

iAGUAS, CDMX!

Climate change is helping sink Mexico City but residents aren't ready to give up.

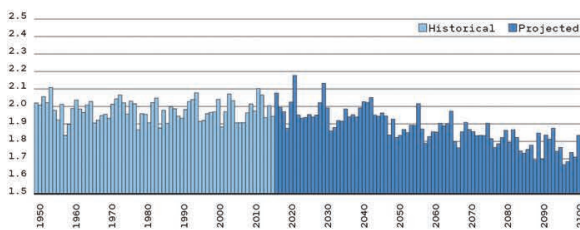
The comings and goings of water define Mexico City, a mile-high metropolis sprawled across three dry lake beds. The city floods in the wet season and thirsts during regular droughts. CDMX, as the city of 21 million styles itself, pumps

more water from the aquifer below it than it replenishes: the city sank some 12 meters in the last century and may sink another 30 meters before hitting rock bottom. Scientists predict that climate change will exacerbate these problems.

But residents are taking charge of water—and their climate futures—in a variety of ways that promise to buoy the city's hydraulic balance and perhaps promote equitable access to safe drinking water. —Lucas Larsen

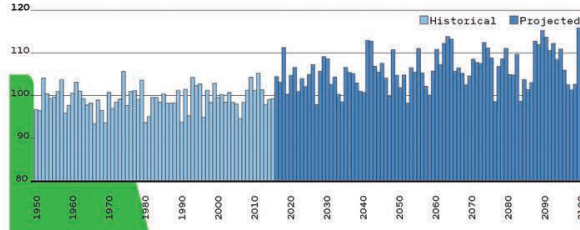
TOTAL RAINFALL WILL DECLINE

The IPCC projects that total daily rainfall in the region (in mm) will fall.



BUT WHEN IT DOES RAIN, IT WILL POUR

The IPCC projects stronger bursts of rainfall (in mm) in any given five-day window, a proxy for storms and flooding.



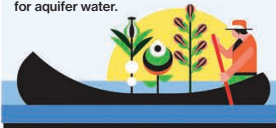
SINKING FEELING

With less water in it, Mexico City's aquifer no longer holds up the city. The drier land also puts buildings at greater risk for earthquake damage.

Rainwater helps recharge the aquifer, but the city's drainage network takes most of it to a neighboring state for treatment, never to return.

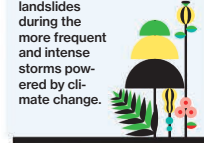
INDIGENOUS TECH: CHINAMPAS

The indigenous Mexica fenced in and filled lake areas, creating waterlogged farms to feed their island city. A collective of researchers, city planners, and farmers is adapting the approach to filter water for irrigation and reduce demand for aquifer water.



REFORESTATION

The state of Mexico is reforesting the slopes above the city, which should help capture rainwater and minimize landslides during the more frequent and intense storms powered by climate change.

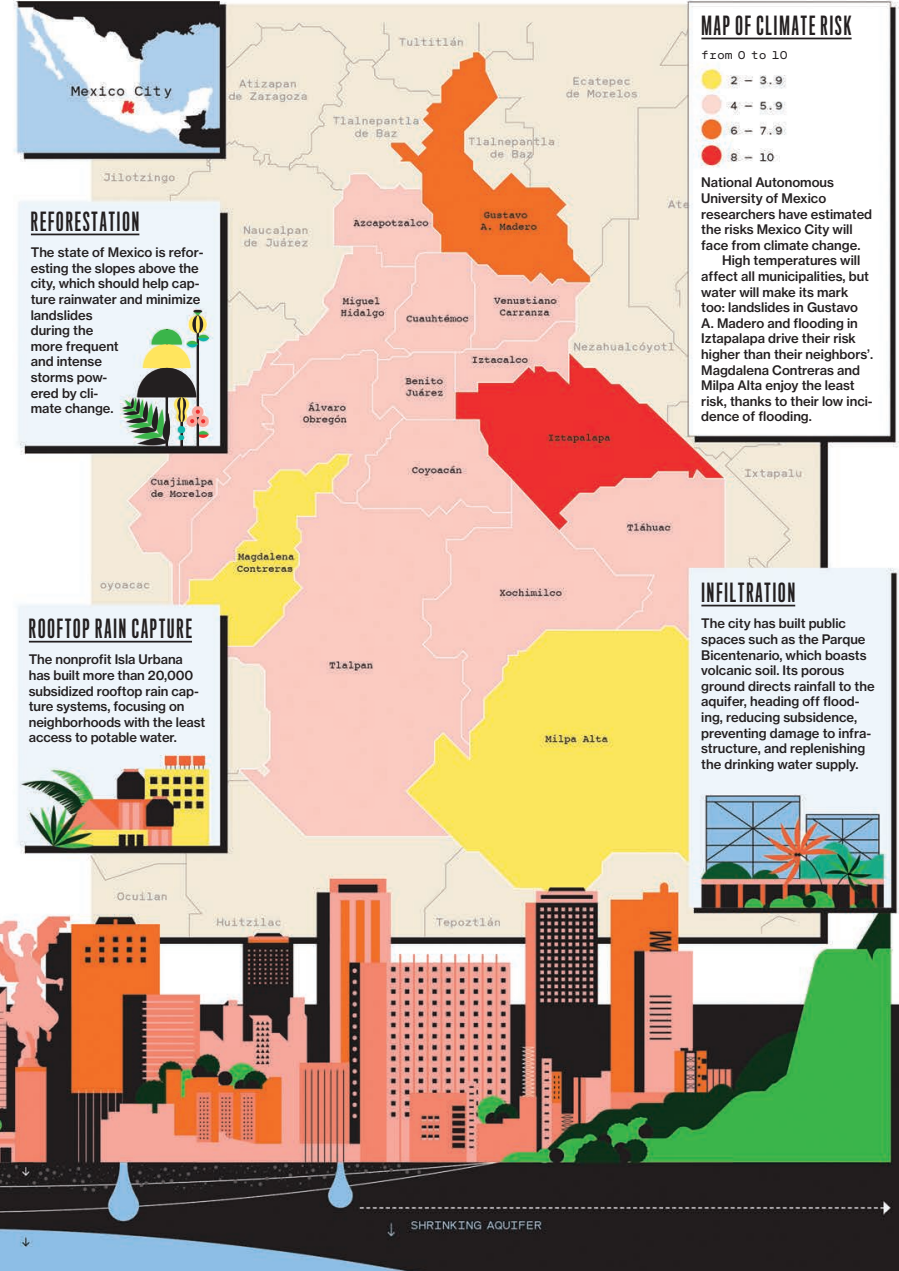


ROOFTOP RAIN CAPTURE

The nonprofit Isla Urbana has built more than 20,000 subsidized rooftop rain capture systems, focusing on neighborhoods with the least access to potable water.



Report



ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURA CATTANEO / RAINFALL; IPCC; VIGILAS; EXTRA WATER SPENDING; REPORTE INDIGO AND THE NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO; UNAM; CHINAMPAS; UNAM AND ORU FROM DE RESILIENCIA URBANA.

