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“Food and nutrition security and its resilience
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Medicinal Flora from S. Tomé, Africa

ISABEL MARIA MADALENO

University of Lisbon, Geography Department (IGOT), Portugal

Abstract

S. Tomé archipelago is one of the smallest countries on Earth. A highly biodiverse equatorial environment, S. Tome island, where the capital city is located, is also one of the poorest in Africa. Discovered by the Portuguese, in 1470, the island had four economic cycles: 1) The sugarcane plantation and production cycle, from 1494 to 1610; 2) The trade cycle, in a triangulation of Africa with the Americas and Europe, from 1611 to 1779; 3) The coffee plantation cycle, the shortest one, from 1780 to 1822, because *Coffea arabica* suffered from diseases; 4) The cocoa cycle, from 1822, year of the independence declaration of Brazil from Portugal, a colony where production was exported to Portugal, a process of replacement that continues to our days. Independent from Portugal from 1975 onwards, S. Tome archipelago has 163,784 residents. The research question for this contribution was: “How can the city residents solve their mild and chronic health troubles when they lack financial resources for their daily needs, such as food and shelter?” During the year 2019, the University of Lisbon conducted a survey to four categories of informants: 1) the food, spice and natural medicines growers (20 %); 2) the fruit, fresh legumes, staples, and healing plant collectors (74 %); a couple of traditional medicinal practitioners (4 %); service providers that sold dried plant portions either, like a botanical garden guide (2 %). The survey gathered 111 different plant species, half of them possessing curative properties. The main objective of the research was to feed a database about healing flora from Africa, a project initiated in 2018 in Ghana.

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