

FIELD TRIP TO BRAZIL 2020

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Making management of migration flows
more efficient across the European Union



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INTRODUCTION

Hibiscus Initiatives is a UK registered charity which provides advocacy, support, and specialist services to marginalised vulnerable Foreign Nationals and Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugees (BMER) principally but not exclusively women who affected by the criminal justice and immigration systems.

Our work falls into four broad areas:

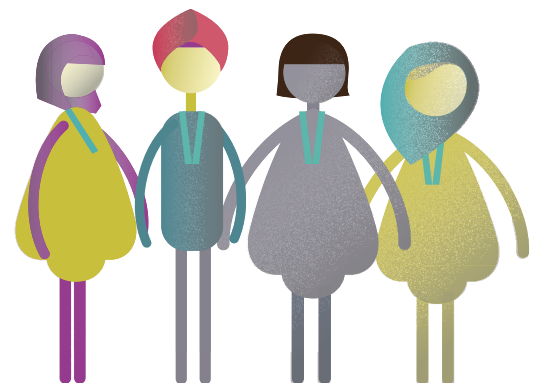
- Advocacy, information, assistance and mentoring in prisons and on release
- Assistance and support on returns and reintegration to home countries
- Assistance with community resettlement and reintegration in the UK
- Identification and support to victims of human trafficking

Our International Resettlement work provides returns and resettlement assistance, and where possible sustainable reintegration assistance through short/medium-term practical and emotional support.

When assisting clients with their resettlement needs, various aspects of support are discussed and considered. Clients generally have multiple support needs, with some needs more of an initial priority than others. In the context of Brazil, the immediate priorities are generally accommodation, livelihood, and safeguarding. Our experience is that failure in provision of these support needs, decreases the likelihood of successful long-term resettlement.

We strive to assist and support clients to successfully reintegrate in their home countries by extending our referral programme to local support organisations and networks to obtain accommodation, provide or secure seed capital assistance to start small businesses, and help with other resettlement needs.

Within the context of Hibiscus' International Resettlement Programme, Adrienne Darragh (Chief Executive), Louise Hatch (Head of International Resettlement and Detention Services) and Rakie Ceesay (Project Worker) undertook a research field trip to Brazil in March 2020.



BACKGROUND & AIMS

In recent years Brazilian nationals, particularly women, have been one of the top three nationalities which the Hibiscus project assists in Yarl's Wood and Heathrow Immigration Removal Centres (IRC's). Between April 2019 and March 2020, our International Resettlement team supported 374 Brazilian clients (170 women and 204 men).

The objectives of the field trip were to carry out the necessary data collection and research activities to:

- Better inform our work with Brazilian nationals
- Measure the accuracy of the information and advice we provide to Brazilian returnees
- Produce an accurate and timely "Returning to Brazil" booklet
- Gain further information and insight into the resettlement needs of Brazilian returnees
- Assist us to establish contact with agencies/ organisations who can potentially help our clients
- Meet up and document returned clients' personal experiences of the return and resettlement process

The information and data were collected through:

- Expert interviews
- Interviews with clients
- Observation

The work conducted on this trip links to Hibiscus' strategic objectives:

- Improved and extended partnerships and collaboration
- Improved quality
- **We aimed to:**
 - Build and use an evidence-based methodology that will inform the development of our services, respond to partners, and allow us to influence policy
 - Make efficient use of our existing resources, networks and contacts to increase our knowledge, and articulate the voice of those we support more effectively
 - Share and deploy our knowledge powerfully through commissioning and disseminating analysis, research, and evidence
 - Gain more insight into the push factors relating to migration
 - Present our messages through informed communications, including those of our partners that reflect the voice of our clients, our mission and impact
 - Develop our networks with institutions; both nationally and internationally and to extend our knowledge, influence, and reach

A range of stakeholders and experts in the fields of migration, community development, and anti-trafficking/modern day slavery were contacted, and appointments arranged to gain information and insight into migration and return of vulnerable Brazilians. The list of clients we interviewed was compiled by project staff.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHIC

As estimated by the UN in 2020¹, Brazil is the 6th most populated country in the world with 212 million people. Most of its population is concentrated in cities located along the southeast coast including Sao Paulo; the largest city with more than 12 million inhabitants, Rio de Janeiro; with around 6 million, and Brasilia with 3 million². These figures indicate a high rate of urbanisation within the country, with increasing numbers of people moving from rural to urban areas over the years. These figures were one of our deciding factors into which regions we would be visiting.

The main language spoken is Portuguese, with a minority of the population speaking local indigenous languages such as the Tikuna and Guarani Kaiowá³. Ethnicity in Brazil is highly diverse and is comprised of different cultures and ethnicities from African, European, and American communities. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics categorises the population as being White (Branca), Black (Preta), Yellow (Amarela), Brown (Parda), and Indigenous (Indigena), which is a controversial method of categorisation among people and local groups who do not identify themselves on such terms.

The latest figures show that what was once considered minority groups, such as mixed race and blacks now make up more than half the population of the country, with less than half being white⁴. It has been suggested that this shift in demographics could be a consequence of changes in the way people self-identify, with many more today relating to their origins and ethnic roots and challenging stereotypes regarding skin colour and poverty⁵.

The population of Brazil, which has a greater number of women (50.8%) than men (49.2%), is also relatively young, with a median age of 31 years and a life expectancy of 72.5 years⁶. Improvements in education, sexual and reproductive health, and the incorporation of women into the labour market have gradually reduced the number of childbirths per year, with the figure now standing at 13.7 per 1.000 people⁷. Based on this, the UN predicts that by 2050, the country will have to cope with a far more substantial aged population⁸.

Brazil has the largest Catholic Christian population in the world with more than 112 million people actively practising⁹, making them the most important religious demographic in the country.



¹ United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Population Prospects 2019. (Online) Retrieve from: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population>

² Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Estimativas da população residente no Brasil e unidades da federação com data de referência em 1o de julho de 2019. (Online) Available from: ftp://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Estimativas_de_Populacao/Estimativas_2019/estimativa_dou_2019.pdf

³ A. Pariona. What Languages are Spoken in Brazil? World Atlas. 2018. (Online) Available from: [worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-brazil.html](https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-brazil.html).

⁴ Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. 2010 Population Census. (Online) Available from: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/en/statistics/social/population/18391-2010-population-census.html?edicao=18519&t=destaques>

⁵ M. Castillo. Minorities now officially a majority in Brazil. CNN. 2011. (Online) Available from: <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/americas/06/16/brazil.race/>

⁶ Countrymeters. Brazil population 2020. (Online) Available from: <https://countrymeters.info/en/Brazil>

⁷ Knoema. Brazil – The crude birth rate in 2019. (Online) Available from: <https://knoema.com/atlas/Brazil/Birth-rate>

⁸ UN. World Population to 2300. New York. 2004. (Online) Available from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/files/documents/2020/Jan/un_2002_world_population_to_2300.pdf

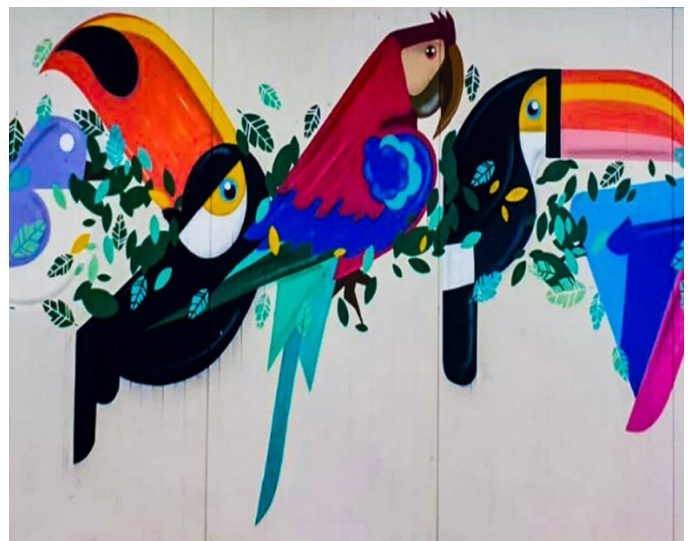
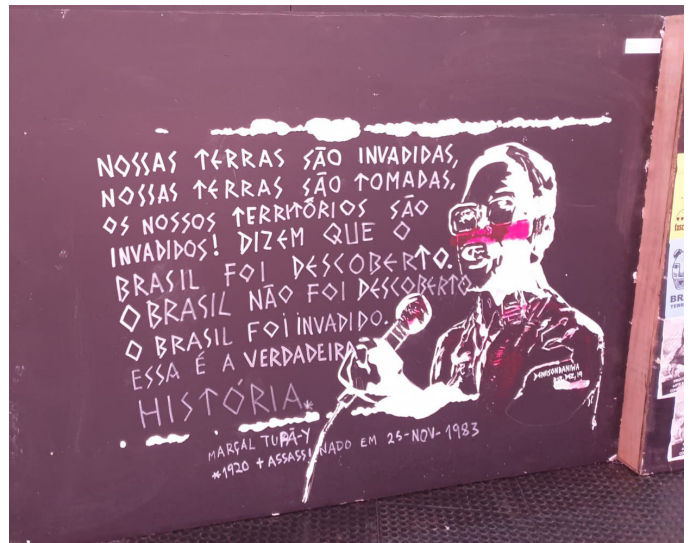
⁹ World Population Review. Highest Catholic Population in 2020. (Online) Available from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/highest-catholic-population>

ETHNIC MINORITIES & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The population of indigenous communities across Brazil is highly diverse. According to figures from the most recent 2010 census, around 818,000 indigenous people are cohabiting in Brazil (0.4% of the total population). Some of the indigenous communities include Tikúna (46,045 people), Guarani Kaiowá (43,401 people), Kaingang (37,470 people), Makuxí (28,912 people), Terena (28,845 people), Yanomámi (21,982 people), Potiguara (20,554 people), Xavante (19,259 people), Pataxó (13,588 people), Sateré-Mawé (13,310 people), Mundurukú (13,103 people), Múra (12,479 people), Xucuru (12,471 people) and Baré (11,990 people)¹⁰.

Most of these communities inhabit rural areas located in the north and northeast of the country near to the Amazonas, Roraima and Rio Negro regions. These communities face incredible challenges as they have been systematically dispossessed of their rights to their land and have suffered exploitation at the hands of the current government, agricultural businesses, and international corporations¹¹. Such exploitation is often linked to humanitarian or ecological degradation and in some cases has resulted in violence. The NGO Global Witness recorded 57 killings of indigenous activists in 2017 alone, the highest in the world¹².

Indigenous people and ethnic minorities who live in urban areas also experience serious problems with discrimination and a lack of opportunities. Most of the ethnic minorities who live in large urban settings are in the communities once known as “favelas”, where access to basic needs such as water or electricity is poor and social services are lacking¹³. Violence is another common problem, with the 2017 Atlas of Violence revealing that African Brazilians were the most common victims of homicide crimes: suffering a higher rate of murder than any other ethnic group¹⁴.



¹⁰Minority Rights Group International. Brazil. Minority Rights, 2020. (Online) Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/country/brazil>

¹¹J. C. Sousa. Bolsonaro Threatens the Indigenous Right to Be. Amazon Watch, 2020. (Online) Available at: <https://amazonwatch.org/news/2020/0220-bolsonaro-threatens-the-indigenous-right-to-be>

¹²Global Witness data. 2017 - Global trends. Global Witness, 2017. (Online) Available at: <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/their-faces-defenders-frontline/#chapter-1/section-1>

¹³W. Carless. A Brazilian student mapped out Rio's racial segregation. What he found was startling. The World, 2015. (Online) Available at: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-11-02/brazilian-student-mapped-out-rios-racial-segregation-what-he-found-was-startling>

¹⁴Global Health Now. Young, Black and Vulnerable in Brazil. Global Health Now, 2017. (Online) Available at: <https://www.globalhealthnow.org/2017-06/young-black-and-vulnerable-brazil>

MIGRATION

In contrast to other countries, Brazilian born people have a higher unemployment rate than immigrants to Brazil where unemployment rates are 11.1% for Brazilians and 4.8% foreign-born¹⁶.

We were repeatedly told that lack of employment opportunities for Brazilian born people combined with the demands of care work abroad, has created a migration pull towards countries such as the UK, Italy, USA, Switzerland, and Portugal. In terms of gender, black and mixed-race women experience a higher degree of discrimination than their male counterparts, with many findings work in informal settings. There is also a significant gap between male and female salaries, with black women receiving considerably less.

Black and mixed-race women also suffer more discrimination in judicial and detention settings, even though such systems are designed to protect and secure an individual's rights¹⁷. These are all push factors that lead to a high number of such women deciding to seek out employment and livelihood opportunities for themselves and their families elsewhere. In Brazil, this has been the case for many women that have left their families to fulfil this role (both genuinely and under false pretences). This is known as "global care chains"¹⁸. According to ONS figures, around 101,000 Brazil born individuals are currently residing in the UK¹⁹ of which 55% are women.



¹⁶G20-migration-and-displacement-trends-and-policies-report-2019.pdf

¹⁷MCT. Violence against Women in Brazil. A Report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Violence Against Women: 10 Reports / the Year 2003. (Online) Available at: https://www.omct.org/files/2004/07/2409/eng_2003_02_brazil.pdf

¹⁸(ILO, 2016a) https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf

¹⁹Office for National Statistics. The population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, January 2019 to December 2019. (Online) Retrieve from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationality>

PUSH FACTORS (HUMAN TRAFFICKING & LGBTQAI+)

Through our work, Brazilians nationals in the UK were aware migration to the UK and Europe involved work in the sex trade and domestic work. We became aware of what seemed to be a growing trend indicating that another reason for leaving Brazil is being LGBTQAI+.

Brazil is considered a “source, transit, and destination country” for human trafficking. Source countries provide traffickers with the human capital they need. Transit countries help move victims from one country to another and destination countries are where trafficked humans arrive and are exploited the most²⁰.

Many of the Brazilian women we work with have been trafficked for sexual exploitation to the UK. Some Brazilian trafficking victims are forced to engage in criminal activity, including drug trafficking in Brazil and the EU.

*“NGOs and officials report some police officers to ignore the exploitation of children in sex trafficking, patronize brothels, and rob and assault women in prostitution, impeding identification of sex trafficking victims. Government officials and former officials have been investigated and prosecuted for Trabalho escravo”.*²¹

Whilst on the trip, it was made evident from the charities we visited that the state of Goiás has the highest murder rate of women. They also have the highest rate of indigenous and black ethnic minorities, being exploited as modern-day slaves in various farms (within Brazil) and including the illicit sex industry.

The majority of our female clients come from Goiás and surrounding states. Grass root campaigners in Goiania told us how the perpetrators sell stories of life in Europe to entice women to leave Brazil and how women from out of state are transited to the “hub” in Goiás where they hear stories of women that have expensive houses, extravagant lifestyles and are lured into exploitation.

The women are often from rural low-income families who have had little educational opportunities. They are told sex working with men in Europe is “easy money”.

In 2018 Brazil had the highest homophobic murder rates in the world²², of which most of them were centred towards transgender women²³. Hence people sought safety in Europe. Homophobia can be reported as a crime, however organisations (both government and NGO’s) and clients explained that in practice this is not a deterrent as the legislation is not implemented and homophobia is not only tolerated but encouraged by influential politicians.



²⁰<https://borgenproject.org/9-facts-about-human-trafficking-in-brazil>

²¹<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b93a.html>

²²<https://www.statista.com/statistics/799411/lgbt-people-violent-deaths-brazil/>

²³<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2019/11/18/murdered-hanged-and-lynched-331-trans-people-killed-this-year/#557819302d48>

EXPERIENCE & IMMERSION

Through our cultural observation and immersion, we learnt about the impact, effects and factors of migration and immigration.

Date	Meeting/Event
Thursday 5th March	Caritas Brasilia British Embassy
Friday 6th March	Returnees and ex-clients from the IRC's (women/men) Project Resgate ASTRAL
Saturday 7th March	Clients in Brasilia
Sunday 8th March	Parque de Cidade The event at the Museum of Ingenious people for Women's Day – Brasilia
Monday 9th March	Travel to Sao Paulo SEFRAS
Tuesday 10th March	Compassiva IOM – Sao Paulo CASA 1
Wednesday 11th March	Associação Comunitária Monte Azul Rede Feminista de Juristas DeFEMde
Thursday 12th March	Centro de Direitos Humanos e Cidadania do Migrante CDHIC Clients from Sao Paulo
Friday 13th March	Ibirapuera Park Local markets

Caritas²⁴ is a faith based organisation and shares the mission of the Catholic Church to serve the poor and to promote charity and justice throughout the world.

Cáritas Brasília was founded in 1956. Caritas works in five areas within Brazil. These are North 1, North 3, Northwest, Center-Oeste and Rio de Janeiro.

Within this work they prioritised projects into their main support missions; these are:

- Refugees and migrants
- Youth and childhood
- Employment
- Environment and emergencies
- Biomais – sustainable climate change, ingenious people-specific to South Americas
- Training and capacity

Hibiscus' focus on this visit was to gain support for Brazilian nationals that are being returned to Brazil. Caritas further informed us that they also work with Brazilian families who are on a low income with children who are means-tested. Caritas is tasked with delivering a variety of services. They work on integration services with the support of diverse NGO's. One of these projects is “La Pana” programme which translates as “to receive and to welcome.” It is sponsored by the USA offering help to migrants mainly from Venezuela and other affected countries, which crosses the Brazilian border. The focus of this project is to ensure that refugees are placed in various regions across Brazil and are supported with housing, education, training courses, and integration within the Portuguese language.

Caritas has a multi-disciplinary team including: social workers, legal advisors, trainers, counsellors, human rights specialists and environmentalists. The social services programme assists all those that face difficulties in the integration of the governmental system. Those facing problems with securing employment are supported with basic skills such as help with creating a CV, interview preparations and in some instance help in searching for employment. Caritas can support those in the programmes until they have secured employment in line with their support needs.



²⁴<https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/latin-america/brazil>

The British Embassy in Brasilia maintains and develops relations between the UK and Brazil. They have a great insight into the difficulties that returnees may face once returning from the UK.²⁵

The Embassy explained that there had been a large increase in migration to the UK; mainly due to the economic issues in Brazil and families having to meet the need of the growing population. In 2015, the situation of the economic crisis deteriorated and heightened immigration from Brazil which could not support those people with heightened push factors. Historically Brazilians often immigrated to the USA but with tighter immigration and border controls. The focus is now on European countries.

The Embassy staff further informed us about the role of the local Councils. The Government municipalities are responsible for “first response” to the public. They provide emergency shelters (cities only). In 2015 the need for sheltered emergency accommodation increased and shelters deteriorated. Due to the increase of those becoming homeless, this consequently increased the demand for sheltered accommodation.

The Embassy informed us that all Brazilians are entitled to the public health system and children are entitled to free education. There are several supports they can access e.g. SENAC capacity training (vocational training course). This can be accessed via local councils (municipalities). Vulnerable groups can access different support services e.g. the programme “Bosa Familiar” where cash is given to a family on social benefits. (This is managed by the Ministry of Citizenship). Application forms can be accessed online via the municipality’s website or hard copy available from their office. Citizens who are returning to the country need to show proof of address and ID card to apply for funds.



²⁵<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-brazil>



Based in the State of Goiás, the association Project Resgate exists to help victims of human trafficking, primarily women, to exit prostitution. They are an IOM partner and help returnees not just to return to their homeland, but above all reintegrating them into a healthy life to prevent the risk of recidivism.²⁶

Project Resgate support (mainly) women and men with:

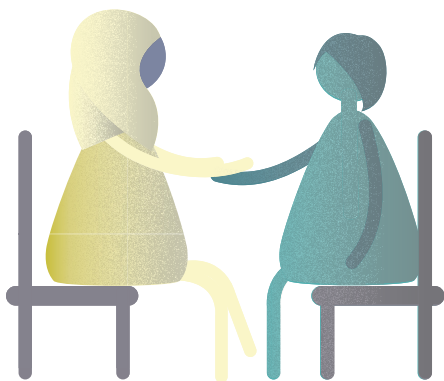
- Medical and psychological care
- Career planning advice
- Financing of training and mini business, support for livelihoods and the like (in cooperation with local partners)
- Regular assessment of the successful integration through constant contact

Assistance provided by Project Resgate often serves as a start-up aid for business as unemployment is one of the main reasons people are victims of human trafficking and prostitution.

Project Resgate's statistics show that the number of Brazilian returnees in 2019 supported were 133, from a range of different countries including: Switzerland, Belgium, France and the UK. 64 of these returnees live in Goiania and 41 of these returned from the UK. Most of the returnees from Goiania did not successfully resettle in Brazil and instead wanted to return to the UK.

The state of Goiás is one of the five most violent areas of Brazil, although it has a smaller density of population, with women being the most associated victim.²⁷ Therefore this has meant that women are more likely to leave Brazil for the UK in search of safety and economic growth. Perpetrators often exploit this vulnerability, telling their success stories to vulnerable women and encouraging them to leave.

Project Resgate operates in the state to try and advise, support, and help women who have returned to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle. They can work with the grant that is offered by the IOM of the country they are returning from to start training, employment, and education. They also support women to find safety and develop a circle of friendships as well as reconnecting with family.



²⁶<https://www.projektresgate.ch/angebote/?lang=en>

²⁷CLEI ELECTRONIC JOURNAL, VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1, PAPER 0, APRIL 2016 Feature Selection for Clustering of Homicide Rates in the Brazilian State of Goiás

Astral is a charity that is part funded by the Ministry of Justice in Brazil and is mainly operational in Gioana and across the North East. It is an NGO that works on the development of policies for those that have been historically discriminated against.²⁸

The primary goal of Astral is to support those that represent the “feminine gender” and mainly those who identify as “trans”. They often have supported women that are returning from Europe including the UK. Astral’s founder Beth informed Hibiscus that many trans women prefer to be within Europe, albeit homeless, than in Brazil as they are often rejected from the community and their family. They are also at risk of violent hate crime.

They created two safe houses so that people have a safe area they can go to as often they have no money to protect themselves and being homeless can be extremely dangerous. Astral offer up to six months of safe sheltered accommodation as well as emotional support to help women reintegrate and gain stability in their lives.

We were also informed of updates of some clients that both Hibiscus and Astral had worked with. This included a woman we had supported that had been trafficked into Europe by convicted traffickers.

Astral also offer counsellors and psychologists to those identifying themselves as LGBTQIA+ who are affected by hate crime and trafficking.

There were reports from Astral’s clients that due to the lack of education and information, psychologists offering mental health services do not support those that identify as LGBTQIA+ and therefore would place blame on those needing support. It was also reported that some psychologists within the Brazilian state referral system have told clients that they had a choice to change their body and therefore being trafficked, as well as being confronted by violent crime, was a consequence.



²⁸https://www.facebook.com/pg/astrallgoias/about/?ref=page_internal

CRAI²⁹ which means “to heal” is a project overseen by Sefras, an NGO in Brazil which was established as a partnership in response to the Haitian people arriving in 2010.

It provides a community point to access public services for immigrants and promotes socio-cultural, political, and economic rights.

As part of their main project “Migration Regulation”, support is provided for migrants to integrate within Brazilian society. CRAI believes that by employing staff and volunteers who are immigrants/refugees themselves, clients will be better supported with first-hand experience from the staff. They also help with legal services, training, employable skills and access to formal education. The migrant population within their projects are mainly from Venezuela, Bolivia, Syria, Haiti, Congo, and Peru who often transit through Brazil as is not normally their final destination. CRAI help with issues linked with modern day slavery and usually signpost to the appropriate authorities or NGO to ensure that they get specialist support.

CRAI also work in women’s prisons with a focus on ensuring access to rights both for women on remand and those sentenced. Those sentenced who demonstrate good behavior can be placed in open prisons. This has meant they have supported women in open prisons who have been homeless or in insecure accommodation. This causes difficulties for the women as many have never lived in Brazil, are homeless and/or have no experience of the Brazilian system.

Mental health has been an increasing issue where CRAI provides therapeutic support for those women.

CRAI have other projects including: support for homeless people and squatters, outreach services and legal representation.

CRAI confirmed that they could potentially support Hibiscus’ Brazilian clients returning. Services are free however financial resources are a problem nationally and resources are very scarce hence services can be poor.



²⁹<http://www.sefras.org.br/novo/servicos/sao-paulo/crai>

Compassiva is a social organisation that supports children, young people, women and refugees living in situations of vulnerability in the city of Sao Paulo. Their main mission is to create opportunities for transforming the lives of people in vulnerable situations.³⁰

Compassiva can operate due to volunteers, partnerships as well as having a project with UNHCR (for Venezuelan's and Syrian's). All other projects that they provide are currently not funded. They have various projects as well as activities within the centre that can support parents whilst their children are in school.

Compassiva have a project that works with the population that live in high-rise communities. These are large houses or apartments that have been repossessed or who have gained "squatters rights" and are often run by political bodies to help with the homelessness situation. They provide social workers, who visit these communities to ensure they have basic needs such as furniture and donations as many do not have employment.

They also help provide basic food boxes and essentials, although "landlords" of these communities often refuse NGO's entering due to the living and unstable conditions.

To help those accessing the service within the community centre, they offer morning and evening Portuguese classes and have specific gender-focused classes; often due to cultural reasons and the preference of the main client group.

Compassiva are very concerned about the economic crisis and lack of opportunities for returnees. They drew our attention to the fact the United States is now deporting around 200 Brazilian people each week while there are growing numbers of Brazilian people at the US border. They estimate this has increased by many thousands in the last two years.

Compassiva staff stressed how difficult it is for Brazilians to get a job. They suggested they could potentially assist Hibiscus clients returning to Brazil with training opportunities, the only barrier being accommodation for the trainees.



²⁹<http://compassiva.org.br/en/who-we-are>

INTERNATIONAL OFFICES FOR MIGRATION

IOM Brazil³¹ offer support to most returnees in Brazil. They established their office in Brazil in 2015 in order to carry out activities which include: reforms in domestic immigration law, migrants wellbeing and reintegration programmes. The returnee programme has two designated offices; one in Sao Paulo and the other in Brasilia. The IOM in Sao Paulo is funded in partnership with several EU countries such as Portugal, Ireland, Switzerland, Holland, and Italy. Each Program operates differently based on the main objectives and priorities set by the relevant Government.

As of 2020, Belgium provides a return ticket home which is paid directly to the clients. Portugal funds post-arrival reintegration as well as the return ticket. Switzerland has a specific and targeted human trafficking project when someone returns to Brazil. Italy has a focus on returnees with mental health needs. The IOM programme in Brazil is expanding what is a relatively new project. There has been an increase of Brazilians in the USA, Holland, the UK, Portugal, and Spain. There were strong trafficking networks to Spain, Italy, Switzerland and increasingly to the UK which has meant an increase in the number of those needing support.

The IOM offices in Brazil suggested that due to the free fall in the economy in Brazil, people are more likely to migrate at a faster rate than previously. The top countries of destination are the USA, Spain, Portugal and the UK. The salary is more attractive in Europe and although often the work is low paid, in relative terms to Brazil it is a higher base rate. This proves challenging as many are recruited on this basis and then are subsequently trafficked or brought into modern day slavery.

They also felt that the migration of Brazilian's who are most vulnerable such as women and trans women are often due to the high rates of violence and murder towards them. Brazil has the highest murder rates towards trans women in the world, and therefore this lures them to Europe where although trafficked, will be in a safer position. This does lead to difficulty for many people who want to seek asylum or shelter as the Governmental approach in Brazil's policies indicate that LGBTQIA+ and women are protected, although in practice this is not the case. Due to this protection from the Government which in essence is "written on paper", they are often refused asylum in Europe as Brazil is identified as a "safe country".

Although the IOM does not currently have a funded project with the UK, they can refer them onto the correct departments in the municipalities within the returnee's hometown. Assistance can include reintegration guidance from other NGO's providing support.



³¹<https://www.iom.int/countries/brazil>

CASA 1 — SAO PAULO



Casa 1 was started in 2015 by a group of people responding to the need for a place of safety for the LGBTQIA+ community when the violence and murder rates against those in the community rose.

Until 2019 homophobia was not a crime in Brazil, although the legislation has now changed. Casa 1 staff said this has caused a bigger societal issue as many people believe they are legally protected while in fact homophobic views have become more radicalised due to the political rhetoric against the LGBTQIA+ community.

“La casa” was their first project; a safe house for 18 to 25-year-olds who are subjected to domestic violence due to their sexuality.



The project raised funds with help from friends. This safe house was initially secured for six months whilst La casa began to develop their methodology. In 2017 when the house and services were well structured, they developed other services.

They built a cultural centre to deliver services to the wider community, working with an “open door policy” to the whole community; with the primary focus on the LGBTQIA+ community

Due to the increasingly violent messages from the Government, the project realised that there was a greater need for mental health support in the community³². They opened a social clinic which also served the local homeless community, of which over 35% are within the LGBTQIA+ community. They provide vocational training programmes (beauty salon, body massage, sewing, etc.) to support clients to gain non-sex work employment. The building also houses a library, cinema, medical facilities to sensitise beneficiaries on health awareness such as sexually transmitted diseases and dispense treatment to HIV positive people.

Hibiscus was informed that statements made by politicians about the LGBTQIA+ community in the 2018 general elections, led to an increase in attacks and is a major factor in migrating to seek safety and refuge. They feel strongly that the human rights in legislation are not being recognised.

Casa 1 work with local employment partners to host workshops with both employees and employers to ensure access to the workforce. This has proven to be a success with international companies and franchises.

Casa 1 supports local people and advised they will support Hibiscus clients returning to Brazil who identify as LGBTQIA+ or who live locally. Their main issues and difficulty moving forward is due to the political censorship imposed.

³²<https://nowtoronto.com/lifestyle/education/dandarah-app-brazilian-trans-women>

ASSOCIAÇÃO COMUNITÁRIA MONTE AZUL

Associação Comunitária Monte Azul (ACOMA)³³ was founded on the 25th January 1979, following commencement of work started by the educator Ute Craemer who brought educational opportunities to children and families living in slum dwellings.

ACOMA now has more than 260 employees and can accommodate over 70 overseas volunteers each year; the majority being from Germany. Since 1979, ACOMA has developed activities based on education, employment, training, health and social care across three distinctive favelas, Monte Azul (3,800 residents), Peíinha (2,000 residents) and the Horizonte Azul (“Blue Horizon”) neighbourhood (12,000 residents).



Community and educational activities include:

Nursery care for approximately 200 children, early primary education for approximately 100 children aged 3-6, youth centre for approximately 400 children and young people aged between 7-14 in 3 nuclei, art workshops, cabinet making (joinery) for approximately 40 young people aged 13-17, bakery, electrical and computer workshops for approximately 12 young people, school for approximately 50 children and young people with disabilities, training for nursery and youth centre education assistants, social workshop for young people and community educators and workshops in recycling furniture.

ACOMA also have a project named “Childhood” for new-borns and children up to the age of three. This project supports mothers returning to work once their child reaches two months to help them to support themselves and their children financially. Currently there is no provision within the state system for mothers with new-born babies.

The community also built a health centre with support from a doctor from Germany. Initially built as a wooden structure, it is been transformed into a concrete building which houses medical practitioners for the local community at a more affordable cost than the state medical system. At the time Hibiscus visited the centre, it was the only hospital and healthcare facility within an accessible radius.

We were surprised to learn that in Brazil most babies are born by caesarean. ACOMA’s Childhood project promotes and facilitates natural births to expectant mothers living locally.

³³<http://www.sab.org.br/monteazul>

REDE FEMINISTA DE JURISTAS DEFEMDE

This organisation was founded in 2016, consisting of a diverse network of 300 advocates and lawyers who came together as volunteers to promote gender equality within the criminal justice system in Brazil. Their main objective is to promote the rights of women and social equality in the 'letter of the law'. They also offer valuable support to trans women as well as victims of violence and those who have experienced oppression, harassment and physical and mental torture.

They have carried out extensive policy and advocacy work across Brazil and despite having no financial support, have identified the following:

- Women with children under 10 years of age can carry out their sentence at home through a project called "Free My Mother"
- 89% of Brazilians who are convicted of drug trafficking identify as Black and 75% of domestic violence victims are Black
- Politicians and members of the National Congress do not reflect the ethnic diversity of the country; Black people represent 56% of the Brazilian population
- 27% of the vote is Black women yet only 0.6% get to Congress; whilst everyone has the right to vote, one third of the total population do not use their vote
- Colourism is an issue in Brazil hence there is a culture of voting for White people to become politicians and often the political line is passed down through male lineage
- Although there may be a small fine for not voting, some take the view that their vote will not count and therefore this fine will not impact them



The project leaders at Rede Feminista, informed Hibiscus about their role in supporting victims of domestic violence. In 2018, they secured a safe place to accommodate Brazilian women and their children, providing respite and temporary shelter for six months, pending the availability of a sustainable solution. They can also provide them with psychological support, a designated social worker, access to medical care and advocacy with law enforcement agencies.

On a more national level, Rede Feminista filed a petition to the United Nations to register their dissatisfaction over what they perceived as a "blatant disregard" for human rights during the president's speech in 2019. They felt it incited hate crime towards women³⁴ and the LGBTQIA+ community.

³⁴<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jair-bolsonaro-who-is-quotes-brazil-president-election-run-off-latest-a8573901.html>

CENTRO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E CIDADANIA DO MIGRANTE (CDHIC)

CDHIC³⁵ aims to promote and create a society free of prejudice, sexism, racism, discrimination and xenophobia for refugees and immigrants. Since 2010, they have provided services to both returning Brazilians and refugees by providing support and reintegration services in collaboration with the IOM. They work to influence policy reforms within immigration laws and policies in Brazil.

They provide support for those without documentation and those working in hostile conditions, helping them to access their legal papers and find legal representation. CDHIC also support those that have experienced modern day slavery or human trafficking in Brazil. It has a strong emphasis on the promotion of rights and services for the LGBTQAI+ community.

They indicated that a collaborative effort is needed in order to provide adequate support for those who have experienced human trafficking. CDHIC aim to ensure the safety of their clients by providing shelter, counselling and help with reintegration support. There have been cases involving modern day slavery, where CDHIC have assisted with securing the release of workers from factories producing clothing for well-known brands in the western world.

Due to the unequal treatment of migrants and certain refugees, there has been growing resentment in Brazil. When refugees arrive in Brazil, there is a protocol to get documents together. The process often takes two to three years for official papers to be generated for refugees and migrants. Returning Brazilians and some migrants are often faced with long wait times, partly due to Venezuelan nationals being given priority in some cases, because of an agreement between the Brazilian and US Governments. This has resulted in many people being left unregistered, which CDHIC believes is a driving factor in modern day slavery and human trafficking.



³⁵<https://www.cdhic.org.br>

MR N'S STORY

Mr N is a young man from Brazil who entered the UK. However, after being encountered by the authorities for overstaying his visa he was detained. Mr N's reasons for not returning to Brazil was due to his family situation. Having disclosed to them about his sexuality, his family did not accept his choice and threatened him with harm.



Mr N went through the asylum process whilst detained and sought Hibiscus' advice during the initial engagements. During the asylum process, Hibiscus supported Mr N with contacting his solicitor, the Home Office and support agencies in the UK. Further advice was given on the bail procedure and interpretation used to clarify any misunderstandings.

By early September, Mr N received his asylum refusal and continued to challenge the case with the Home Office. After discussing various options, Mr N accepted that he could no longer challenge his removal especially without his solicitor's support. It was then that Hibiscus began to explore various support agencies in Brazil to accommodate Mr N's needs. An NGO in Brazil supporting the LGBTQAI+ community was contacted. They were able to provide direction, advice and additional support to Mr N. Mr N was provided

their details and additionally given some funds to assist him with emergency accommodation since he could not return to his family home. Since his return, Mr N messaged to say his journey home went well and is now preparing to look for work:

"My journey back it was quiet, I'm in Goiania. I am looking for a job, I have already sent some resume. I'm staying in a hostel, but I keep in touch with some friends".

Additionally, Mr N was able to meet with the Hibiscus team in Goiania during the overseas trip to Brazil and share his experiences of returning and his current situation.

Upon meeting staff in Brazil, Mr N explained to us that he had found the experience difficult. He disclosed that he had left Brazil due to his family, friends and community disowning him and was in constant threat of violence and harm due to his sexuality. He had wanted to go to the UK as it seemed that he would be able to live a "normal" life and would be able to live without turning his head all the time. He did not feel safe and has not spoken to his parents since. He stated that although the voluntary return route went smoothly, he was still dealing with the emotional trauma of what he had gone through. He is still very much alone and without contact from family or friends and is scared. We spoke to him regarding the agencies we had met and the importance of reaching out to communities he can feel safe in, as well as work in therapy towards the trauma he has faced to which he was very keen to continue with our support.

In March 2020, Mr N was able to find work in Palmeiras as a worker for a butcher.

**Name changed to protect identity*

MISS M'S STORY

Miss M is a Brazilian national who had to flee Brazil with her son as a survivor of domestic abuse. She was rendered as an “overstayer” due to the expiration of her visa. She was subsequently arrested at her home. Due to the trauma she had suffered, she fled the home during arrest by jumping out of the window with her son, suffering injuries to her face, arms, stomach, leg and feet.



Miss M was detained in an IRC where Hibiscus work. We introduced our services during our induction. During the visits with Hibiscus, Miss M disclosed that her son was seriously injured from the fall but was scared to seek help. Hibiscus encouraged her to get her son to the hospital to minimise further health concerns. We further advised her to seek support from the Brazilian embassy who could support the son with a voluntary return in order for him to seek medical support in Brazil.

Hibiscus had lengthily conversations with Miss M and spoke to her about her options. Miss M explained that she did not want to return to Brazil due to the risks that her husband posed to her in the past. She decided to seek asylum and we advised her to register for a legal aid solicitor at the library.

A few days later, Miss M came to Hibiscus and was very tearful and panicked. Hibiscus supported her emotionally as she explained that her son did not have the funds to get the medical support he needed in Brazil. She stated that she wanted to return to Brazil to be with her son. We explained her options and supported her as best as possible. Miss M was insistent that she wanted to return. We supported her return to a different city in Brazil if this is what she wanted and to ensure safety for herself and her son.

We contacted family in Brazil who could support her as well as contacting international partners. We supported Miss M through her safety options upon returning including psychological, counselling, and medical support. To enable Miss M to return safely, Hibiscus gave Miss M a resettlement grant. Miss M stated:

“Thank you Hibiscus staff for all your support, God bless you all”.

BRAZIL TRIP

We met with Miss M in Goiania during our trip to Brazil and she told us that she was safe and happy. Life was still difficult in Brazil, especially due to the economy and presidential campaigns. She further said that her son was coping well and that the operation on his arm was successful, however his fingers are still damaged, and he is receiving physiotherapy. They are both attending counselling services and they want to leave behind the traumatic experiences they encountered from their arrest. Miss M is seeking advice and support on her immigration rights as she would like to return to her British partner and be able to look towards a life together.

**Name changed to protect identity*

CONCLUSION

Three Hibiscus staff had ten days across two cities and one town in Brazil. Despite the very limited time in this vast country, with prior research, careful planning, and clear objectives, we achieved and exceeded the principle aims of the international field trip.

We heard first-hand accounts of the housing and economic crises in Brazil, endemic racism, the influence of the church, and the impact of current political rhetoric. We learnt about the political dynamics within the various towns, cities and the country as a whole which can cause confusion and difficulties for many of those we support, especially in terms of access to support, guidance and services.

Our clients who returned to Brazil in the last year were generous in sharing the factors which influenced their decisions to leave Brazil, methods of deception used against them, their experience of living in the UK and their perspective of the detention and returns process, as well as the multitude of barriers to successful reintegration. We learned about the very real dangers facing LGBTQAI+ community living in and returning to Brazil.

We left at a critical time from Brazil as the pandemic hit the nation as there was uncertainty of the global economy and the health of those that are most vulnerable. Hibiscus' resettlement work with Brazilian nationals will be more effective as a direct result of the links, shared visions and cultural exchanges that were created with a range of organisations and individuals in the capital Brasilia, Sao Paulo and Goiania.



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