

NOVEMBER 2025

## El Tanzania visited El Brazil



**The El Tanzania team with some of the Quilombola community members. Joel Newby (far left), Jesca Mgimba second from left, Pastor Maliki (second from right) and Simon Ewing (far right)**

As part of the El International Global Strategic Plan (STEP), El Tanzania (EITZ) committed to starting a partnership with El Brazil through a mission initiative focused on reciprocal learning, and sending. In 2024, EITZ raised local funds to support the Terena Bible College\*. This was an important step in building stronger ties between the church in Tanzania and the church

in Brazil. For 2025, our vision expanded as we believed that a mission trip from Tanzania to Brazil would provide a relationship-building, partnership.

Our team traveled with three primary goals: to learn from the experience and ministry approach of El Brazil, to strengthen relationships between our two El offices, and to explore the

opportunities for long-term Tanzanian missionary involvement. One of the expressed desires of EI Brazil is to welcome an African missionary who could serve among the Quilombola people. These communities were formed by the descendants of Africans who escaped slavery or were later freed and established isolated settlements throughout Brazil. Because of this history, many Quilombola communities retain a strong sense of being African, from music and food to rhythms, movement, and cultural memory.

This desire resonated deeply with EITZ. As “Tanzanians”, we felt both humbled and honored by the possibility of sending a missionary to serve a people whose ancestors came from the very continent we call home. Little did we know how strongly this connection would be felt during our visit.

One of the highlights of our trip was spending two full days with the Quilombola community. From the moment we arrived, our team felt an unexpected sense of familiarity. The landscape lush with mango trees, with children running freely reminded us so much of villages back in Tanzania. We saw cement being mixed by hand, stray dogs wandering about, and chickens darting between the houses. Yet, at



**With pastor Gilmar (second from left)**

the same time, everything was new: the language, the style of clothes, and the subtle cultural differences that reminded us we were far from home. It was a beautiful blend of similarity and difference.

We were graciously hosted by Pastor Gilmar, a man who has spent many years slowly building trust in the community. Because the Quilombola people carry a deep history of pain from being oppressed, marginalised, and ignored, trust does not come easily. Many have had land stolen from them or have been taken advantage of. Yet Pastor Gilmar has faithfully and humbly walked with them, earning their respect through consistent love, presence, and service. Seeing the way he is welcomed into homes was inspiring. His heart for the people challenged us deeply, reminding us of the power of patient, intentional ministry.

During one family visit, we experienced a moment that left a permanent mark on our team. As we sat talking and laughing with a family in front of their house, we noticed a woman next door sitting near her fence with her back towards us. There was a double wire barrier with a path between separating the two households. She listened quietly, smiling occasionally but unsure whether to join us. Jesca, one of our team members, felt led to invite her to come sing and dance with us as we taught the group a few Tanzanian praise songs. At first the woman hesitated. She stepped forward, then back, clearly wanting to join but unable to cross the line. Jesca gently persisted, encouraging her again and again. Slowly, and with visible emotion, the woman stepped around the fence and joined our circle.



### **Jesca teaching a Tanzanian worship song and dance**

Later, we learned the significance of what had happened with the two women. The one we were visiting and the neighbour who joined us were sisters who had been in conflict for over three years. Because of their disagreement, a fence had been erected to separate their properties, and in all that time the estranged sister had never crossed it. Our simple singing, dancing, and prayer became a doorway for reconciliation. It was the first time in years that the sisters stood side by side. We were humbled to witness how God used a small moment of joy and fellowship to soften hearts and begin a path to restore a broken relationship.

This experience showed us that there is a tremendous opportunity for church planting, discipleship, and Bible teaching in the Quilombola communities. There is openness, hunger, and a readiness for the gospel. We left Brazil sensing a genuine invitation from God to consider how the Tanzanian church might play a long-term role in this mission field.

Pastor Maliki and Jesca said “We worshipped, shared testimonies, and prayed together. They welcomed us with great joy, and they were especially excited to see us; very glad to identify

with a brother and a sister from Africa.” Jesca said that participating in this mission trip has encouraged her faith and now she wants to encourage others in the Iringa team to look at mission possibilities.

This article is only a glimpse of what we experienced on our trip. We returned home grateful, inspired, and challenged by what the Lord is doing through EITZ Brazil. We ask for your prayers as EITZ continues discerning how we might send a Tanzanian missionary to serve among the Quilombola people or elsewhere in Brazil.

*Joel Newby, Country Director EITZ*

*\* The team also visited the Terena bible College and will share their experiences in a future issue of Down to Earth.*

*For a short glimpse of Jesca teaching a Tanzanian worship song in Picada, scan the QR code or visit [youtu.be/6yRo3KxxJGc](https://youtu.be/6yRo3KxxJGc)*



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