Sheela Patel
Most people who come into cities come to, to transform the life of their children if not for themselves.

Jose Diaz Giocochea
I left the place I was born to look for a better life and for a better future for my children.

Liliana Miranda
Sometimes you see just one mother taking care of the children. Families are broken. It’s, it’s very sad.

Woman 1
A lot of people have left - a lot! There are a lot of women here without husbands, without children - the children leave and they stay there and they become lost.

Woman 2
There are some who leave and they die and never come back.

Woman 3
People that leave die in the desert of hunger and thirst and heat.

Woman 1
What we would like is to move forward, to get help so we can get out of this.

NARRATOR
Over the last century hundreds of thousands of Mexicans have migrated to the United States in search of a living wage. Working for the rich, they became America’s new poor. While their families lived off the dollars sent home, rural Mexicans also paid a price of community and cultural disintegration

Liliana Miranda
Here we are in Beverley Hills. I have a business ‘la Troca” serving lunch. It’s like a travelling restaurant. A lot of people come who work here: gardeners, construction workers, cleaning women –

Mexicans, Salvadoreans, Guatemalans. This is an area of people with money so they use the services of these people.

Filiberto
My town is called Jaltiangius - Santa Maria de Jaltiangius in Oaxaca. Everybody works the land, that’s the only way we can survive there. Well, here there are more opportunities, because here of course you earn more.

NARRATOR
The 1980s saw an influx of rural Mexicans to California. Thousands of indigenous people made the 3,000 mile trip from the southern state of Oaxaca, many illegally crossing the border, to find work in Los Angeles.

* Image: TVE's logo is visible in the top right corner of the image, indicating the source of the transcript. * Text: The text is presented in a clear, readable font, with paragraphs neatly aligned. * Relevant Information: The text provides insights into the daily lives and challenges faced by migrants from Mexico, including the struggle for survival and the impact on family structures. * Language: The text is written in English, with occasional use of Spanish phrases and names. * Style: The writing style is informative and descriptive, providing a detailed account of the experiences described. * Conclusion: The narrative highlights the hardships and sacrifices made by migrants in their quest for a better life. * Action: The text does not require any specific action, but it encourages readers to reflect on the realities faced by these migrants. * Context: The context is set in the United States, specifically focusing on the experiences of rural Mexican migrants. * Analysis: The analysis underlines the persistence of poverty and cultural disintegration in rural Mexico, despite the attraction of the United States for better economic opportunities. * Questions: The text raises questions about the long-term effects of migration on families and communities, and the ethical considerations of labor migration policies.
Gaspar Rivera was one of them. Today he is a professor at the University of Southern California.

**Gaspar Rivera**

In the early 1980’s, Mexico went through the worst crisis in recent history in Mexico. There was the peso devaluation, the economy was in a tailspin, er and the heaviest negative impact was on the countryside.

The presidents at the time came up with an economic plan to take advantage of Mexico as a third world country with cheap labour to get inserted into the global economy. However, rural Mexico did not have a place within this new economic model.

**NARRATOR**

Today, the Gueleguetza restaurant chain has become the centre of the Oaxacan community in Los Angeles. People meet here to organise projects in their villages and send money back home.

**Fernando Lopez Mateos**

After we suffered all the problems of the crisis in Mexico, I personally had to sell my things to begin a new adventure here in Los Angeles without knowing what to do - without knowing where to go. Fortunately I had a sister who had been living here for 12 years and between her and I, we started a business, which is this restaurant of Oaxacan food. All Oaxacans care about supporting our communities because we see the standard of living there and we want to help it change a little bit. To support the economy of our homeland we organise dances, raffles, and fêtes to collect funds and send money to our hometowns.

We are collecting funds to set up a maguey plant - that’s a project we have at the moment. The amount of migration worries me - we leave our villages and we see other ways of life. We worry about the breakdown of our families. We want the wives and children to stay with us in our community. There are people here - friends who haven’t seen their wives or children for eight or ten years and that’s not fair, that’s not right.

We Latinos are the backbone of the economy in California; we are the second highest percentage of [the] population. Without workers like us the economy wouldn’t function.

**Juan Manuel**

I come from Oaxaca. I’ve been here for one year and two months.

We come for a reason, many of us come to improve our way of life, to offer something better to our families - and I think that’s my goal, more than anything.

I’m never going to forget my journey here. Truthfully, I suffered a lot - like everyone else suffers when they cross. I walked a lot - that was the only difficult moment that I had, walking a long time over the mountains, thirsty and hungry.

**NARRATOR**

Every month Juan Manuel sends $400 through the restaurant money wire service to his father in the Oaxacan village of Zimatlan.
Jose Diaz Giocochea
For me it’s important - the money from there - because I don’t work anymore and er we are only three in the family, we are not many.

Here there are no sources of work, people cannot support themselves and they want to find another way of life. So they leave to go to another country to change their way of life.

NARRATOR
While jobs in the United States bring money back home, the absence of men has lead to the breakdown of family life.

In Oaxaca’s neighbouring state of Veracruz, a fall in coffee and papaya prices recently forced the men to migrate.

Lucretia and Alicia share a house in southern Veracruz while waiting for their husbands to return.

Lucretia
Sometimes in the town meetings here there are no men. They leave because there are no jobs and the situation is very hard. We couldn’t afford to get by - even now they earn very little. The first time that he left he used to send us money but very little and now it’s the same, he doesn’t have a job. One day he works, the next he doesn’t and also we don’t hear from him. Sometimes he calls us once month and I think that feels rather distant.

I was thinking of going to help him out so I also could earn some money, but it’s not possible because I can’t leave the children – and it is not easy because I think he’s got another woman and he’s going to stay there.

Alicia
The children need their father a lot.

It’s very difficult because you don’t get accustomed to it fully and now he has abandoned us and we don’t know if he’s going to come back.

Cristina Guerrero
The main burden of migration falls on women and there is a social breakdown that is going to be accelerated. The people, for example the children or the husbands that come back, have other customs and a different way of thinking - as a result, we don’t even know if the drug addiction can get worse in this area, not to mention sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

We’ve noticed that women are left as the head of the family but in this area women are not really accustomed to make decisions. It’s not a culture that has educated them to make decisions to be independent. It is a huge responsibility the women are left with because if the children behave badly or something like that then the blame falls on the women, because the women are seen as not doing their job properly.

It’s not right.
NARRATOR
Back in the mountains of Oaxaca, the remaining inhabitants of the village of Jaltiangius are celebrating Saint's Day. The town's mayor worries that in the long-run his village could disappear.

Antonio Bautista
What worries us is that many young people leave. They finish secondary school and they leave and everybody focuses their mind on the United States.

Sixty percent of the inhabitants of the town have gone to the United States.

We work really hard here - eight hours - and over there you work eight hours too and they pay you in dollars, sixty, seventy dollars, and here you only earn seven, eight dollars.

We town authorities are concerned about setting up income-generating projects so that people can survive here.

We have a management committee in the United States - they're in Los Angeles, they have sent money to support the community. The projects underway are the resurfacing of the municipal plaza, an extension of the health centre, the remodelling of our church - which is in a terrible condition - and the construction of a classroom for the kindergarten.

But at the moment I can’t tell you about any income generating project we have in the future.

We have 640 people in this town but we hope that the population won’t vanish - on the contrary, we want to increase the population; we don’t want it to disappear.

NARRATOR
Some villages have even demanded the return of their citizens from the United States, in an attempt to ensure their survival.

Porfirio Hernandez Ruiz
I left my town in 1964 to - bound to Mexico city, I lived there for seven years and then er, then we took an adventure to the United States. After 30 years in Los Angeles, the people from my small town they wrote me a letter that they needed me because of the migration situation - so many people left town already and they don’t have anybody else to serve the town. They’ve been doing this for the last couple of years: requesting the guys who are absent to come back.

I’m glad I’m one of the first ones that are able to, to do this – I came back to serve my town.

The situation here in, in San Francisco, it’s very frightening let’s say. There are a lot of houses, nice houses, built - but they’re empty, nobody lives in them. The people who are able to build they live in California.

Every time when one child leaves here in San Francisco the schoolteacher comes and says we need more students otherwise the government is gonna take away another schoolteacher and the school population gets smaller and smaller. And yes, we’ve been
talking with the rest of the people who live in Oaxaca City, in Mexico City and California. We are explaining them, we are making them know the situation before this town becomes a ghost town.

We try to convince them to put some money together, come back to san Francisco, start any kind of work that will make them stay.

We’re only about 300 people here, including children and old people and we’re losing the battle.

NARRATOR
For people in Oaxaca, the problem is not just one of diminishing numbers but also the disappearance of a unique language and culture.

Gaspar Rivera
International migration is er a challenge – it’ the most tremendous challenge that this and the US communities are facing in recent history. The indigenous peoples in Mexico have survived the colonial period, the conquest period, the emergence of the “New Mexico” – the modern Mexico. They have resisted: they have kept their language, their culture, their abilities, their land. What’s going to happen with the future – the future generation in Oaxaca who need very specific cultural knowledge to survive in this community? All this is knowledge which has been passed from generation to generation and when there is a strong dependence for survival between the remittances, the dollars that workers send from the United States, there’s not any incentive anymore for people who remain behind to work very hard, physically, to just make ends meet.

NARRATOR
Migrants in Los Angeles are now trying to save their culture by funding income-generating projects in Oaxaca. One project supports indigenous production of mescal, an alcohol made from the maguey plant. Mescal, now produced industrially, plays a key role in the culture of Oaxaca’s Zapotec Indians.

Dr Lopez
Mescal is part of Zapotec culture and it’s getting lost, just as we Zapotecs have lost our identity. The great majority of children in the community don’t speak Zapotec. It’s a sad situation because in the long term we are going to lose our language which is almost like our heritage. It’s a problem of migration, because so many of the children of many Zapotec people in the United States come back speaking English and the same thing is happening with mescal. We are a unique community in the world, the world capital of mescal – however, that is being lost.

The maguey nursery project is unique because its main purpose is to help the community and teach young people from an early age that here you can invest, you can also get ahead and you don’t necessarily have to migrate.

The idea of our migrant friends to organise this project, starting with the children is very nice because I think only from the roots can we tackle the problem.
When children learn as they’re growing up the community’s way of life, which is growing maguey, then they learn how to love the community and the environment and then probably we could stop migration.

NARRATOR
With the militarisation of the border, crossing to the United States has become expensive and dangerous. It can take several weeks to cross the Arizona desert and cost thousands of dollars for the services of a smuggler.

Last year 369 people died from overexposure or drowning. For many Mexicans, crossing the border has become a game of life or death.

Every day people arrive at the Tijuana bus station to try their luck.

Bus guard
In my opinion they should not leave their homeland and could lose their life in the mountainous just to earn some pesos.

It’s very difficult and here they are deceived, they are deceived by the smugglers - they tell them that they are going to walk for three to four hours and then they find that they walk for three days or more.

Some of them come back.

Gaspar Rivera
The latest program that the Mexican government’s unveiling is to give an emergency kit to immigrants who are trying to cross the border. So they’re gonna wait for them at the bus station and they’re gonna be handed band-aids, aspirins - and they’re investing millions of dollars on this program.

I think it’s, it is outrageous that they’re doing that because that’s not going to help! That’s not the problem! You know - these people are exposing [themselves] to these dangers because they don’t see any alternative.

NARRATOR
Back in southern Veracruz the husband of one of Lucretia and Alicia’s neighbors has returned.

Jaime
We arrived at the border and there we met the man who was going to take us across to the other side - he seemed very responsible. They locked us in the train and we were there with many people for 30 hours, locked in there. Thirty hours without drinking water, without moving your body, nothing! We suffered the heat and cold at night until we arrived at Houston. That was the most dangerous experience - the most difficult.

I came back because the life that I had there was very hard.

I really love this place, this land.
Gaspar Rivera
The question is what kind of economic development are we pushing for Mexico? Is it an integral model that is having an opportunity for everyone?

Instead of looking outward, to looking at what’s going to be the place in the global economy, to say: what are our needs and what are the needs of our people? And to respond to that.