 1995. Main sources and tools for monitoring were: a school questionnaire, used for the analysis of educational and organizational choices of each single school; inquiries on samples of schools realized by ministry inspectors about real implementation of new curricula, quality and effectiveness of new organizational model, perception of value of innovations by teachers; a large survey realized by CENSIS (a public Institute for research and statistics) on last class students' achievement in language and math" (ib: 291).

Apart from the quotations above, the Ministry and the regional levels have also initiated some ESI programs. For example, since 1994 a new syllabus has been introduced into the secondary schools to ensuring each citizen a compulsory education for ten years (two years longer than before). Only in the last three years of the secondary education, are students required to choose between different curricular tracks (ib:277).
4. **External evaluation and external agents**  
Some information was available in the function of external evaluation and external agents in the two Italian case studies:  

The main concepts about evaluation in Italian school laws are "systematic observation" and "exam". However, at every school level, the choices about evaluative procedures are left to teachers. The teacher or the teacher's team defines the instructional method and the evaluation procedures without any rules or control from higher or external authorities" (ib: 273).  

(The 1st case study) All the schools in the pilot study decided to 'use a critical friend in order to carry out diagnostic/improvement actions. The role and presence of this figure varied a great deal in work groups' activities. In school contexts where the function of the critical friend was useful and satisfactory, his/her activity was mainly constituted by observation and mentoring, aimed at stimulating the diagnosis of problems and finding strategies to solve. In some schools the presence of the critical friend was not particularly influential, above all for the lack of continuity in his/her activity (ib: 288).  

"The European Center of Education (CEDE) carried out a continued guidance and counseling to the schools involved during the program realization and the external evaluation" (ib: 284).

5. **Market mechanism**  
No information was available regarding market mechanism in the two Italian case studies.

6. **School accountability**  
No information was available about school accountability in the two Italian case studies.

7. **Adequacy time, financial and human resource support**  
The available information regarding the adequate time, financial and human resource support for ESI obtained from the Italian case studies are as the following:  

"All the participating schools in the pilot project were unable to accomplish completely the foreseen project tasks in time" (D’Arcangeli, M. et al., 2000: 289).

"The ones (teachers and staff) who take part in the programs are awarded with an extra fee " (ib: 294).

"The schools, which doesn't attain the goals and objectives stated at national level, are supported with a wide range of improvement initiatives. The SNQI and the Ministry have to help the school staff to identify the causes of the problem and to support improvement actions. These actions can be funded by the Ministry, the European Community, and other private sponsors (traders, manufacturers, associations, foundations, etc.)" (ib: 282).

The above quotations indicate that, financially speaking, the Italian government has funded the Italian ESI programs and extra fee was awarded to those teachers who participated in the ESI programs.

"The CEDE supported the project implementation by means of two consultants who, besides monitoring pilot project development at a national level, essentially played a facilitator role and acted with varying degrees of involvement, depending on local school situations. Another important dimension of external support was the dialogue and the exchange between the schools involved in the project, guided and stimulated by the CEDE consultant" (ib: 288).

8. **The local support**  
Limited information is available with respect to local support. The only available evidence is the following paragraphs:

"One of the most relevant points of the Italian school system reform is the integration of educational resources (family, training organizations, associations, churches, sports clubs, music schools, etc.) and participation of local community (parents, local authorities, enterprises, trade unions, associations) “ (ib: 295).

"A school organized a conference to introduce the project to the Mayor and other town authorities, representatives from cultural associations of the area, and students’ families” (ib: 287).

Other information gleaned from the Eurydice was: in Italy, the region assumed responsibility for the planning of educational provision within their area, drawing up the school timetable and support to private schools, etc. At primary and lower secondary level, municipalities became responsible for setting up or closing schools, the way the school system was organized, support for pupils with special needs and plans for the use of buildings and other facilities (Eurydice, 2000: 347).

9. **Offering schools some autonomy**  
In Italy "in 1974, schools were granted administrative autonomy for expenditure on administrative and teaching activity" (ib:342-343). "In 1993, the law granted legal status to all schools, along with autonomy
in administrative, financial and educational matters, as well as research and development (ib: 345). This law came into effect in the year 1997. The autonomy offered to the Italian schools included:

**Instructional autonomy**
Every school can organize the school time in a flexible way. The Government states the year hour for each subject. The schools can flexibly manage this time consistently with the need and the features of their students and the choices of the teachers.

**Organizational autonomy**
Schools can choose any organizational structure coherent with their educational goals as long as allowed by labor regulations.

**Research, experimentation, and development autonomy**
The schools can carry out research about evaluation/assessment, social and cultural context features and educational need, instructional experimentation (especially by means of new technologies), integration with other educational and institutional subjects.

**Schools network autonomy**
Schools can pool and make school net, to enhance the quality, the effectiveness and the efficiency of their educational supply. (D’Arcangeli, M. et al., 2000: 279)

10. **Engendering a culture in support of ESI**
At the national contextual level, engendering a culture in support of ESI in Italy was reflected in the 1996 reform which involved most labor unions and the associations of employers in Italy requiring them to sign an agreement committing them to accomplishing reform of the educational system and further to formalize this agreement in laws approved by the parliament in 1997. In fact, this comprised the vision building and vision sharing process for school improvement and educational reforms. At the school level, engendering a culture in support of ESI was mentioned in the case studies:

"The ‘cultural’ conflict was harder in some schools where, while analyzing 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”. To this must be added the emotional value linked of the term ‘evaluation’, which can be perceived as something threatening, intruding, although it was clear the autonomy in managing the evaluation instruments and the role of methodological support played by the external agents" (ib: 289).

"The schools in which the dominant culture is widespread and accepted between teachers and students, and is based on values like co-operation, willingness to take risks and to ‘experiment and evaluate’, the project did not create problems" (ib: 289).

As seen above, engendering a culture in support of ESI was vitally important for the success of the ESI programs, especially in those schools where the dominant culture was anti-cooperation and anti-external evaluation.

### The analysis of the two Portuguese case studies

1. **National Goal setting in terms of student outcomes**
Regarding national goal setting in terms of student outcomes, no information was available directly from the case studies, however, we found some information from some other resources. According to Lopes da Silva (2002), the assessment is regulated nationally and uses formative and summative methods. Formative assessment is based on data collected by the teacher and is used to assess student needs and inform parents. At the end of the third stage (last year of compulsory schooling), students must pass a test whose subjects comprise all third stage curricular subjects.

"The academic curricula for Secondary Education are determined at national level with a clear definition of the educational objectives, contents and students profile at the end of the 12 grade. The mainly prescriptive nature of the curricula (national syllabi for each grade and subject matter) accommodates with a highly centralized system" (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 355).

"A discrete scale from 0-20 points is used in secondary schools while 0-5 points scale is used in primary schools. Normally, the marks consist of 2 parts: a. given by the teacher of each subject; b. given by the final test designed at the school level. The students at the last year (12th) must pass the national exams" (ib: 356).

"(The secondary education) At the end of the 12th grade, they must pass a national exam to which the school admits them only if they have a mark given that is 10. The final mark combines (with different weights) the mark given by the school (internal assessment) and the mark obtained in the national exam (external assessment)" (ib: 356).

2. **National goal setting in terms of school improvement**
The information available concerning national goal setting in terms of school improvement in the Portuguese case studies and in other resources is as follows:

“1986 is the landmark for "Comprehensive Law". In 1989, establishing a general framework for curricula in Basic and Secondary Education gave rise to "curriculum reform" in 1991… In 1993/94, a new Mathematics syllabus for Secondary Education was generalized… This reform was supplemented by a reform in the assessment systems in basic and secondary education and by a reform in school governance and management that is now being implemented” (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 355).

The Observatory of School's Quality is inspired by Scheerens' integrated model of performance indicators. From a first experience using the 50 performance indicators in 12 schools it was possible to build the model used in the Program Education for All (Clímaco, 1992). These indicators are organized around four descriptive and evaluative dimensions:

1. Pupils background 
2. Educational resources 
3. Stimulating school context 
4. Educational outcomes

It provides schools with a guidebook presenting an overview of the monitoring process to be used, introducing the issues of self-evaluation... These procedures allow establishing a common language among schools and ensuring the validity of comparisons within and among schools (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000. pp. 369-370).

The negative effect of the adjusted syllabus has also been mentioned in the case studies. Some evidences show that the adjusted syllabus has a double discriminatory effect in students' achievement (ib: 365).

3. Strong central steering and empowering ESI

For the purpose of central steering and empowering the curriculum reforms and school improvement, the Department of Secondary Education in Portugal appointed a team to introduce some adjustments in the (mathematics) syllabus. This team worked closely with a National Committee involving representatives of scientific associations such as the Mathematics Teachers Association, the Portuguese Mathematics Association and the Department of Basic Education (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 356). To foster the implementation of the prescribed syllabus the Department of Secondary Education launched a national program involving mathematics teachers who were in charge of the classes where the syllabus was implemented (ib: 357). Moreover, it also designed supportive strategies. "Among the support strategies, teachers consider the methodological guidelines and the thematic brochures as being useful because they were clear, easy to look up and appropriate to the contents" (ib: 363). Special financial grants were offered to those schools that were carrying on the reform programs. In the 1990s, the intervention of the MoE also entailed a cash grant. However, only schools that belonged to the foregoing programs could obtain these specific grants (Eurydice, 2000: 362).

To empower educational reforms and ESI, the Portugal government has embodied in legislation (Act number 11-A/98) that the school organizational structure must follow the norms below (Lopes da Silva et al., 2000: 360):

* A School Assembly elected by universal and direct vote, where teachers, parents, students, staff, local authority and community take part. As its main objective this organization has to approve the internal regulations, the school policy and the school development plans
* An Executive Board (elected by the schoolteachers and formed by three teachers), which is in charge of implementing the school development plan.
* A Pedagogical Board (formed by the different heads of curricula departments, students and parents) which defines the school performance lines.
* An Administrative Board which is responsible for administrative and financial management.

When comparing the pressure from national exams and the pressure of school improvement, the case studies say: “it is possible to say that facing the dilemma of using more participant strategies vs. covering all the content areas, teachers seem to choose the latter. As a matter of fact, they seem to feel the pressure of the national exam at the end of secondary education, and they also experienced the difficulty of working according to the methodological guidelines proposed by the syllabus” (ib: 361). Attention needs to be paid to steering and empowering the teachers involved. If "there were no professional benefit to the teachers involved in the ESI program and no consequences either positively or negatively in their professional career, they felt free to participate in or not" (ib: 371). The impact of strong central steering and empowering ESI was hereby greatly diminished.

4. External evaluation and external agents

The information available concerning the external agents who supported ESI programs was controversial. The authors of the Portuguese case studies declared that "there is no influence from external agents due to fact that teachers didn’t accept the role and action of these agents" (Lopes da Silva et al., 2000: 366). At
another place, the case study argued that "the interviewed teachers mentioned also the role of external agents from local educational services, in the introducing of these strategies" (ib: 376).

5. Market mechanisms
The information available derived from the two Portuguese case studies is as follows:
Parents in Portugal had to enroll their child in the school closest to their residence or workplace in the public sector (ib: 360). Due to the decrease of birth rate these schools are also loosing population and compete in attracting the 3rd cycle pupils that can follow the secondary education there (ib: 372).

6. School accountability
School accountability was mentioned once in the two Portuguese case studies:
School reports at the end of the year include the data gathered on different dimensions and a reflective review of the process and the evaluation of the school performance. This review is intended to allow internal and external school accountability and become a base to define improvement strategies (Climaco & Araújo, 1995).

7. Adequate time, financial and human resource support for ESI
The information from the Portuguese two case studies shows that there was some financial and human resource support for ESI from the national contextual level.
"The accepted schools receive extra funding and benefit from training and counseling. They are also required to use the Observatory of School's Quality and to present an annual report reviewing the information gathered" (ib: 368).

"The national support system aiming to help teachers implementing the adjusted syllabus included five main support strategies (ib: 357):
1. A teachers' training program – to train some Mathematics teachers to become peer tutors of local groups of teachers.
2. A local guidance system where the teachers initially trained meet regularly with local groups of teachers… These local tutors were also in charge of informing the National Committee of the difficulties faced by the teachers. For the teachers of the same school can attend these meetings, schools were required to find a common free period of time in teachers' timetables.
3. Editing support documents, such as Brochures dealing with specific contents or with strategies for Mathematics teaching so as to help teachers to organize the syllabus differently.
4. The possibility to deploy classes, once a week.
5. An Internet site and a newsletter "InforMat" to encourage teachers to interact and communicate each other" (ib: 357).
Concerning the adequate time, financial and human resource support for ESI, a lack of time was mentioned in the case studies (ib:361). "The changes on the teaching process and on students' achievement will become more visible in a long term when teachers became more familiar with the new practice" (ib: 362). The other support such as teacher training and counseling for the programs was mainly performed at the local level (see more below).

8. Local Support
The 1st case study stated "the local guidance allowed the study of the syllabus, the planning of didactic units and the exchange of teachers' practices" (ib: 363). The 2nd case study declared "the change processes have had some support: the supervision of regional educational services and the counseling role-played by the special education teachers" (ib: 371). More details about the partnership collaborations with the local community appear below (ib: 374):
Local Health Center - The Program Education for All stresses the importance of co-operation between schools and Local Health Centers. The doctor comes once a week to the school and a closer collaboration has been developed between both services.
Parents Association - An initiative from school parents association allowed having the funds, to pay a psychologist and a social worker in charge of a closer liaison with the families.
Local Authority - The Local Authority has implemented a program "Young Volunteers for Solidarity" from which the school asked some to be engaged in giving extra help. Six of these young people have been placed in the school. Each one gives 2 or 3 hours per week and their job is to organize activities with small groups of pupils, including games in the playground, or whatever makes school more attractive for them.
Local Employment Center - This center that manages the national program for the temporarily unemployed, placed in the school two extra assistants: one of them is helping the school psychologist and the other works in collaboration with the Health Center to help the families in coping with health
problems. The Local Employment Center is also co-operating with school in helping the pupil's finishing school to find professional training.

Other local services - In order to solve pupils' social problems the school arranges regular meetings among different local services: local authority, other schools, police forces and health center (Lopes da Silva et al., 2000: 374).

The interviewed teachers mentioned also the role of agents from local educational services in the introducing of these strategies (ib: 376).

Apart from the case studies, additional information derived from the Eurydice report and the information written by Lopes da Silva (2002) has unfolded that in mainland Portugal the five Direccoes Regionais de Educacao (DRE) carry out, at regional level, the tasks of 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, and supervising school physical education and sports. Moreover, the financial contribution of local authorities has represented an addition to the (national) budget (Eurydice, 2000: 362).

9. Offering school some autonomy

Previously, the Portuguese system was highly centralized. Currently attempts have been made to give schools more autonomy, including financial autonomy, the autonomy in adjusting national curriculum and prescriptions, and the autonomy in electing school leaders.

Schools, however, have some freedom to adjust national prescriptions to their contexts and needs, establishing a school policy for at least three years - “school project” - that is to be implemented on annual development school plans (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 356).

Until very recently school leaders were elected only by teachers (ib: 376).

In 1988, schools authorized to collect funds and manage them, which had previously been impossible. This revenue was used for school maintenance and upkeep (Eurydice, 2000: 361).

Looking at the two case studies, we found that although the national curriculum and the syllabus for each subject were highly centralized and prescriptive in Portugal, teachers had too much autonomy in applying the curriculum and in carrying out the national syllabus. The case studies described:

Teachers are aware that at the school level all the facility needed to the development of all the syllabus suggestions has been implemented, but they felt totally free to use them or not (ib: 362).

Teachers have only participated in some of the initial meetings and have later on abandoned. There were no professional benefits to teachers involved in the program that has no consequences either positive or negative in their professional careers. So they felt free to participate or not (ib: 363).

There is no tradition of team working among teachers and even less of communication among different curriculum departments organized by disciplines. Teachers are totally free to decide whether to use the new curricula or not. No control and no evaluation” (ib: 362-376).

"A factor limiting the functioning of ESI programs and rendering the development of a common purpose and shared vision among the school staff practically impossible is related to teachers’ terms of employment. Public School teachers’ terms of employment formulate a climate not conducive to the improvement of teaching practice or the creation of a shared vision as motivation is lacking" (ib: 244).

"There are, however, no efforts for improving teaching and learning in the classroom. We have debated this issue with the interviewed teachers whose comments pointed difficulties that have their origin in the educational system and the processes of leadership in school organization. Until very recently school leaders were elected only by teachers. Even the election procedures have changed recently the influence of school leaders in the classroom processes is limited by a heavy resistance from the teachers who are used to be totally free in their classrooms. The procedures in use for teachers' placement, teachers' advancement in their career or other rewards of teaching performance do not also facilitate the role of school leaders in these matters" (ib: 376).

Therefore, Lopes da Silva et al concluded, “in Portugal, the Ministry of education centrally places teachers, so schools don't have the capacity to engage teachers or to keep them if they want to move. In general, teachers' mobility is considered as hindering the continuity of development plans, and as a severe limitation to carry on a sustained improvement” (de Silva et al., 2000: 372).

10. Engendering a culture in support of ESI

The Portuguese government had established some new laws, new educational goals and policies, which were in favor of educational reforms and school improvement. The most important ones were the 1986 Comprehensive Law and the 1989 Act which established a framework for curricula in basic and secondary
education and the Act NR 98-A/92 which reformed the assessment systems of the pupils in basic and secondary education. However, the gap between the national culture and school culture had been mentioned in the 1st case study:

This support program launched by a central education department was a top-down initiative whose implementation was oriented to a common culture of secondary teachers and not really taken care of the diversity of school cultures. Teachers felt more controlled than empowered by this strategy (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 363).

With respect to engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, a lack of a co-operative and improvement-oriented school culture was revealed in the two case studies.

Teachers don’t see themselves as part of an organization; they focus their work in the classroom. There is some interaction at the level of their subject-matter department… but they don’t see the need to involve the school as a whole. Even if there was some improvement it is within the mathematics Department and is not to be shared in the school (Lopes da Silva, et al., 2000: 363).

The efforts to change this situation were made, particularly in shaping new visions, new routines and new practice for helping students (e.g. the “support room”), for strengthening relationship with local primary schools (e.g. opening the secondary school library to them) and for shaping a self-evaluated school culture.

In order to support all pupils' learning the school has organized a "support room" where they can find different sorts of studying materials. This room is open during the school day and there is always a teacher to help pupils to do homework and research work (ib: 375).

In order to prevent dropouts in the transition from primary to lower secondary education, i.e., from 1st to 2nd cycle, the school developed some strategies that aim to establish closer relationships with the local four primary schools where the pupils came from. These relationships have two main components: meetings for teachers and activities for pupils of both schools (ib: 373). To open the lower secondary school library and resource center to all teachers and pupils from primary schools (ib: 375).

In the 1st case study, the interest shown by the school Executive Board in collecting and in treating the data on students achievement and on schools' involvement for self-evaluation indicated the potential for engendering a school culture with self-evaluation.

Analysis of the Spanish case studies

1. National goal setting in terms of student outcomes

With respect to national goal setting for education, in the 2nd, the 3rd and the 5th case study and from other resources as well, the following have been mentioned which give us clues to the existence of unified standards/goals in each subject in terms of ultimate student outcomes.

“The most significant result has been that the percentage of the pupils achieving the Secondary Education Certificate has increased to slightly higher than the national average” (ib: 429).

“The minimum core curriculum is determined at the State Level. The Autonomous Communities establish their own curriculum based on the State minimum core curriculum and schools develop and adapt the curriculum to their own context” (Hofman, et al., 2002: 48).

“Concerning textbooks, there is no need for approval from any educational authority. Every subject area department is responsible for the choice of its textbooks. There is no national or regional system of testing. The minimum core curriculum includes basic guidelines for assessment, which is an integral part of the curriculum and must be global and continuous. While in primary education, the form teacher is responsible for decisions on promotion, in lower secondary, all the pupil’s teachers have to decide on promotion collectively” (ib: 48).

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement

With respect to national goal setting for 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 proposed and developed both of them (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., 2000: 379, 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 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). 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 introduction of PAM and LOGSE has been done in Chapter 4 (4.7), in order to avoid repetition, we are not going to repeat them.
3. **Strong centrally steering and empowering ESI**

Regarding the factor centrally steering and empowering ESI, the financial empowerment was evident thus.

"The MEC will award 1,000,000 pesetas to the educational centers which have developed the best improvement programs for a school year" (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., 2000: 387).

These initiatives stem directly from the center which results in a kind of pressure and competition for schools since the selected well-developed PAM programs will be published and rewarded by the MEC. The PAM can be seen as a centrally stimulus for school change and school development, and an external pressure exercised upon the schools for change as well (ib: 435). Apart from pressure and funding, central support can be evidenced as well. As the 2nd case states:

"By joining the call of PAM it has been possible to systematize the program and to receive the award given by the Ministry in recognition of the quality of the Plan developed, which has given some publicity to the initiative and to the work carried out by the school" (ib: 413).

"The improvement program (LOGSE) has introduced various organizational changes at school. (New cycle distribution, deeper co-ordination among teachers, agreed minimum goals and contents, agreements on the methodology and use of the resources…). Moreover, it implied new modifications, which fitted in with the school's objectives and principles, such as some changes in methodology and evaluation. Therefore, this Educational Reform is not seen as an imposition but as an opportunity to institutionalize teachers' efforts and way of working" (ib: 405).

4. **External evaluation and external agents**

The two external agencies which have more impact on the case studies are the National Institute for Quality and Evaluation (INCE) and the Educational Inspectorate Service of the Ministry.

In the last few years the evaluation is getting a special importance as an important factor for the quality of education. In 1990 the INCE was created by the MEC to carry out the educational system evaluation in the whole country" (ib: 381).

The Educational Inspectorate Services of the Ministry have played a core role in the five case studies.

"The Inspectors reoriented the school needs in a positive way and encouraged both the Management Team and the Teachers' Assembly to join the PAM. This initial support was crucial for the success of the improvement process. The Inspector was also in charge of carrying out the external evaluation at the end of the first year, and helped make the whole process easier by allowing some flexibility in the organization of the school" (Muñoz-Repiso, et al., p. 395).

"When each school developed PAM program finished, they (Inspectors) carried out a global evaluation of the results achieved and followed up the sessions closely, by means of both observing activities in every classroom and meeting with the school’s teaching staff" (ib: 420).

"There have been two external agents involved positively valued by schoolteachers: the Educational Inspectorate and the Center for Teachers and Resources. The Inspectors has offered a stable relationship of support for the program development, assessing and carrying out the monitoring of the program. The collaboration of the Center for Teachers and Resources has been more occasional, based on economical resources, support seminars" (ib: 395).

What we found was that the functions of the external agents were more associated with support than pressure.

5. **Market mechanisms**

According to the Spanish case studies:

Since "there are not enough places in most of the schools that is the reason in Spain there is not any competitiveness culture among schools. Real freedom of choice has traditionally been very reduced and school did not have to worry about recruiting pupils" (ib: 381).

"The birth-rate decrease has promoted the use of marketing strategies by the schools, so that they can fill their vacancies. Competitiveness is higher in both private and urban schools, and very strong in some concrete situations" (ib: 381).

6. **School accountability**

There was no information available in school accountability in Spanish case studies.

7. **Adequate time and financial and human resources**

There is some information about financial and human resources support in the five Spanish case studies. The 1 million pesetas awarded to each well-developed PAM program comprised special financial encouragement for effective school improvement in Spain. The 2nd case study states "thanks to the economic resources obtained from the Educational Administration for the quality of the plan developed, this "travelling library" has meant a new impulse to the reading program". Similar statements can be found in the 4th case study, "counseling and resources given by the external change agents have favored the
development of the improvement program. Their support has contributed to the success of the initiative” (ib: 423). The Spanish case studies also mentioned the influence of the external counselors and the other external agents, the 2nd case study described how the external counselor played his role for PAM:

“Every center for teachers has a different number of primary and secondary schools assigned to it, providing schools with their support, both for professional development and for resources or counseling in order to carry out innovations or improvement initiatives” (ib: 382).

“It was undoubtedly the external counselor the one who played an important role in the plan. He was the one who suggested the starting point for the program and also contributed with the materials he had already elaborated. He was the guide of the process and carried out the counseling to the teachers on materials revision and on agreement of goals and contents for each cycle. He also took part in the elaboration of some of the tests which are internally used for the evaluation of the achievement in mathematics” (ib: 404). “Teachers consider that it is not possible to understand the program without the proposals and contributions of the external counselor” (ib: 405).

In short, the support from the external agents varied and there was considerable overlap in the five case studies. However, lack of time has been repeatedly mentioned in the Spanish case studies. “It is necessary to point out the scarce availability of time as a factor that, to a certain degree, has posed many difficulties for carrying out the improvement process. The different collectives involved in the program consider that this limitation has always been present (and it still is)” (ib: 405).

8. Local support
In Spain, “the Autonomous Communities expand the state standards, exercise both the executive-administration and the full educational responsibilities” (ib: 380).

“The Federation of Ikastolas 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 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 those of the years before. On the other hand, the Federation of Ikastolas also searches for outstanding results at each area” (ib: 401).

9. Offering schools some autonomy
The five case studies show a different picture from the EC information that there is considerable autonomy in choosing teaching methods, in deciding teaching time and the number of hours devoted to each subject, even in choosing textbooks and teaching materials, in electing or dismissing school principals, etc. For instance, in the 2nd case study,

“The cross-curricular character of the program meant the reorganizing both the timetables of teachers and pupils” (ib: 409).

Every four years, the school principal must be elected by the School Council which is composed of representatives of teachers, parents and, in secondary schools, students. 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 common teachers and who will be so after four years, thus he/she may not be too "tough" to use the necessary power to develop the change process (ib: 435).

The differences between what we found in the literature and what we found in the case studies raises the questions: did such autonomy in the five case studies exist in all Spanish schools? Or was it simply because LOGSE and PAM offer the experimental schools more autonomy?

10. Engendering a culture in support of ESI
Regarding engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, the 1st case study evidenced:

“An important change was made in the teaching cooperation, teachers' teamwork became more frequent. Teachers meetings are more useful now, and the school timetables are reorganized. The teachers think that they have developed a highly positive common culture that enables them to take responsibilities in a collective way” (ib: 401).

Students show a positive attitude towards the reading sessions and have increased their motivation, specially the underprivileged pupils. Besides that, the whole teaching staff is still involved in this project which nowadays is established as part of the school's culture” (ib: 415 & 421).

The LOGSE has influenced ESI case studies through the form of legislation law to implement the reformed national curriculum, thus it means "not just the reorganization of the educational levels but setting up new teaching ways and principles as well” (ib: 397). It creates the new vision and brings about new values as well.
The analysis of the 10 English case studies

1. National goal setting in terms of student outcomes

The information on the Internet (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/education/uk_systems/) indicates that the UK government set specified increased academic points for each subject targets. Schools had to set their goals in accordance with these national goals.

(The 1st case study) The standards of attainment in English of this school in the national tests in the years of 1996 were 57%, 1997 (63%) and 1998 (64%) respectively … The rate of passing the national test Level 2 and above in Speaking and Listening of this school was 82% in the year 1997 and 83% in the year 1998. The rate of passing the national test for Reading was 80% in 1997 and 81% in 1998. (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 55-56).

(The 8th case study) “Over the past three years the average total GCSE points score obtained by pupils at the school is broadly in line with the national average. In the last four years the score per pupil shows a rising trend in line with those nationally… Test results at the end of KS3 have improved in English, mathematics and in science. …There has been a significant increase in success at A level and in the resulting GCSE point scores since the last inspection (ib: 133). Teachers interviewed who were not part of the IQEA group commented that they felt that the students were being pushed to achieve more A*-C grades. They expressed some concern that the focus was too heavily on examination results, and that the message being given by the school seemed to be that anything less than a C was a failure” (ib: 136).

The target setting in the 10th case study clearly linked the school's specific achievement targets to those of the national government. The 6th case study shows how its school improvement programs goals coincided with the national goals/targets (the words, which appear in bold print, are national goals for primary education) in terms of student outcomes (ib: 118):

• To further develop research information; baseline testing and target setting;
• To monitor effectiveness of literacy/language project;
• Hopeful continuation of National Literacy Project - to increase pupil confidence and competence in the handling of non-fiction texts and teacher confidence in this;
• Reading club - to improve reading status for all children; and
• To review success of numeracy policy (ib: 118).

In the 9th case study, three out of the eight School Development Plan priority areas are coherent with the national education goals. They were (ib: 146):

• continuing the drive to raise achievement by focusing on Key Stage 3 strategies;
• improving standards of literacy and numeracy;
• expanding ICT provision; … (ib: 146)

"Target setting has also been a feature of the school development and recent government policy" (ib: 101).

The below quotations from the case studies give us a portrait of this feature:

(The 2nd case study) "Assessment, acknowledged the head teacher, was also essential for school improvement, to establish benchmarks and evaluate progress. The teachers used a variety of nationally available assessments to inform their work: SATs, QCA tests, Literacy and Numeracy Project tests, as well as those available from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)" (ib: 75).

(The 3rd case study) "Lesson planning and evaluation also integrated with the school development plan cycle. Targets and lesson objectives were shared with pupils, including with the targeted children on the SIP project… (ib: 81-82).

(The 4th case study) Success criteria must be measurable where possible and targets must be SMART… Monitoring was evident as a key process at many different levels (ib: 96).

(The 9th case study) “The head teacher indicated that staff checked constantly to see that what was being done was making a difference. Monitoring took the form of reviewing the results of Key Stage 3 SATs and GCSEs, staff and student questionnaires, and discussions with departments and staff. In their survey responses, 94 per cent of the teachers reported that teachers made use of Key Stage and examination results in their planning, and 88 per cent agreed that data about pupils’ achievements was used to help target areas for improvement” (ib: 149).

Some discouraging opinions about the national curriculum have also been mentioned.

“Teachers expressed a degree of frustration with what they felt was the restrictive nature of the national curriculum. This was manifested in serious concerns on the part of many of the teachers interviewed. They were 'much stress, pressure, and resentment' because they felt that they could not do

3 An acronym popularized in teacher appraisal training, but used in development planning: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time constrained.
what they believed their students needed but had to cover the curriculum, whether or not it was appropriate for their students. Teachers also reported that they felt some pressure to comply with government directives because they knew that the school would soon have another OFSTED inspection (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 129-130).

"Almost all of the respondents to the teacher survey (94%) reported that staff in the school was under a lot of pressure" (ib: 152). "There were too many initiatives but lack of cohesion" (ib: 64). "The teacher interviewed felt there were too many curriculum changes and that the curriculum was overcrowded" (ib: 140). The 9th case study mentioned "the teacher survey results showed that levels of trust in the school, relationships between staff, and staff enjoyment of working in the school had all declined in the last three years" (ib: 153).

2. National goal setting in terms of school improvement
In the 10 English case studies, national goal setting in terms of improvement was well mirrored in the LEA program and the IQEA program. Their impact on the ten case studies has been repeatedly mentioned. In addition, the influence of the other central initiatives has been mentioned as well. They (the staff) had also addressed national policy, working on literacy, numeracy and ICT for the past two years. The attention to monitoring, data collection and evaluation has had an impact on embedding the gains of these programs in the school (ib: 82-83).

The school had a thorough and detailed improvement plan, which covered all the areas of the curriculum, and also included New Outlooks (a LEA behavior initiative), assessment, SEN (special education needs), the library, business links, multicultural issues, and parental involvement. Each plan included details of what was intended over the next 3 years under the headings of target, plan of action, action by whom, time-scale, resource implications, staff development, success criteria and monitoring and evaluation (ib: 72).

From the quotes above, we can see that school improvement could be set up more specifically because of the information about student tests and the public accountability for pupil test results. (The 3rd case study) Twenty minutes was nominated for joint planning by teachers every week… Such extensive planning involved all the staff and familiarised them with the initiatives and new ideas, such as the SIP interventions, the national literacy and numeracy strategies. It also promoted a consistent approach, underpinned by other processes, such as moderation, lesson observation and so forth (ib: 81-82).

(The 2nd case study) The teachers, however, listed the following as external factors that they felt had influenced the improvements: the change in the demographics of the area, the National Curriculum, the National Literacy Hour, the new teachers who were hired as a result of the retirement of many of the more senior teachers and the posts created by the increase in student enrolment (ib: 65).

3. Strong centrally steering and empowering ESI
In the UK, strong centrally steering and empowering ESI mostly reflected on the following aspects through:
- Updating the National goals and Curriculum;
- Strictly applying the National Standardized Tests (at the ages of 7, 11, 14, 16);
- Publishing the League Tables in the national press;
- Implementing National Inspections (OFSTED);
- Carrying out accountabilities at all levels including performance related payment, legalizing the home-school contracts, rewards for outstanding head teachers and teachers, etc.
- Providing time, financial and human resource support

As for the first, the second and the third aspects, we have analysed them in the previous sections. Providing adequate time, financial and human resource support will be explored in Section 7. In this part, we focus on two aspects: the National Inspection and the accountabilities. According to Wikeley, et al (2000), the OFSTED process has concentrated the minds of all practitioners on external accountability measures and success criteria. The influence of the OFSTED inspections has been strongly evidenced in the English case studies.

(The 4th case study) "The trigger appears to have been the 1995 OFSTED inspection. This not only provided an audit for the new head teacher of improvement problems, but identified key issues which became the basis for the School Development Plan 1995-1998 and informs the continuing development as described in the school's Strategic Development Plan 1998-2001" (ib: 101).

(10th case study) As part of the school’s action plan in response to the 1997 OFSTED inspection, the school’s senior management team was reorganized… The OFSTED inspection did provide something of a focusing influence on the school. A number of the school’s improvement projects are directly related to the action plans developed in response to the OFSTED report (ib: 159-164).
Such a strong centrally steering and empowering school improvement has yielded pressures on schools, individual teachers and individual students. The case studies confessed:

(The 3rd case study) The survey indicated that teachers do feel under pressure. Pressure on staff and their hard work were mentioned in an open question inviting further comments about the school (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 89). (The 8th case study) These teachers suggested that results may have improved because of more revision by the students because of the pressure placed on them, or because the staff targeted individual students to raise their grades from a D grade to a C grade or higher… (ib: 139-140).

(The 10th case study) At the same time, some teachers recognized that the school’s roll was falling, the government was pushing for better results, and student results needed to be improved. This was the point at which the head teacher suggested that involvement in the University’s IQEA project might serve as a method of meeting some of these needs (ib: 138).

All these yielded substantial pressure on schools and teachers. The teachers in the case studies put it more bluntly, stating, "comparative performance tables (League Tables) and other benchmarking data, especially that which begins to compare 'similar' schools challenge us, they cannot be ignored." They also confessed that these kinds of data could be used as effective tools to convince school staff members of the need for change. The strong central steering and empowering ESI was not always unproblematic" (ib: 166).

Evidence in the case studies also uncovers central empowerment through rewards (e.g. the 3rd, the 5th, the 6th and the 7th case studies). The 3rd case study says that “the school has won many awards, for example: Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark for Primary Schools (1998), Investors in People (IIP) (1998), Aim High Award (1997), Business Partnership award for partnership with local Police Force and also with local company (1995 & 1996) and Awards for Environmental Education (1993)” (ib: 78). The highest reward to stimulate school leadership is "... the government's decision to give a knighthood to some head teachers" (ib: 119) and "Plato" and "Teacher Oscar" awards to outstanding teachers.

4. External evaluation and external agents

The below quote shows that how the external evaluation may trigger the school improvement.

(The 8th case study) A great deal of the pressure to bring about school improvement had come from the head teacher who informed staff that the school’s examination results (the percentage of A*-C grades) had to be improved. They stated that he then proceeded to put pressure on the staff and students to achieve this (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 139).

Concerning the external agents, the influence of the OFSTED has been discussed in the previous part. The influence of the LEA will be discussed in the Local Support part. To avoid repetition in this part, we focus on the influence of the IQEA on the English case studies.

(The 7th case study) IQEA had provided teachers with opportunities for personal and professional development, as well as with a chance to interact with others. It had given recognition to the expertise that existed within the school and had used the strengths of the staff... Many agreed that the IQEA project had: ‘provided a boost.’ The teachers interviewed stated that being involved in the IQEA initiative had provided opportunities for change and a focus for a systematic approach to staff development (ib: 128–129).

(The 8th case study) “The teachers indicated that they believed that involvement in the IQEA project was the next logical step after the quick fixes had taken effect. They felt they had reached a 'plateau' after those tactics. Involvement in IQEA was intended to lift them off the plateau. They pointed out that many initiatives in education have come and gone without making any difference, but they felt that the IQEA project was more likely to succeed because of its emphasis on teaching in the classroom” (ib: 137).

“During the school year 1998-9, two whole school INSET days were devoted to the IQEA initiative. The IQEA team led the staff day in July sharing its recommendations with all the staff so that they could be implemented in September 1999” (ib: 127).

A very special feature of the IQEA program was the “train the trainer” approach. The cadre group went to workshops and received training in order to train their colleagues. This approach seemed to work well. Teachers reported that involvement with the IQEA project promoted enthusiasm and mutual support. They saw it as excellent personal and professional development, and indicated that there was now more willingness amongst staff to talk about teaching issues. There was more sharing of ideas. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn a variety of teaching styles, such as, inductive teaching, STAD (student teams achievement division), and the jigsaw approach to co-operative learning (ib: 150-151). New methods were tried, feedback from the students was incorporated, as was other data, which was collected and analyzed, and modifications were made (ib:167). Teachers pointed to the fact that many staff members continue to use the new teaching strategies introduced, and that this would not have happened if teachers felt they were not working (ib:133).
5. Market mechanism

Information was available regarding market mechanisms and how it functioned in the English case studies. For instance,

(The 6th case study) "The school was built in 1978 to take the overflow from a neighboring school. Initially, parents were eager to have their children in the new school and the enrolment rose quickly, reaching about 850. Many of the students who were moved to other schools were the most able academically. When this happened, many of the parents whose children were still at the school, and who had high expectations for them, chose to move them to schools that were perceived as having more able students. As a consequence the enrolment decreased to a low of about 350" (ib: 145).

(The 4th case study) "Parental choice has changed significantly in this school over the last five years. The number of parents making the school their first choice has increased dramatically as the figures show from 73 in the year 1994 up to 187 in the year 1999. The head ruefully pointed out that when she first came appeals were heard for students not to be placed at this school, however in 1999 there were over 40 appeals for places heard by the LEA" (ib: 100-101).

(The 1st case) They noted that at the same time that the school’s reputation had improved, enrolment had increased. Increased enrolment had meant more funding, which in turn had meant more money for learning materials and building improvements. The school’s budget had increased from £576,313 in 1995-6 to £701,478 in 1998-9 (ib: 56-57).

Head teachers acknowledged the threat of failing OFSTED inspections. There was a concern about the consequent loss of reputation leading to parents choosing other schools (ib: 94).

Market mechanisms were not only reflected on parents’ choice of school but also on schools choosing their students. For instance, the 6th case study mentioned that the school selected the students by interview. From other sources, we know that all schools in the UK have a given number (laid down in 1988 on the basis of their physical capacity) used as a norm for student enrolment (Hofman et al., 2002: 34-39). In England, grammar schools and the "truly private schools" selected their students on the basis of their ability (as of January 2000, there were 162 grammar schools in England). They charged fees, which worked as a kind of selection mechanism controlling their school population.

(The 3rd case study) The school was full and had waiting lists for all 14 classes. There were 120 applications for 60 places for September 1999 (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 77). Parents interviewed were unanimous in having making this school their first choice. "Mine was 6 weeks old when I put their names down for here," one commented. Another kept her son in the school, even though it now meant a car journey. Their choice was influenced by the school's local reputation, including the plaques displayed on the wall. On visiting the school they had also found the teachers very approachable (ib: 87).

Another manner of school choice refers to a school’s capacity to choose their teachers and vice versa. Evidenced in the 2nd case study, "staff turnover would also present challenges in this small school. Experienced staff 'walk away with their expertise' and new staff would need to be inducted into the culture and processes of the school" (ib: 76).

"Information provided for parents was highly appreciated; from the introductory booklet provided before the children started school, the information about their children's curriculum for the forthcoming year and progress reports" (ib: 84). "Parents are kept well informed about the school and their children's progress" (ib: 97).

The negative opinions about market mechanisms were "the head teacher spoke about being more aware of market forces... She believed that achieving targets should not be done at the expense of a broad and exciting school experience... Nevertheless, she understood... assessment was also essential for school improvement, to establish benchmarks and evaluate progress" (ib: 75).

6. School Accountability

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) in 1993; and the publication of annual school performance tables. Politicians believe that publishing performance data encourages schools to be more responsive to their clients (parents) and enhances the options for choice. 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 feature regularly in both national and local newspapers (ib: 45).

The OFSTED process has also concentrated the minds of all practitioners on external accountability measures and success criteria. By September 1997, 340 schools had been designated as having failed the (OFSTED) process, and as requiring 'special measures'. Such schools are given two years in which to raise the quality of the education being offered to an acceptable standard. Fourteen 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 (ib:45).

The Labour Government has increased the pressure on LEAs for their own accountability. Each LEA must draw up a development plan indicating how it works with schools and how it plans to help them establish ‘robust mechanisms for self-evaluation’. Like individual schools LEAs have targets for literacy and numeracy levels across their schools. They are also expected to intervene and work with schools in inverse proportion to their success and like schools are 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 are also under consideration (ib:46).

Higher Education (HE) has also been affected by this increased demand for accountability. Funding for research is to be increasingly dependent on a research assessment exercise in which the quality of research outcomes (publications) are assessed by a panel of ‘experts’ in the context of a description written by each subject area as to its research aims and objectives. The resultant grading is used by the Higher Education Funding Council to allocate research funding. An assessment of teaching quality within HE institutions, has also been introduced (ib: 47).

The publishing of examination performance (league) tables and the government’s increased emphasis on accountability were also mentioned as spurs to change, and several people described tactics they used to raised examination performance (ib:165).

Finally, it cannot be denied that the reality of school improvement in English schools is very dominated by the national scene... Similarly, at the LEA level increased accountability and a more specified role has influenced the relationship they have with schools and the support they can offer to those already improving. In addition, at the time of writing (2000), increased accountability for outside ‘providers’ of in-service and programs of support, including HE, is being highlighted in new Government consultation documents on continuing professional development (DfEE, 2000) (ib:176).

7. Adequate time, financial and human support

Financial support and the time allocated for school improvement have been stated in the following quotes:

(The 10th case) Teachers interviewed also noted that time had been provided for teachers to observe examples of good practice among their colleagues (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 160).

(The 6th case study) The school had invested money in these aspects of their work before the government made funds available through the Excellence in Cities program (ib: 115).

(The 10th case study) Single Regeneration Budget Projects in the Urban, [Name] and [Name] areas have been used during the last year to support extra-curricular activities such as mentoring and to provide alternative curricular strategies for small numbers of students (ib: 159).

Funding from the LEA supported working collaboratively within schools. Nevertheless, collaborative work in all schools had benefited from additional funding (ib: 170).

(The 8th case study) The financial support from Nottingham University provided £3000 to the school to support the project. This money was used to buy cover time for teachers. In addition, it would appear that the school’s involvement with Nottingham University also served as a source of stimulus and guidance for the staff (ib: 139).

From the above quotes, we can see there was government funding for SI programs (quotes 2 and 3), the LEA’s funding (quote 4) and funding from universities for supporting ESI. Financial support for new school buildings and its impact on school morale has also been mentioned in the 6th case studies (ib: 114).

Human resource support and spiritual support have been mentioned in the 10 English case studies as well.

Some discouraging opinions have also been mentioned in the English case studies. A lack of time and financial resource support was mentioned in five English case studies. As with all schools one major constraint was time, the staff reported difficulty with finding the time for ESI activities (ib: 130).

Teachers commented that training, staff meetings, departmental review in relation to teaching and learning and the school development plan all took time (ib: 111). One of the challenges that came up repeatedly was that of the time and personal commitment required by the SI project (ib: 152). Lack of time is a major concern. Teachers indicated that they often have to work through their lunch hour on paper work and administration in order to cope with the increased demands brought about by the additional emphasis on record keeping (ib: 166).

Lack of financial resource support made it difficult to make the necessary improvements to the school’s facilities (ib: 139), for refurbishment and decorating the schools’ old buildings, for ICT (ib: 132, 141), for providing staff with the release time required for planning, meetings, staff development (ib: 65), for doing research (ib: 142). A lack of money and other resources was mentioned by most of the people interviewed (ib: 76, 153).

The school had only limited resources available to be used to buy in cover in order those teachers could be provided with time to work on the school improvement initiatives. When asked if they were able to make time to review their classroom practice, in 1997, 30 per cent answered often or more. By 1998, this was still only 38 per cent... The head teacher pointed out that Derbyshire was the second
lowest spending LEA in the country. He noted that his school had very little to spend on ICT in the last six years (£4/pupil compared with the national average of £32/pupil). This concern about under-funding was also raised by all of the teachers interviewed (ib: 141).

In addition, five case studies pointed out the side effects of the government policy of LEA involvement being in inverse proportion to the success of schools. This made the continuation of improvement endeavors more difficult for succeeding schools (ib: 99, 102, 110, 111, 122, 171).

8. The local support

The centrally increased pressure on LEAs for their own accountability makes the LEAs try all they can to help their schools to realize the national goals of school improvement. The LEA school improvement goals mentioned below have influenced 6 English case studies (the LEA program) and have mirrored the national goal setting in terms of school improvement.

- To raise awareness of the need to raise standards of achievement and develop a robust culture, conducive to school improvement.
- To monitor and measure the achievement of all pupils and assist schools to benchmark their performance with "like" schools.
- To develop a shared understanding of the school improvement knowledge base, its language and processes.
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning and develop the leadership and management skills of school improvement.
- To network schools, teachers and other colleagues to share experience of school improvement and disseminate successful interventions.
- To identify particular groups of underachieving pupils and develop a range of targeted interventions, including "out of school" provision, to address their needs.
- To raise the expectations, confidence, skill-base and morale of pupils, parents, school-based staff and other members of the wider education community.
- To work in partnership with business, public sector agencies, community groups, the neighbourhood and elected members of Parliament to implement the school improvement strategy.

The 4th and the 6th case studies declare that all those asked agreed that the above LEA's goals for school improvement matched the school's goals” (ib: 99 & 120).

The first local support was reflected on the LEA's support for school leadership - its political representatives participating in the school governing body, which is a must in all state schools in England and Wales (Hofman, et al., 2002: 38). The members of the governing body are called “governors”. The governors' influence on ESI was evidenced in the case studies. The other LEA support obtained from the 10 English case studies were providing funding for its schools and for ESI projects, providing access to networks, providing expertise in supervising and inspiring ESI, developing strategies for ESI, raising aspirations for ESI within the community and engaging all of its schools in a concentrated effort to raise standards of achievement and at the same time to develop the schools' capacities for managing their own improvement.

The following quotes provide evidence for this:

Birmingham City Council published a series of ‘Guarantees’ for each phase of schooling which specify input, process and outcome targets for schools and pupils… To enable schools to deliver such promises Birmingham has committed itself to provide schools with consistent and uninterrupted support including an increase in budget for primary schools; consistent level of services; and access to international and local networks and expertise in the area of school improvement (Brighouse & Woods, 1999).

… The head commented that the involvement of the LEA was very beneficial. She referred to the significance of funding for education improvement. She valued the SI Network, the Center, and the importance of raising aspirations within the community (ib: 86).

The LEA also provides schools with comparative data using percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals (as a contextual indicator) and average point score at GCSE (ib: 104).

Development of new skills in numeracy had been developed through a hands-on cascade model. The LEA numeracy adviser demonstrated a lesson to the co-coordinator. The adviser then observed a lesson by the co-coordinator. The co-coordinator then demonstrated lessons to the Key Stage teachers, then taught jointly with them, and finally the co-coordinator observed the teachers' lessons. After each stage, feedback was given and discussed. Research suggests that it is a combination of theory, demonstration, practice and coaching (ib: 85).

LEAs were also encouraged to support networks of head teachers and governors, and linking schools with other local agencies, reviewing or pre-inspection prior to OFSTED; advising governors on the selection of new head teachers and training governors using the MIC model (Monitoring, Improvement and Change). Appreciation of the role of the LEA was strong throughout all the six LEA case studies (ib: 63, 74, 86, 99, 109, 121). It was described as a "catalyst" giving the school confidence and inspiration (ib: 120). Apart from
the LEA support, other local support was evident in the case studies, for instance, support from communities and companies ranging from the Order of Franciscan Brothers to Rover and McDonalds.

9. Offering schools some autonomy

The information from the case studies shows that school autonomy included autonomies in: school curriculum, INSET, hiring or firing teachers and staff, choosing from when and where schools access ESI, focus for improvement, and choosing the external agents, to mention just a few.

(The 6th case study) Those with responsibility had the freedom to develop their area as they saw fit, within this overall framework. For example, the teacher with responsibility for mentoring was expected to be able to make decisions about the timing and venue for the program (ib: 115-119).

The school had introduced an alternative curriculum for an identified group of disaffected youngsters, many of whom had a poor attendance record (ib: 143).

With respect to school autonomy in teacher training, it seems that schools in the UK have the autonomy to decide the way, the time and the approach for their INSET, for example, mentioned by the 10th case study (ib: 163), INSET days in the school were often conducted by colleagues from within the school, and teachers from other IQEA schools are sometimes invited. One of the targets at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year was that everyone should observe another member of staff teaching, to reach this target, time was allocated for observation. In addition, the school has the decision-making autonomy to decide whether to participate in the IQEA project or not. Seen in the 9th case study, the staff voted to decide whether to become involved in the SI project (ib:150). Schools in England have the autonomy of personnel in recruiting new teachers. The 9th case study mentioned that "students were invited to participate in the interview panel for selecting new teachers for the school. The case study illustrated that students received much attention and were highly valued in school. This creative hiring was regarded as very important for the success of ESI.

(The 9th case study) In terms of human resource deployment, teachers commented on the supportive nature of the staff, and on the success of the head teacher in her selection of new staff. These were described as “intelligent people,” and as “highly qualified.” … The students also felt that they were being taken more seriously since there were now students on the interviewing team for new teachers (Wikeley, et al., 2000: 148).

10. Engendering a culture in support of ESI

Regarding engendering a school culture in favor of ESI, the 10 English case studies have provided us a lot of information as shown in the below quotes with respect to shared visions, shared teaching experiences and mutual classroom observations, cooperative teaching, setting up a school climate more favorable to teaching and learning, creating a culture of student learning instead of a culture of student attainment, etc.

(The 1st case study) The head teacher was able to take the time to set a suitable climate, and to ensure that all of the stakeholders could participate in establishing the vision. He did not have to “share” his vision with others. Instead, they were equal partners in the actual creation of the vision… The school had developed a culture of continuous improvement. The staff, the parents, and the governors shared this culture (ib: 66-67).

(The 2nd case study) “The school climate was now one in which teachers shared their planning, their successes, their knowledge from courses, through their staff meetings and shared observations” (ib: 71).

(The 7th case study) “Over the past two or three years, a lot had been done in terms of setting a climate more favorable to learning. For example, establishing a consistent approach to discipline, re-establishing the policy on school uniforms, and developing strategies to improve the attendance for the small number of students for whom attendance was poor… The teachers wished to create a culture of student learning instead of a culture of student containment (ib: 126).

“The culture of the school ‘not valuing students is no longer acceptable.’ The school now had higher expectations of all those involved, staff and students (ib: 129).

“Changing the physical environment was part of changing the culture of the school. Those in the school, pupils and staff felt more valued and felt that the school was an inviting place to be” (ib: 66-67).

(The 10th case study) “The school’s culture was changing to one of recognition that school improvement was not an event but an ongoing process. The staff appeared to accept the need for ongoing improvement in teaching and learning” (ib: 153).

School routines are a part of a school culture. Routine changes were mostly reflected in the contents of the department/school meetings, the focus of such meetings, the observation of classroom teaching, etc.

"The cycle of meetings has changed. Much more time is given to departments to use as they decide how to further their development plans. More departmental meetings are now devoted to IQEA business. The emphasis in the meetings has shifted more to teaching and learning styles, and on what is happening in the classrooms” (ib: 160).
“94% of respondents to the ESI survey agreed that teachers regularly discussed ways of improving pupils’ learning, and 81 per cent felt this was an improvement over the situation three years previously” (ib: 147-148).

The shared ownership of the SI process has strengthened the collaboration among teachers and staff. Teachers spoke of how the culture had been changed from one of isolation and retrospective planning to one of collaboration and continuous improvement” (ib: 73).

Some discouraging aspects are evident in the case studies as well.

"There was a perception that some long-standing members of staff refused even to consider change and appeared to try to block it. Some teachers found that the pace of change was very slow. It had taken three years just to set the climate and get people ready for change” (ib: 130).

The 5th case study has provided some experiences in how to change this kind of negative situation.

"The school had many long serving members of staff and very few newer members of staff in key positions. The management review report was presented to the governors and led to the abolition of the Senior Management Team (SMT) replacing it with the School Improvement Group (SIG). The head teacher described it also as a way of 're-culturing' (ib: 107)."