

# Better Future

## At Home, There Are No Jobs, The Cities Are Unsafe, and the Rivers Are Dry

Hortensia Reza

**BEFORE YOU READ:** In your experience, what are some of the problems at home that push people to immigrate?

### Trying to Forget Everything Bad

We have lived here, in El Paso, Texas, for only two years. Thank God, we have our house, and we have jobs. My husband started a business as a contractor, and I work cleaning houses. Day by day, we are becoming part of this community.

We are trying to forget everything bad that we lived with in Juárez. My mom was sick and we couldn't find good health assistance and she eventually died. Also, finding jobs is really difficult over there. On top of that, it was an unsafe city.

Still, it is where I grew up. And I took care of my mother there when she was sick. She had



A farmer stands in a dry field, indicating with his arm how tall the corn should be. Photo from: <https://aztecreports.com/companies-are-draining-mexicos-water-supply-amid-drought-activists/2697/>.

a long illness. For five months, I took care of her. Then we had the chance to leave, and so I left her behind. Ten days later, she died. That was devastating for me and my family. We came here for a better future, but I lost my mom. I could not be at her funeral, because of my immigration status. That was awful.

### We Have Many Goals

But life continues. My husband and I work very hard, because we have many goals. For example, I never before thought about studying, and now I have my GED diploma, and I study English. I want to obtain my Microsoft Office Specialist certification in the next six months, and enroll in the Quickbooks certification, because my final goal is to open a small business with my husband.

### We Are Two of a Great Many

We know people from different Latin American countries. They are immigrants to the U.S., because in their countries, they do not have jobs. People do not have land for farms. The rivers are dry, and there is drought everywhere, so they can't grow anything even if they have land. They worked on the land and that was not enough to support their families. My own family in Chihuahua



A portion of the U.S.-Mexico border. Photo by Földhegy, CC 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>



The dry river bed of the Rio Grande in Las Cruces, New Mexico. In Mexico, this river is called the Rio Bravo. Photo by phoca2004 CC/via Flickr. Read more about it here: <https://www.hcn.org/articles/climate-change-diverted-drained-and-dwindling-whats-the-fate-of-new-mexicos-rio-grande>.

hua, Mexico, work on the land. They are in the same situation. They do not have a decent life. That's why they come to the U.S. as immigrants.

Climate change is part of the problem. In Juárez City, in an area called Anapra, people used to benefit from the Rio Bravo. They used the water for their lands, but the river doesn't have as much water anymore. There are not many job opportunities. This is one of the reasons why people leave. They are looking for better jobs and security.


I believe that in the U.S., the majority of people are immigrants or they are descended from immigrants. The only people who are *originally* from this country are the Native Americans. My generation of immigrants is just one of many.

#### AFTER YOU READ:

1. According to the author, what are some of the reasons she came to the U.S.?
2. The author says that climate change is part of the problem. Explain.
3. For more information about drought in Mexico, read the article and study the maps on pp. 20-21. Also, click on the articles linked in the captions on pp. 18-19. Read and listen (3 minutes of audio) to this article: <https://www.npr.org/2022/07/21/1112663036/extreme-drought-in-northern-mexico-has-left-millions-of-residents-without-water>.
4. How do you pronounce *drought*? (Hint: rhymes with *out*.) Compare it to *brought* (rhymes with *shot*).

Hortensia Reza Rodriguez is a student at Ysleta Community Adult Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. She has been studying English for a year and she is not going to stop until she masters the language and become a U.S. citizen.





## Learn More about Climate Change

**Issue #27** of *The Change Agent* includes accessible articles and graphics that explain climate change.