

## REVIEW: *EDUCATION IN 100 QUESTIONS*

**María Teresa Lorenzo. Álvarez**  
Education Inspector. Madrid.

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### DATA SHEET

Book: *La educación en 100 preguntas*

Author: Luís María Cifuentes Pérez

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The issue of education is a cross-cutting one that affects many sectors of society and is the subject of continuous debate between politicians, teachers and families. There is no sector of society that is not directly or indirectly involved in the education debate. No one is insensitive to educational issues because we are all aware that the social and economic development of a country depends to a large extent on the quality of its educational system and how education is seen as an unavoidable expense or as a good investment, the best investment for the future.

The book that Professor Luís María Cifuentes has just published in the 100 Preguntas Collection (Nowtilus) raises with amenity, rigour, and clarity the great dilemmas in which the current educational systems are immersed in the world and in a more specific way in our country. The major issues at the centre of the educational debate in recent decades focus on the analysis of various philosophical and political dilemmas such as quality and equity, freedom and universality, inclusion and elitism, innovation and tradition, and, more recently, the introduction of new technologies in education systems.

This book focuses on all these dilemmatic questions and many other issues of interest in the world of education, without losing sight of the historical, political and legal elements that are essential to gain an in-depth understanding of the Spanish education system. Specifically, in the case of the Spanish education system, it is necessary to situate the debate on public and private education in the historical context of the 19th century, bearing in mind that the history of Spain has been marked to a large extent by the enormous influence of the Catholic Church in the configuration of the education

system from the 16th century onwards. The author points out the fundamental milestones of this history of education with simplicity and clarity, while at the same time connecting all this with the successive educational laws that Spanish democracy has been drawing up since 1980 until today.

The current vision of education is legally based on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the case of Spain it is article 27 of the Constitution which develops in detail all the elements that constitute the right to education. The balance achieved in the 1978 constitutional text is still in force, but the distortions and legislative ups and downs that have occurred up to 2022 reflect the profound ideological discrepancies that continue to prevent a basic consensus in our country on the world of education. The achievement of a truly co-educational school, an inclusive and intercultural education

system and genuine educational and technological innovation at all levels of the education system are still unresolved problems in Spain.

Throughout this book, the author insists emphatically on the need to overcome the reality of the dual educational network of public and private centres by opting for quality public education for all, which is the main axis of our educational system, without giving private initiative a central role in the Spanish educational system. In the 21st century, the author rightly points out, the right to education cannot be subjected to the laws of the market economy because this will continue to exacerbate the social, economic, and cultural inequalities that have plagued education in Spain for centuries. This is the underlying debate that underlies all partisan struggles over education; whether we want inclusive, quality education for all children regardless of their social and economic background, or whether education is understood as a commodity that is totally subject to the economic imperatives of neoliberal capitalism.

The question of the freedom and quality of education is placed by the author of this book in the Spanish ideological context within the constitutional framework of 1978,

which is the supreme norm that allowed Spanish society as a whole to achieve reconciliation and democratic coexistence that has lasted for forty years. However, even today it has not yet been possible to agree on basic and lasting elements that consolidate the essential architecture of our educational system. Books such as this one by Luís Cifuentes can help to raise and respond with rigour and objectivity to many questions about the education system and, above all, to really improve the quality of education in our country, since, as is pointed out several times throughout the book, the best investment in the future for a country is to have professionally and ethically well-prepared citizens, citizens capable of creating a new knowledge and information society based on new technologies and the ethical values proclaimed in human rights.

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