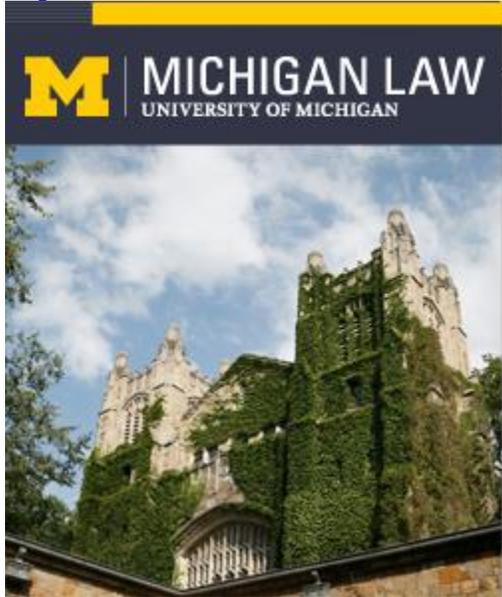


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## University of Michigan Law School Working with Brazil University to Create Human Trafficking Clinic

By Katie Vloet  
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The University of Michigan Law School's [Human Trafficking Clinic](#) is working with a university in Brazil to create a similar legal clinic there in which law students will represent people who have been forced into slave labor in South America's largest country.

U-M and the [Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais-UFMG School of Law](#) have developed a memorandum of understanding that paves the way for the creation of the new clinic, which will begin operating on March 2, 2015.

"Unfortunately, Brazil is a source, a destination, and a transit point for men, women, and children subjected to human trafficking and slave labor," said Carlos Henrique Haddad, a federal judge in Brazil and a member of the law faculty at UFMG. "I think the new clinic will help victims of slave labor in Brazil, and also that this is our opportunity to collaborate on international and cross-border cases."

The collaboration came about when Haddad came to Michigan Law as a Michigan Grotius Research Scholar in fall 2014. U-M Human Trafficking Clinic Director [Bridgette Carr](#) learned that Haddad had decided more than 50 cases involving slave labor, and the two began discussing ways the clinic's model could be replicated in Brazil.

"I deeply admire Brazil's efforts to combat slave labor," Carr said. "They are leading the world in many areas—attacking slave labor in ways that we don't see in other countries."

"In the United States, we want to believe the problem isn't very large, and we want to believe the problem is always somewhere else—not in our own communities. But it's in every community," Carr added. "Brazil, on the other hand, is a nation where they're really grappling with the reality of slave labor in their country. They've moved past the doubt and are working to combat the problem."

Partnering with other universities around the world will help to combat human trafficking on a global level, Carr said. The Human Trafficking Clinic previously set up a clinic in Mexico City with a law school there, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, Unidad Académica de Derecho, and is exploring other opportunities around the world. "We see in our own cases that traffickers cross borders, and legal solutions need to as well. We've represented clients from all over the world, including Brazil, who have been exploited in the United States. We can help them here, but traffickers are savvy enough to compel them through mechanisms back home. With international partnerships, we can take a tool away from traffickers."

In 1995, Brazil created an official system against slave labor. The Global Slavery Index 2013 report, published by the Walk Free Foundation, praised the country's efforts. "Brazil's 'dirty list' publicly names and shames companies that have been found to be profiting from slave labour," the report said. "Companies, from major brands to small enterprises, stay on the list for two years, during which time they have to prove they are making efforts to clean up supply chains. They cannot obtain credit from the government and private banks and are boycotted by those who signed up to the list." Additionally, Brazil's National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour was launched in 2005, and brings together multiple stakeholders who are committed to end modern slavery.

"Brazil is making efforts, spending great amounts of money, to try to reduce or eliminate this social problem," Haddad said.

Initially, eight students will participate in the UFMG clinic, which will be run by Haddad and Professor Lívia Miraglia. The clinic will not be an exact replica of the Michigan Law clinic, or of its affiliated clinic in Mexico City, but it will be based on a similar structure, in which students work with faculty members to represent victims of slave labor.

"At Michigan, I attended some of Prof. Carr's classes. I saw students who were highly engaged, and I saw a formidable conjunction between legal theory and development of practical skills," Haddad said. "I'm very excited to initiate a clinic at my law school and to adapt it to our legal system."

The clinic in Brazil will be called Clínica de Trabalho Escravo e Tráfico de Pessoas (Slave Labor and Human Trafficking Clinic). As the name of the clinic suggests, the terminology for this phenomenon varies. "Human trafficking is a newer name for what is a historical phenomenon," Carr said. "It is also called slave labor, forced labor, debt bondage, involuntary servitude. At the core of all of those terms is an exploitation of a person for a service."

Carr said she hopes that the students in Brazil, as well as her own students, come away from their experience in the clinic with an understanding of how dramatically they can impact people's lives.

"I want students to leave knowing that they have the skills and power as a lawyer to combat global complex human rights problems," Carr said. "Too often I think law students forget that being a lawyer is a really powerful profession, and I want students in the clinic to remember that power and figure out ways to use it for the rest of their career."

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