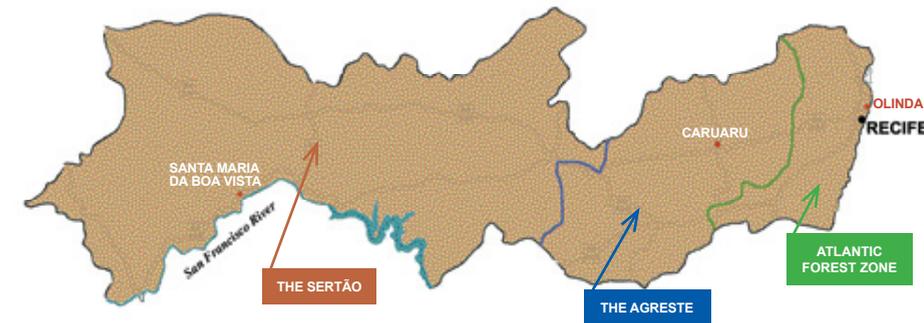


A solidarity visit to Pernambuco, Brazil



Our meeting at the school in the Sonnote Quilombo community near the town of Santa Maria da Boa Vista. L-R: Marta and Rose (standing) and Nivea (seated), who are working with the Movement of Peoples Affected by Dams, community elder Aubino, Danny, Sandy, Caroline, and Tico who represents EQUIP. Front row: Kathy, Brenda, Ann, and Kerrienne.



PERNAMBUCO STATE

Population: 8,745,000.
The Landless: Approximately 28,000 landless families are camped in makeshift black canvas houses. There are 130,000 agricultural workers demanding the right to land and citizenship. Major land holdings are owned by a dozen families.

Capital city: Recife, the fourth-largest metropolitan area in Brazil with 4,136,506 inhabitants. The city of Olinda (part of Recife's metro area) is a UNESCO Heritage site and the first cultural capital of Brazil. It hosts one of the country's three biggest carnivals. Pernambuco's culture and architecture is influenced by its Portuguese colonizers and also by the Dutch who occupied the state from 1630 to 1654.

Land Mass: 98,311 sq. km.
Geography: Pernambuco is made up of three distinct geographical zones:

- The hot, humid, fertile Atlantic Forest zone, formerly covered by rainforest. Less than 3 percent remains, having been cleared primarily to grow sugarcane.
- The agreste, a high altitude plateau with a temperate, drier climate.
- The sertão, a semi-arid swath of land that covers 647,500 sq km of the north-east of Brazil. The landscape of the sertão is characterized by thorny scrub forest. It is the most populated semi-arid region in the world. The San Francisco River forms part of the southern border of Pernambuco and is an important factor in the livelihood and culture of the sertão.



“When we dream alone it is only a dream. When we dream with others, it is the beginning of reality.”

Dom Helder Câmara (1909-1999), Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, recalling a Brazilian proverb



Left: The view from Olinda (“Oh Beautiful”), looking across the bay to the city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco State. Above: Market scene. Right: Some of our group in Recife.