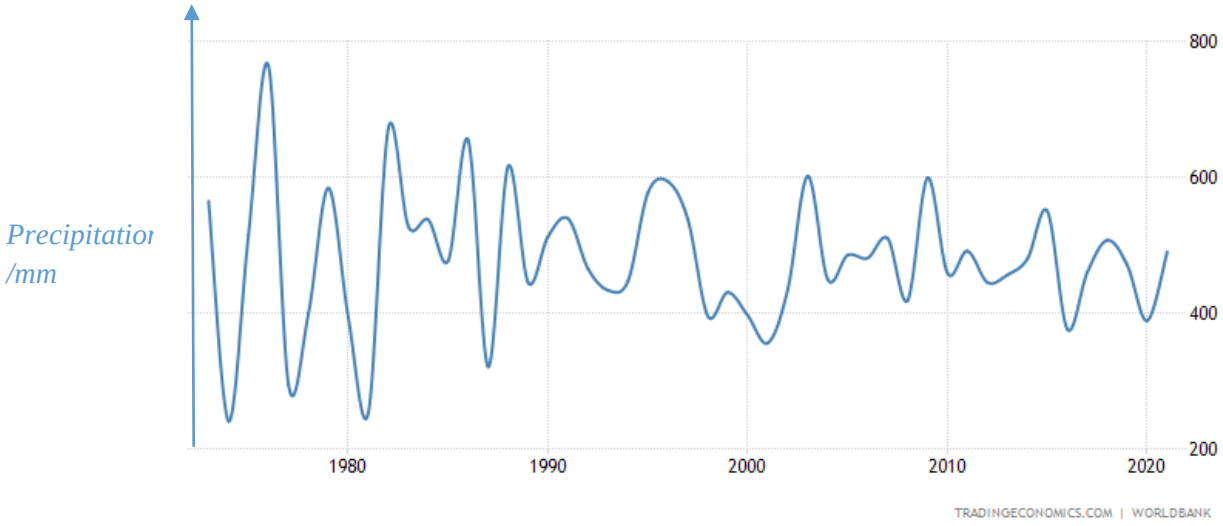
The Seed that Sought Good Soil

This week the weather took a turn for the better. Temperatures started rising and the sun shone for a longer stretch of time. I felt the breeze continuously tugging at my light and feathery nature. It eventually managed to pull me away from my dandelion mother plant, carrying me to new pastures.

I land on a patch of soil – hard, dry and cracked. These are not the ideal conditions for me to germinate. I need moisture in order to grow my roots, to sprout and flourish.

A study[1] published by the National Statistics Office in 2022 and conducted by Professor Charles Galdes, reports that Malta is "growing drier and warmer, with more extreme weather." The report also states that this temperature increase is an equivalent of a 0.2^0C rise every ten years. There has also been a decrease in rainfall rate. It was concluded that every ten years the average rainfall decreased by around 10mm.

The figure below illustrates the variation in precipitation over the Maltese islands in the past 50 years and it can be clearly noted the maximum rainfall recorded has decreased by time.



https://tradingeconomics.com/malta/precipitation#:~:text=Precipitation%20in%20Malta%20averaged%20481.64,of%20216.75%20mm%20in%201947.

In the newspaper article written by David Marinelli in 2019, it is stated that Malta's natural environment is in the process of desertification. This implies that, due to climate change and human interference, vegetation and grasslands decrease sharply and the quality of the soil degrades so much so that it will lose its fertility and will not be able to support plant growth.

A report[3] issued by the United Nations in 2020 supports these findings when it states that, on a global scale, drought and desertification are affecting approximately 24% of arable land and threatening the livelihood of people, other organisms and further contributing to climate change.

Within our own little niche, we can contribute to help combat such a disastrous process of events. Besides employment of climate-smart agricultural practices by farmers which will assist maintaining soil fertility and soil quality, consumers can make sure that they purchase local, seasonal produce. Such food bears less of a carbon footprint, produces less waste since there is less packaging involved and has more chance of being fresher and thus more nutritious. With concerted effort, we can assist seeds to find good, fertile soil.

References:

[1] **Malta temperature climbs 1.5^{0}C since 1952, new report finds.**
https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/malta-temperature-climbs-15c-since-1952-new-report-finds.959480

[2] **Desertification of Malta – David Marinelli**
https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/desertification-of-malta-david-marinelli.740079

[3] **United Nations Decade: For Deserts and the Fight against Desertification**
https://www.un.org/en/events/desertification_decade/whynow.shtml#:~:text=When%20land%20degradation%20happens%20in,depend%20on%20these%20degrading%20areas.