

New European Bauhaus Academy

Design Thinking and Green Skills for Common Futures

Module 1 – Introduction:
Common Futures & New European Bauhaus

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Circular Bio-based Europe

Joint Undertaking

 Bio-based Industries Consortium



Co-funded by
the European Union



This course is part of the **New European Bauhaus Academy South Hub**, designed to empower professionals, students, and young with future-ready knowledge and skills. Through participatory and interdisciplinary methods, the course integrates the core values of the New European Bauhaus: sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetics.

Organized by:

SocialTech Lab (Coordinator, Cyprus)

SURF Lab (University of Cyprus, Cyprus)

Karma Mixed Reality Lab (Koç University, Turkey)

Ankara Aks Creative Hub (Turkey)

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LECTURE 1.1

WHY “COMMON FUTURES”?

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The notion of “**futures**” (plural) challenges the idea of a singular, predetermined “**future**.” Futures studies emphasize **plurality**, **uncertainty**, and **inclusivity** in imagining possible pathways (Inayatullah, 2008). This perspective highlights that the **future is not fixed** but **co-created** through collective choices and societal actions.

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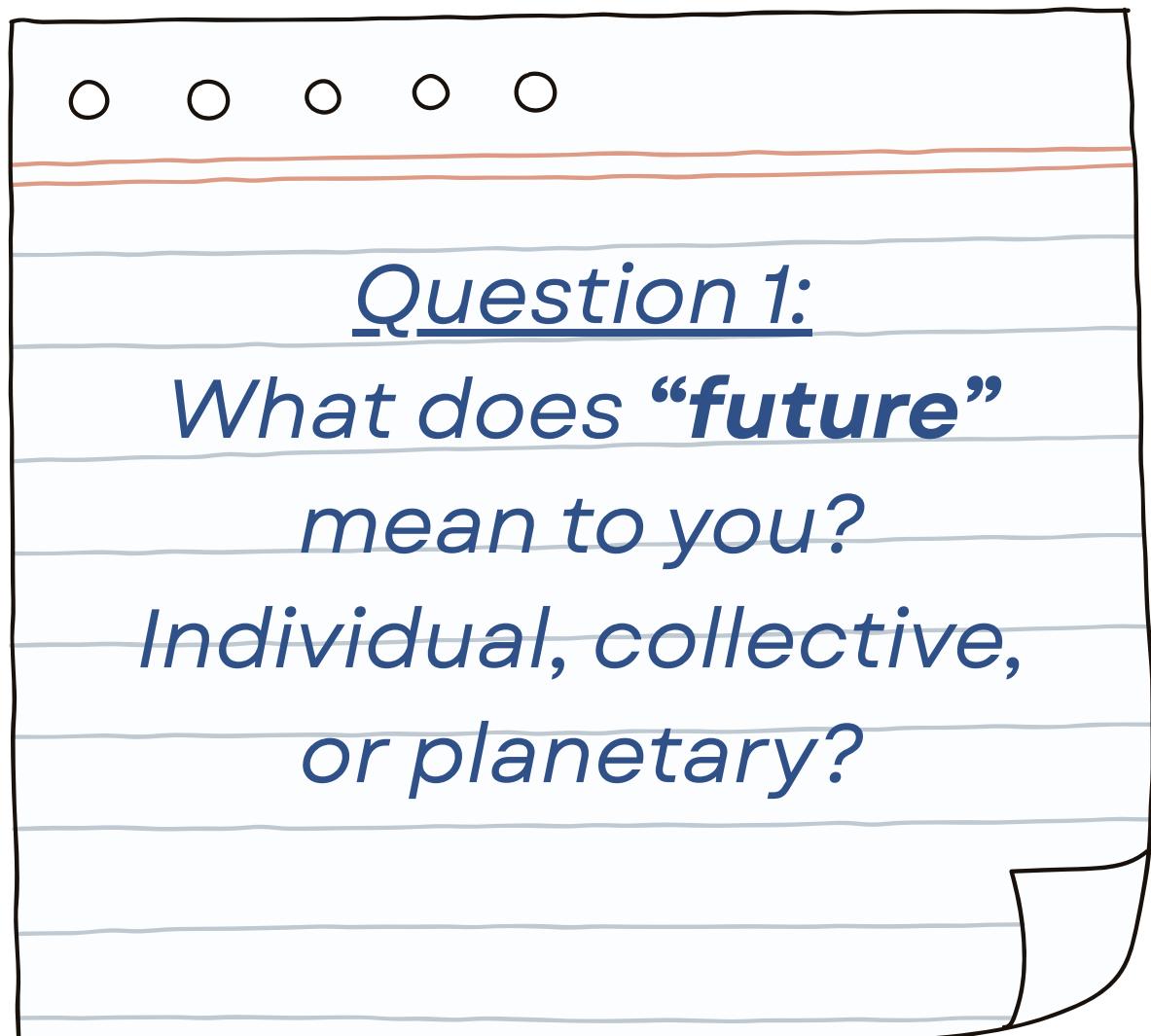


A “**common future**” implies **shared responsibility**, especially in the context of **sustainability** and **design**. Designing for common futures requires acknowledging interdependence across social, ecological, and technological systems (Irwin, 2015).



Youth play a particularly significant role in shaping transitions toward sustainability. Through creativity, activism, and innovation, young people contribute to reimagining sustainable societies. Movements such as **Fridays for Future** demonstrate how youth-led climate activism is reshaping global environmental discourse (Wahlström et al., 2019). At the local level, innovation labs and community-driven projects showcase how participatory creativity enables concrete sustainable transformations (Mulgan, 2021).

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LECTURE 1.2

THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS (NEB) FRAMEWORK

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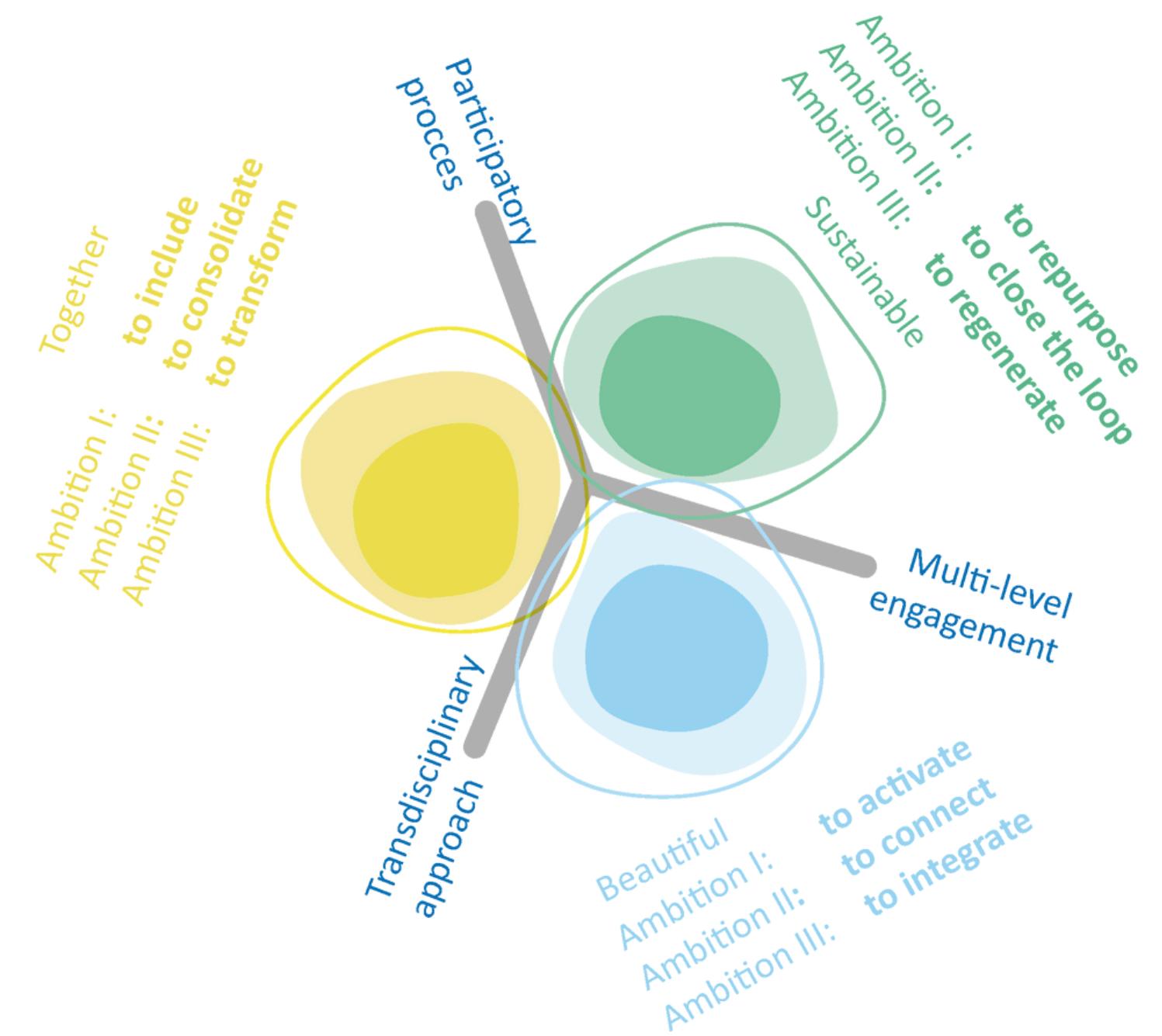
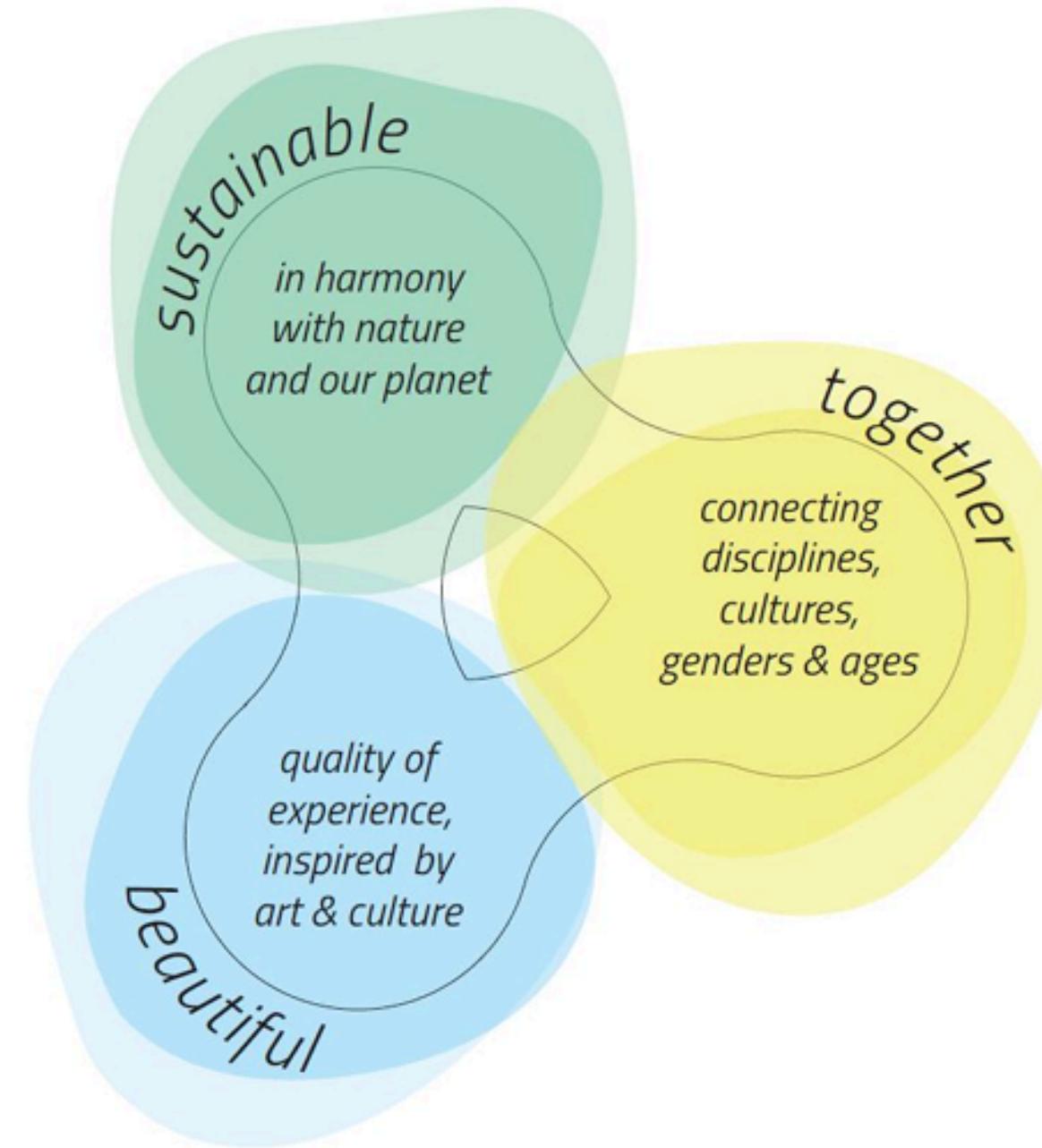
New European Bauhaus

beautiful | sustainable | together



The **New European Bauhaus (NEB)**, launched by the European Commission in 2020, is both a cultural initiative and a practical framework for sustainability transitions. Its three core values are **sustainability**, **inclusion**, and **aesthetics** (European Commission, 2021).

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The NEB concept is deeply inspired by the **original Bauhaus movement**, founded in **Germany** in **1919**. The Bauhaus emerged as a response to the social and technological upheavals of industrial modernity, integrating art, design, and architecture into a holistic vision of society (Droste, 2006).

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Similarly, the NEB reflects a **paradigm shift** in the 21st century, addressing the ecological and social crises of our time. Where the Bauhaus once sought to reconcile craft and industry, the NEB seeks to integrate sustainability, culture, and social justice into the heart of European innovation. In this sense, it can be seen as a contemporary “Bauhaus moment” for a world in transition (von der Leyen, 2020).

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- 1 
Reconnecting with nature
- 2 
Regaining a sense of belonging
- 3 
Prioritising the places and people that need it the most
- 4 
Long-term, life-cycle thinking in the industrial ecosystem

These values are operationalized through **four** guiding principles:

- 1-Reconnecting with nature** – recognizing the ecological dimension of design.
- 2-Sense of belonging** – fostering inclusive and community-oriented spaces.
- 3-Prioritization of places and people in need** – addressing social inequalities.
- 4-Circularity and resource efficiency** – embedding circular economy principles.

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Concrete practices are visible in NEB Prize projects, such as community gardens, adaptive reuse of buildings, and participatory public spaces that embody these principles (European Commission, 2022).

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A compelling case study is the project **“Oasis Schoolyard”** in Paris, a NEB Prize 2022 winner in the category Reconnecting with Nature. The initiative transforms asphalted schoolyards into green, climate-adaptive, and inclusive playgrounds, introducing vegetation, permeable soils, and biodiversity-friendly designs. Beyond ecological benefits, the project fosters a sense of belonging and well-being for children, while simultaneously cooling urban microclimates. This example demonstrates how NEB principles translate into tangible, local interventions that address both environmental and social dimensions of sustainability (European Commission, 2022).

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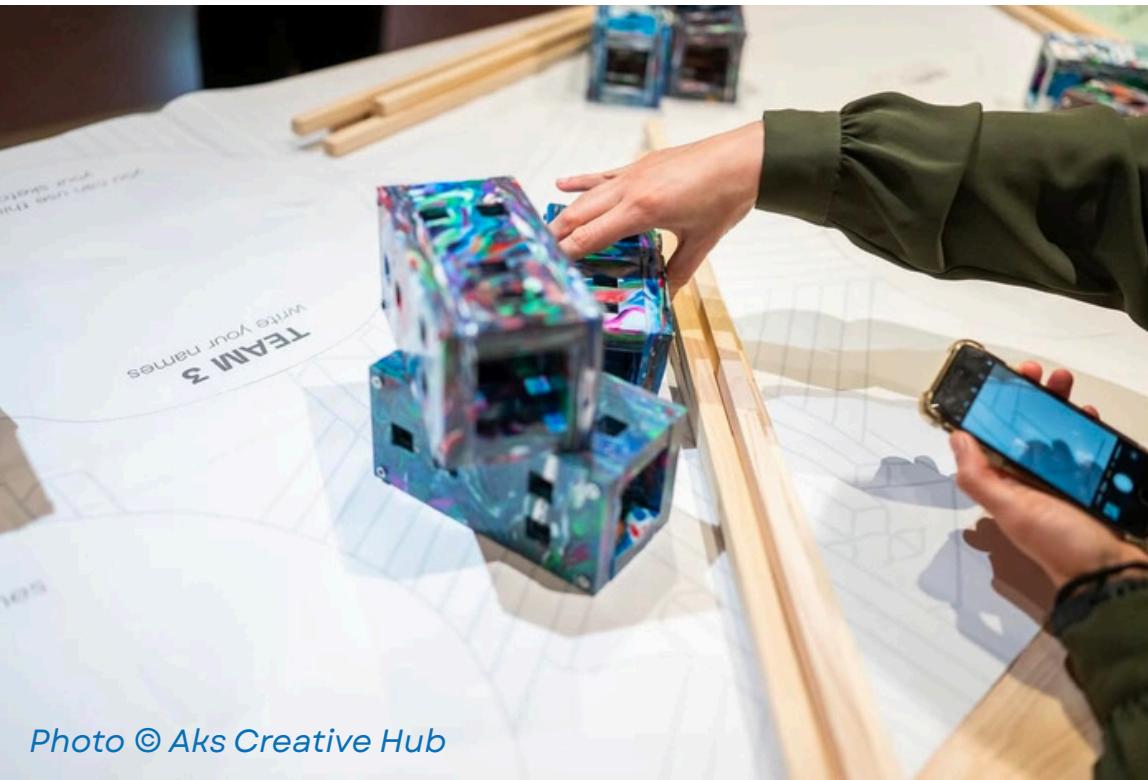
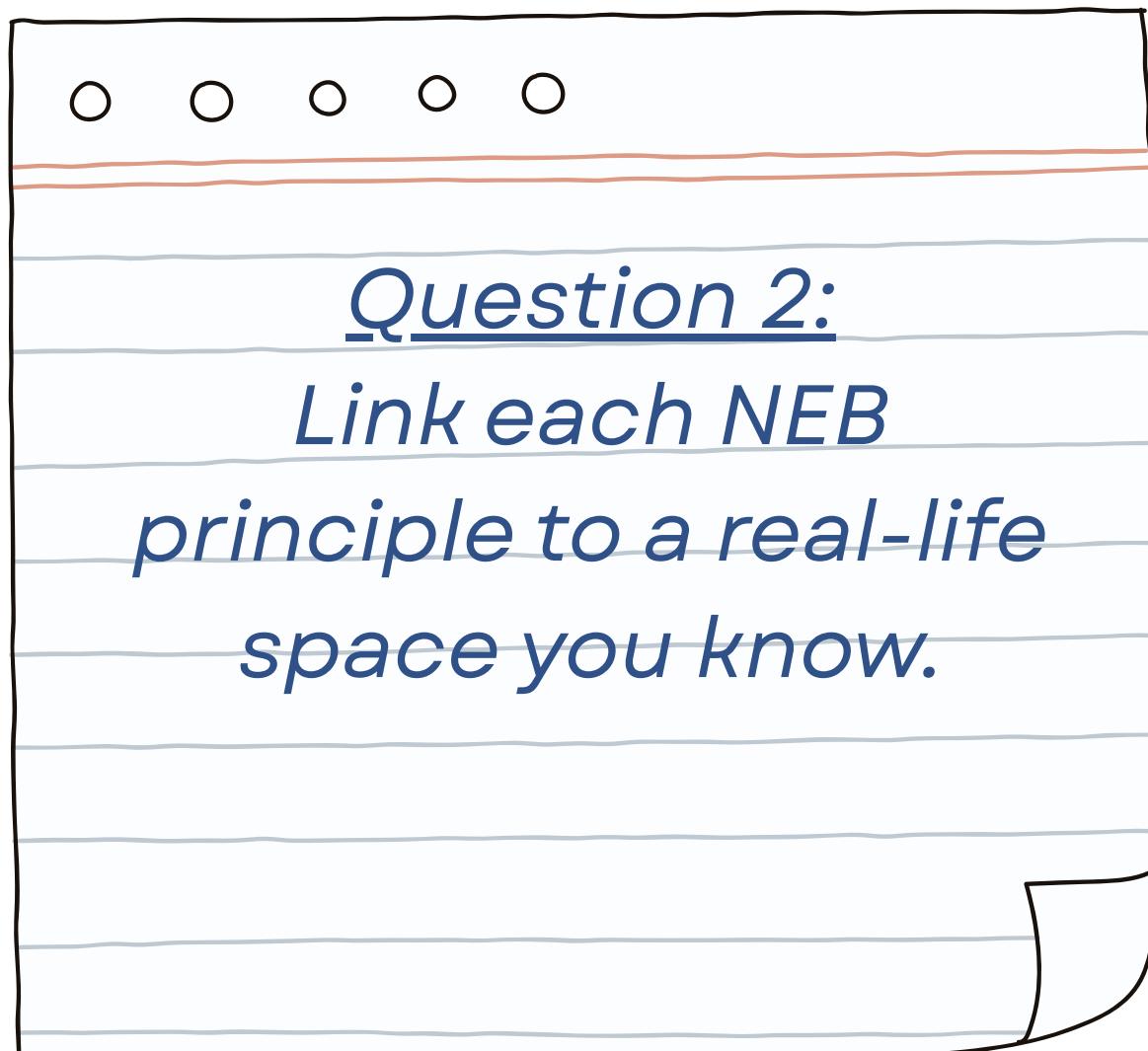


Photo © Aks Creative Hub



“Once Waste: Collaborative Recycling Pavilion” project designed by Aks Creative Hub also embodies the values and principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB). Emerging from the Renewal Manifesto (2021–2022), it translates the vision of sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics into a tangible architectural experiment. The pavilion is constructed from two types of waste materials—HDPE plastics, wooden pallets repurposed into modular building blocks. Participants collectively assembled these modules, creating an interactive and participatory structure, echoing the collaborative spirit of future cities.

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LECTURE 1.3

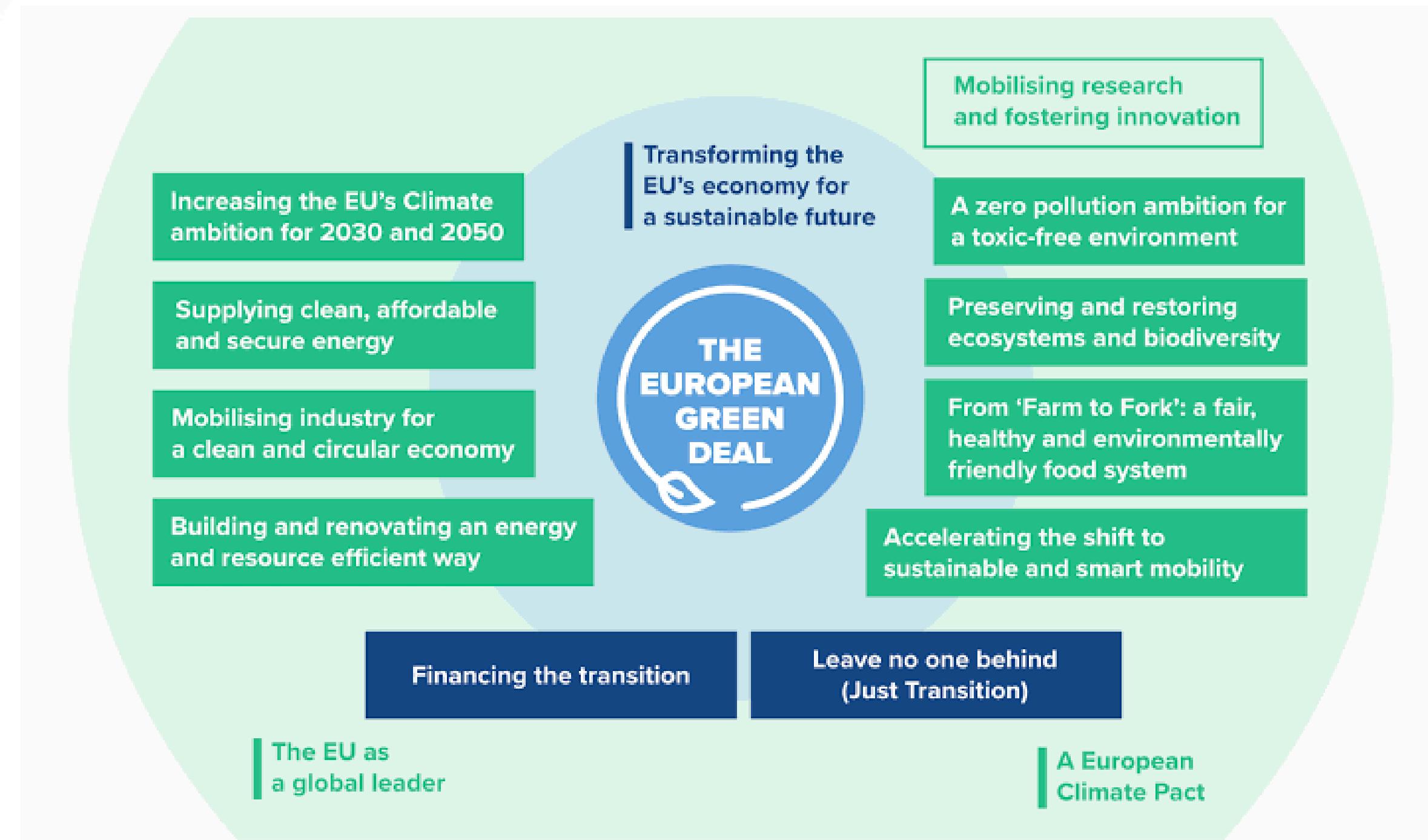
EUROPEAN & GLOBAL ALIGNMENT

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The NEB aligns with broader European and global frameworks. At the European level, it directly supports the **European Green Deal**, which sets targets for climate neutrality by **2050** (European Commission, 2019).

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 **SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

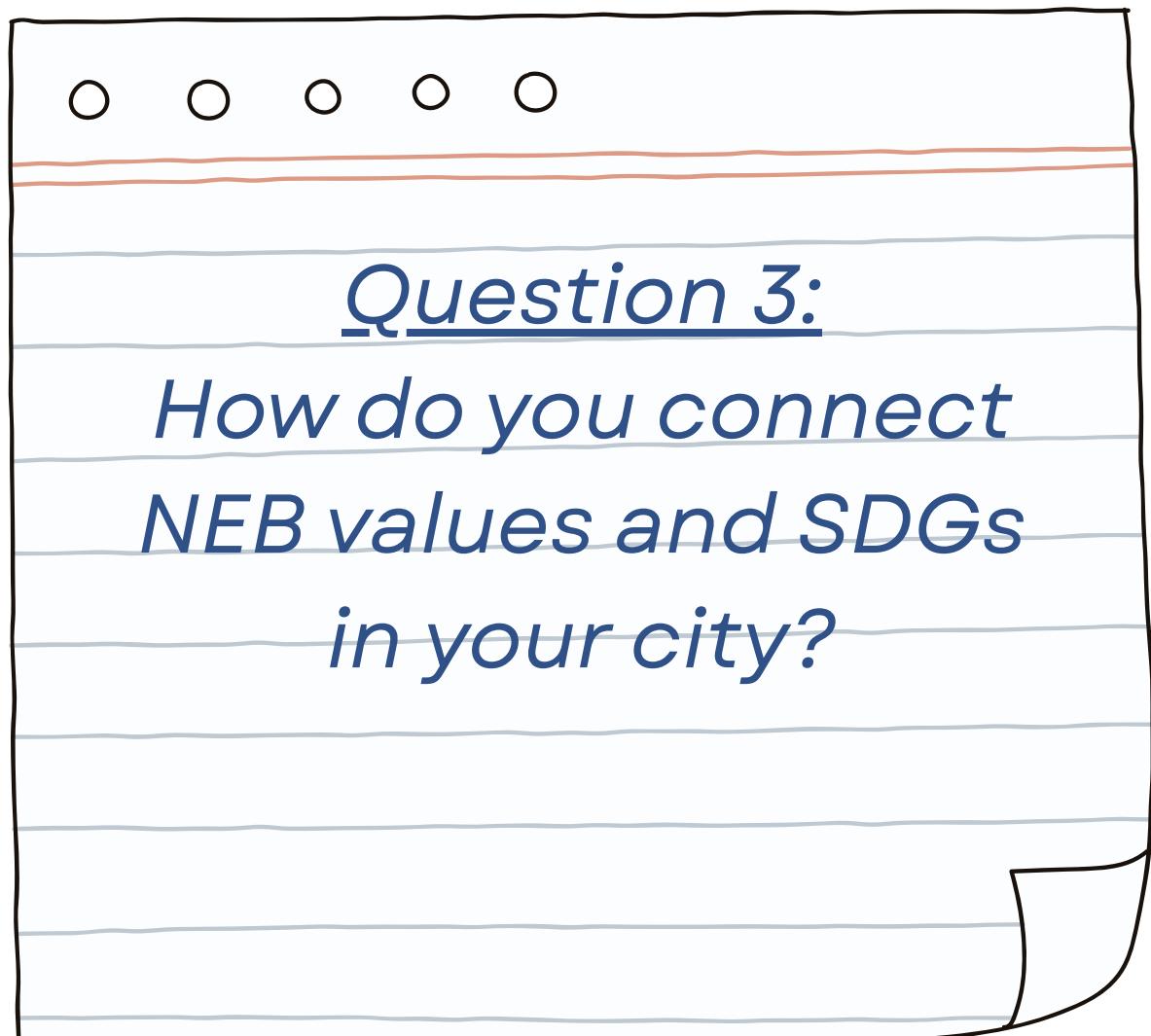
At the global scale, it resonates with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, serving as a cultural and practical bridge.

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For example, **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** is particularly relevant, as it promotes inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban development (United Nations, 2015). NEB initiatives often act as localized interpretations of such global goals, bringing them into tangible community practices.

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LECTURE 1.4

REFLECTION & DIALOGUE

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THINK
GLOBALLY
ACT
LOCALLY

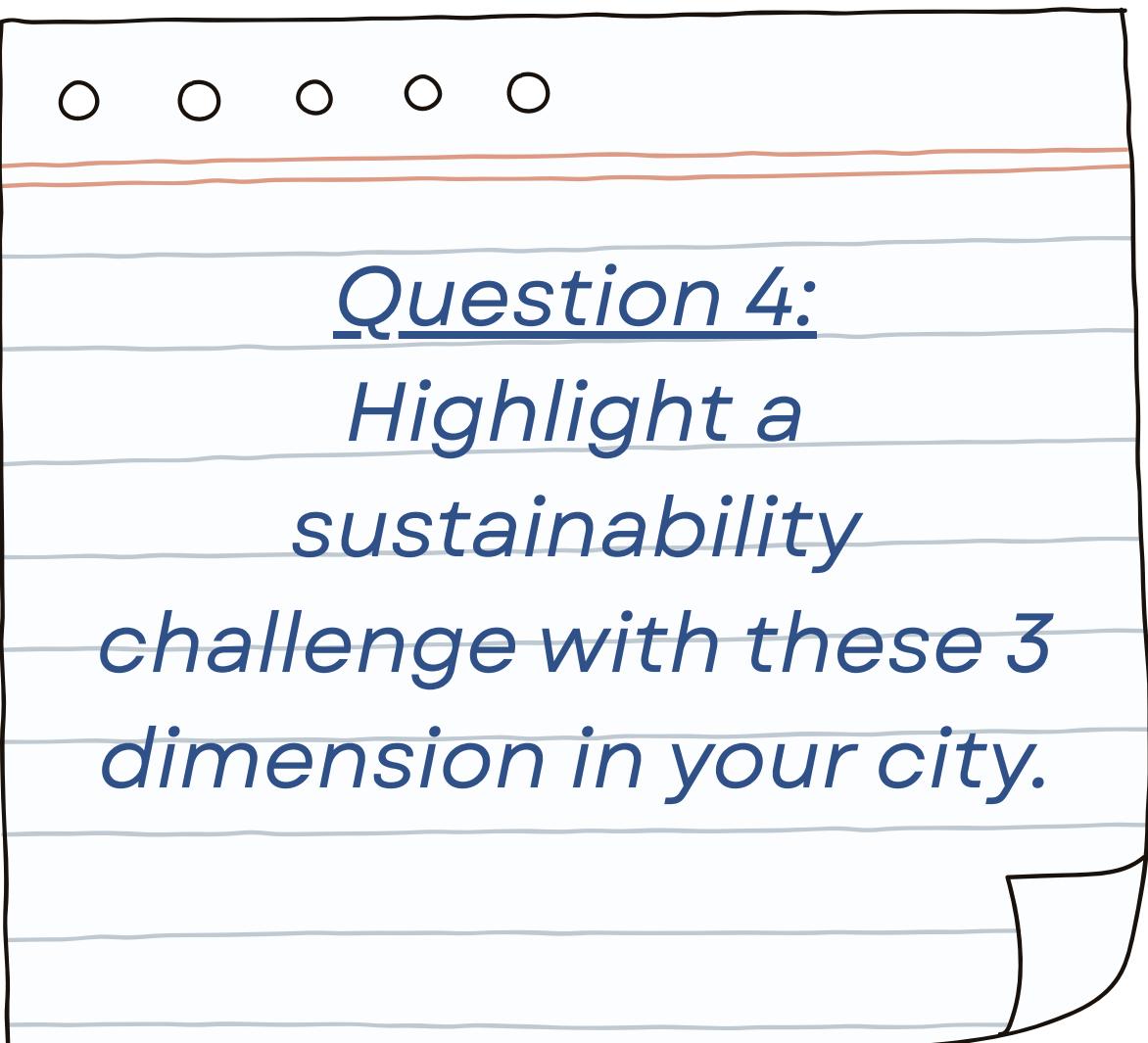
A key step in design education is building connections between **global frameworks** and **local realities**. While global strategies provide vision and direction, their true impact depends on how they are interpreted and applied in specific **cultural, ecological, and social** contexts (Escobar, 2018).

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Reflection and dialogue play a central role in this process:

- **Cultural dimension** – Local values, identities, and traditions shape how sustainability practices are embraced and implemented.
- **Ecological dimension** – Global climate goals address shared challenges, yet local ecosystems face unique pressures such as water scarcity, biodiversity loss, or air pollution.
- **Social dimension** – Addressing the needs of vulnerable groups is essential for building “common futures,” echoing the NEB principle of prioritizing places and people in need..

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SUMMARY

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Module 1 introduces the idea of “common futures” as plural, open, and co-created through collective responsibility, highlighting the role of youth in driving sustainability (Lecture 1.1). It then presents the New European Bauhaus (NEB) framework with its core values—sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics—operationalized through principles such as nature connection, belonging, social priority, and circularity, illustrated by real-life practices (Lecture 1.2). The NEB is further situated within broader European and global agendas, aligning with the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 11 on sustainable cities (Lecture 1.3). Finally, the module emphasizes reflection and dialogue as tools for linking global strategies with local cultural, ecological, and social realities, encouraging participants to share and connect hometown sustainability challenges with NEB principles and SDGs (Lecture 1.4).

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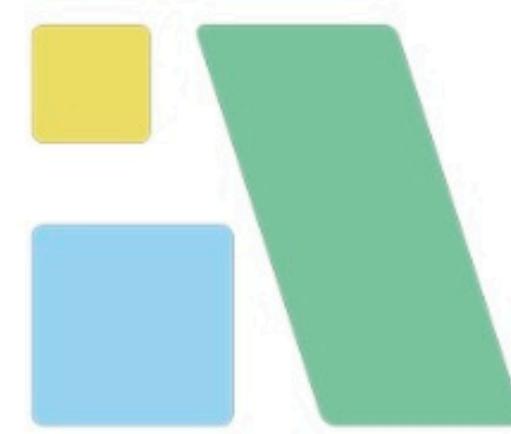
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THANK YOU!

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