

# Values-based Education for Sustainable Development

Building a Pedagogical Framework for the  
Education of Sustainable Development using a  
Values-based Education Approach

*an educational framework that fosters  
sustainability as an intrinsic value*

By Vicky Huang, Alessandro Pagano & Agostino Marengo

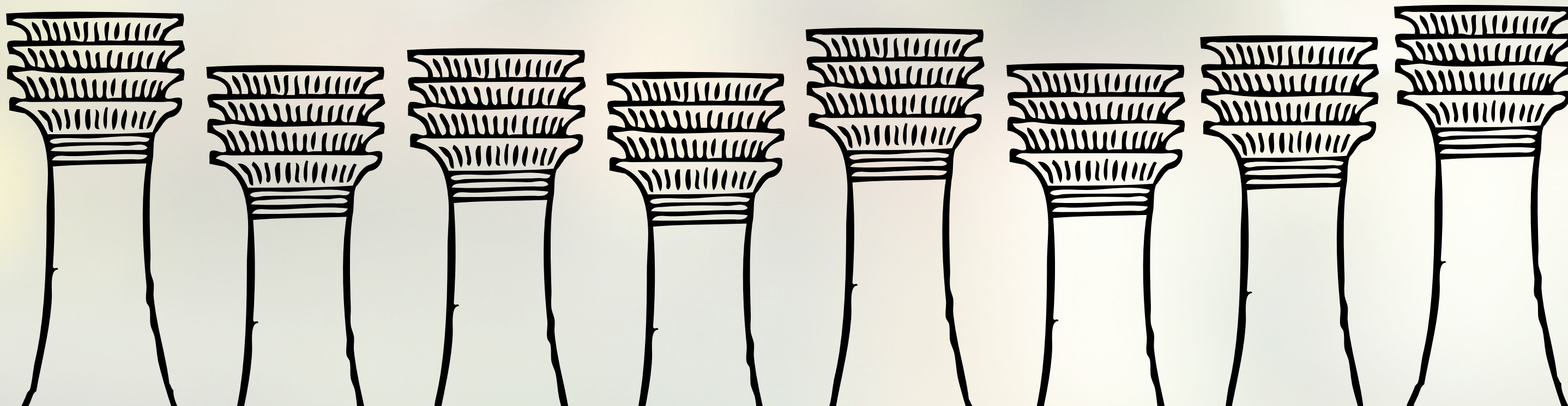
**December 2021**





# This presentation will introduce VbESD:

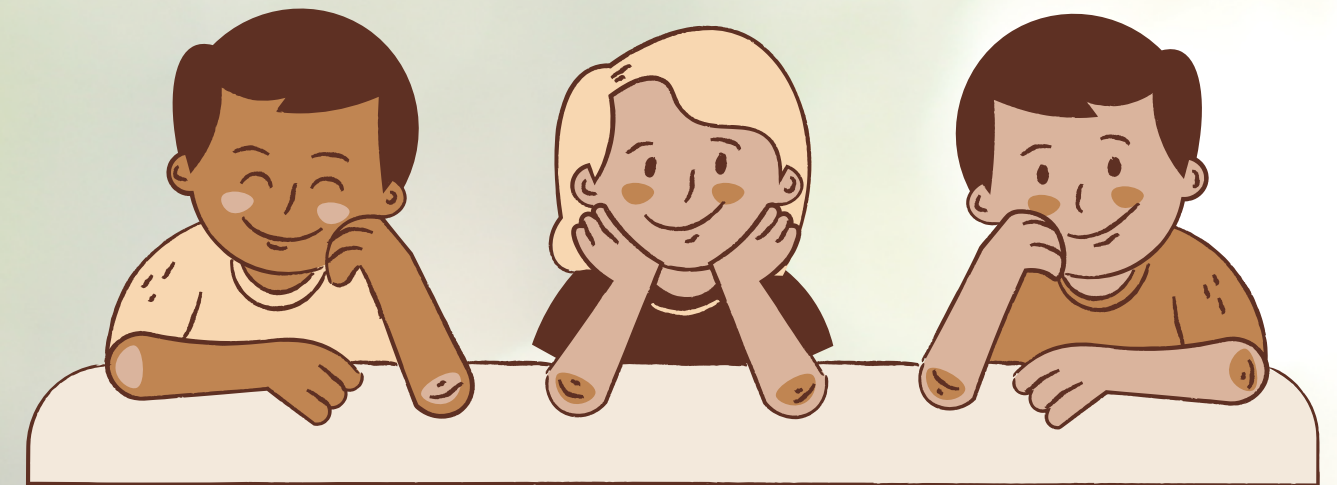
- Why build the Values-based Education for Sustainable Development (VbeSD) framework?
- The 8 pillars of VbESD
- VbESD's impact





# Setting up the Context: Why VbESD?

- Our world needs it – with the climate crisis and the increasing loss of societal wellbeing, we need a positive cultural shift and transformation
- The purpose of education
  - Shouldn't stop at facts and figures
  - Academic success isn't life success and wellbeing



Education has all the potential and ability to foster and develop true wellbeing within individuals, communities, and our planet



# Education for Sustainable Development

- A global action plan from the United Nations that:

*"empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges we are facing, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality." - UNESCO*



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**

- Integral to Sustainable Development Goal #4 (Quality Education)
- A key enabler for all Sustainable Development Goals

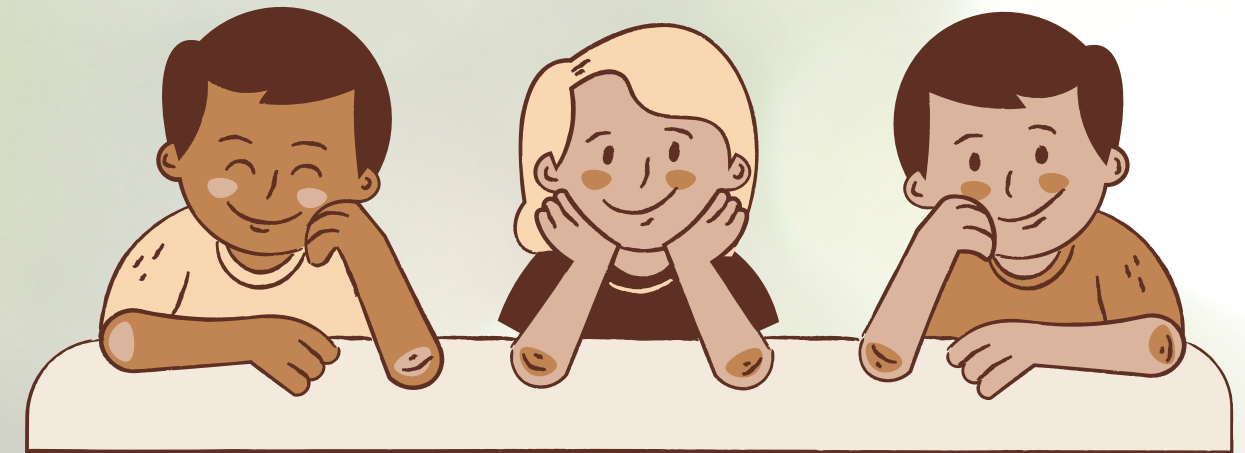


**MSDG**



# The true purpose of education

- Shouldn't stop at facts and figures
- Academic success isn't life success
- What else is important?
  - Living meaningful lives
  - Personal fulfillment and wellbeing
  - Meaningful relationships with others
  - Positive contribution to their community
  - Having intrinsic motivation and purpose



We need to intertwine & integrate these within education!



# Developing VbESD: Literature Review

Needs for successful sustainability education:

- Active engagement & social learning
- Student involvement & student-centered learning
- Purposeful, deep learning
- Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity
- A holistic and integrative approach
- **Affective education**



Education that builds:

- values, beliefs and attitudes
- social & emotional intelligence and capacity

**Affective education is  
*crucial* for effective  
sustainability education.**



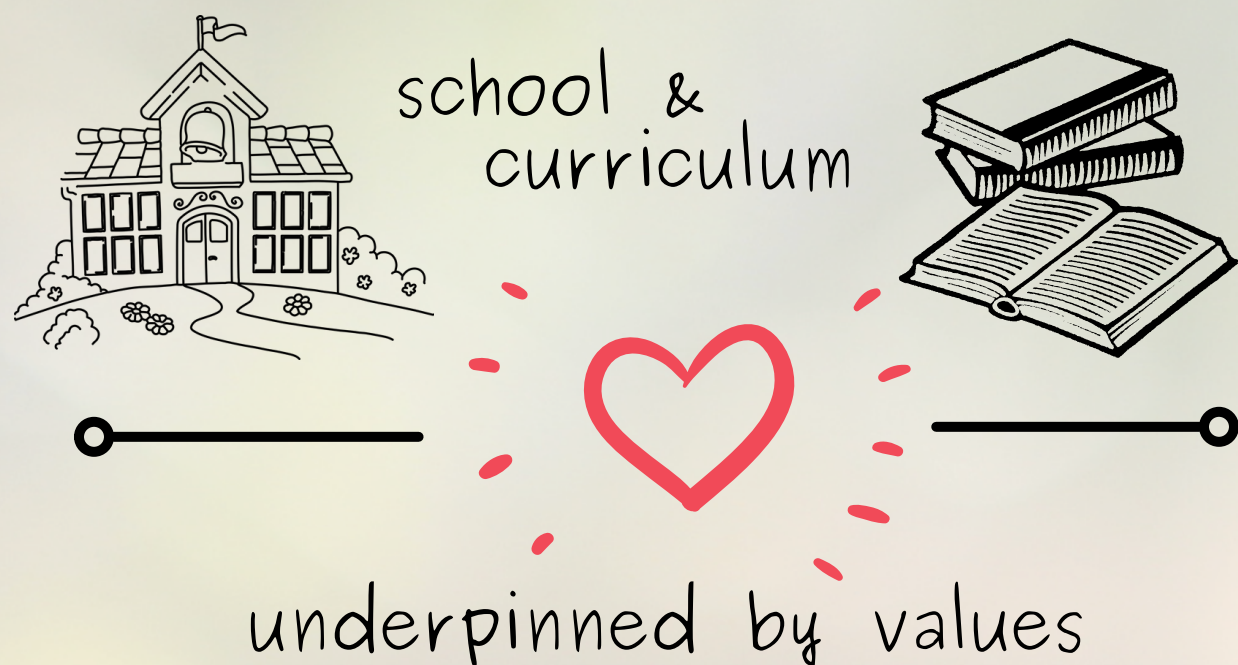
**MSDG**



# The Values-based Education movement



- Underpinning education environments with universal positive human values (i.e. kindness, respect, love, joy, hope, courage, peace)



- Not simply values education, which is teaching *about* values
  - Values-*based* education leads to their students *living* the values
- VbE provides a structure and methodology that has been proven to significantly benefit the students, staff, parents, and community

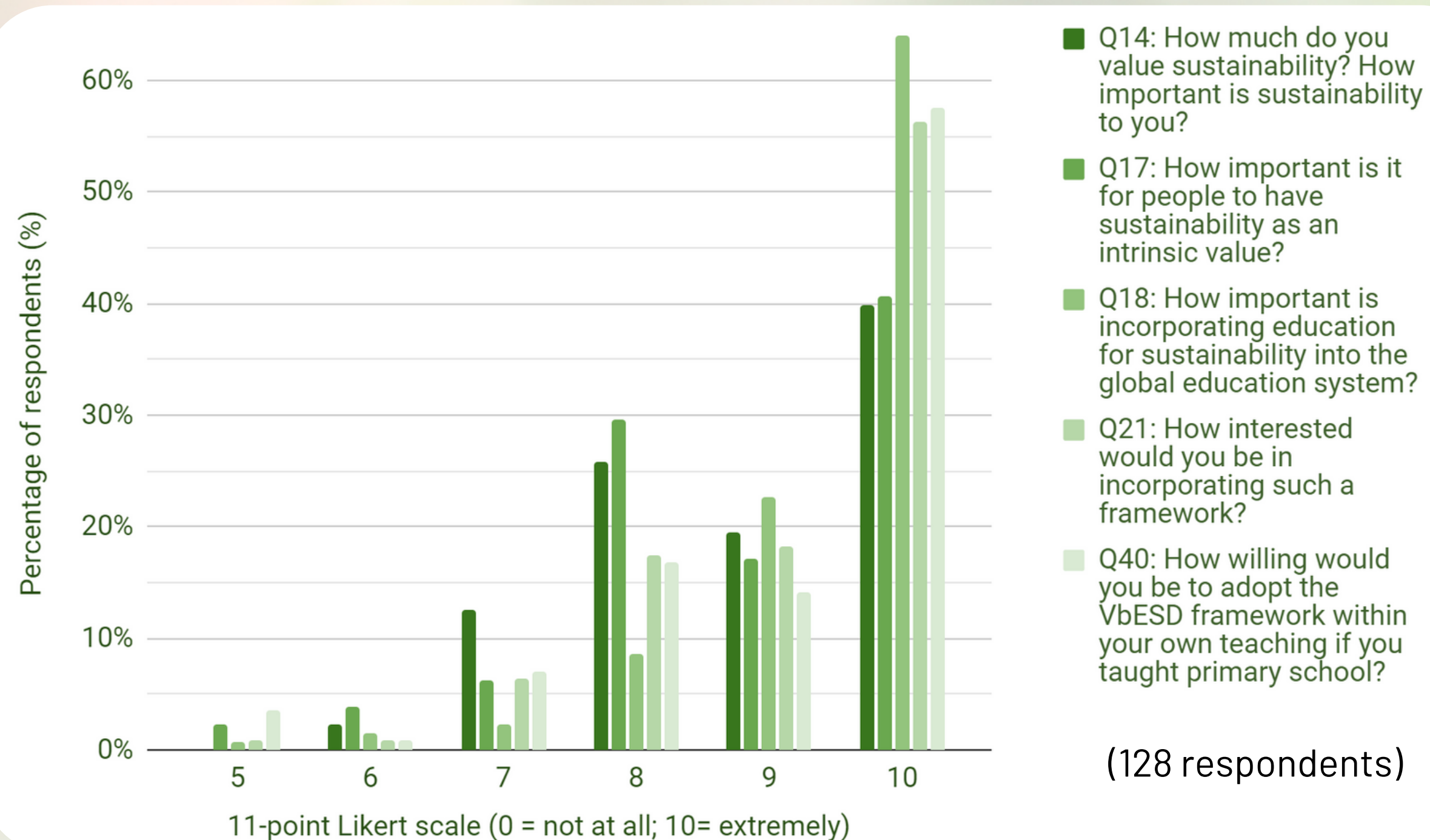
To learn more, watch founder Neil Hawkes' [TED Talk](#) or visit [VbE's website](#)!





# Developing VbESD: Surveys

Select questions from the Survey to Establish VbESD:



very strong support for the need for education that fosters values and sustainability





# Values-based Education for Sustainable Development (VbESD)



$$\text{VbESD} = \text{VbE} + \text{ESD}$$

Values-based Education for  
Sustainable Development

Values-based  
Education

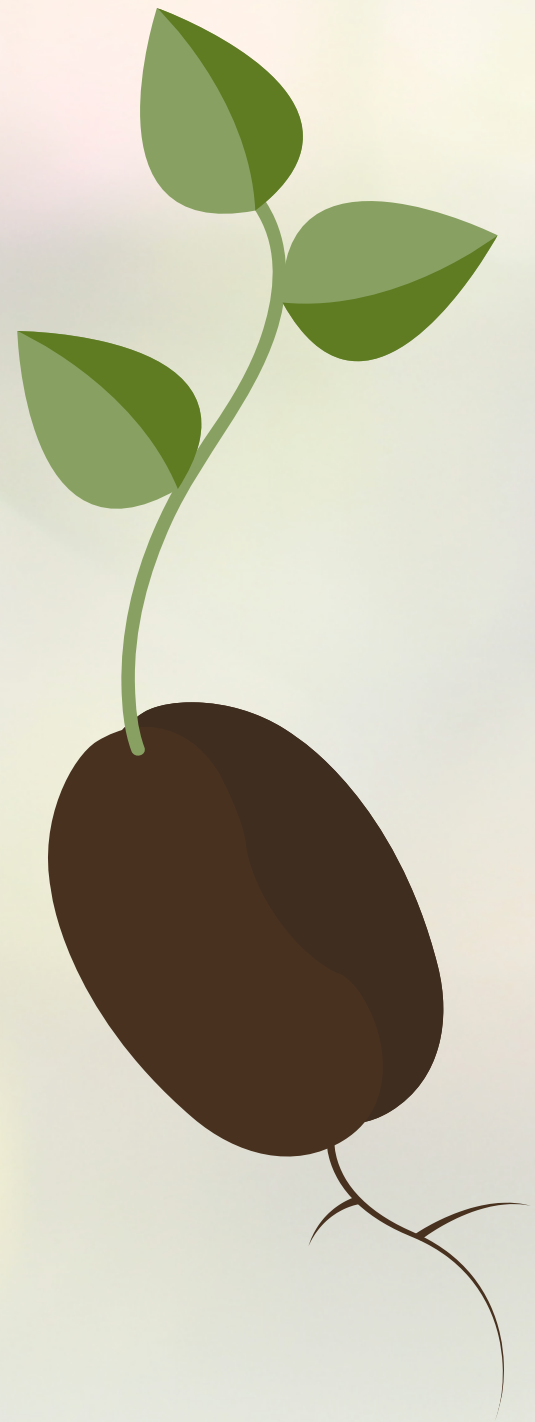
Education for Sustainable  
Development



Applying the principles of VbE **into** ESD, to foster **sustainability as an intrinsic value** to all its students.



# The pillars of VbESD create **MIRACLES**



**M**odelling  
**I**nnner Curriculum  
**R**eflection  
**A**tmosphere & Ethos  
**C**urriculum  
**L**eadership  
**E**thical Vocabulary  
**S**ustainable school operations

\*This presentation  
focuses on  
implementing VbESD in  
**PRIMARY SCHOOLS**  
(Grades 1-6)



# Pillar 1: Modelling

- refers to the modelling of behaviours that the staff and students display, which leads each value by example

All staff in VbESD schools  
model sustainable behaviours  
alongside VbE values

**VbESD modelling = VbE modelling +  
explicit sustainability modelling**



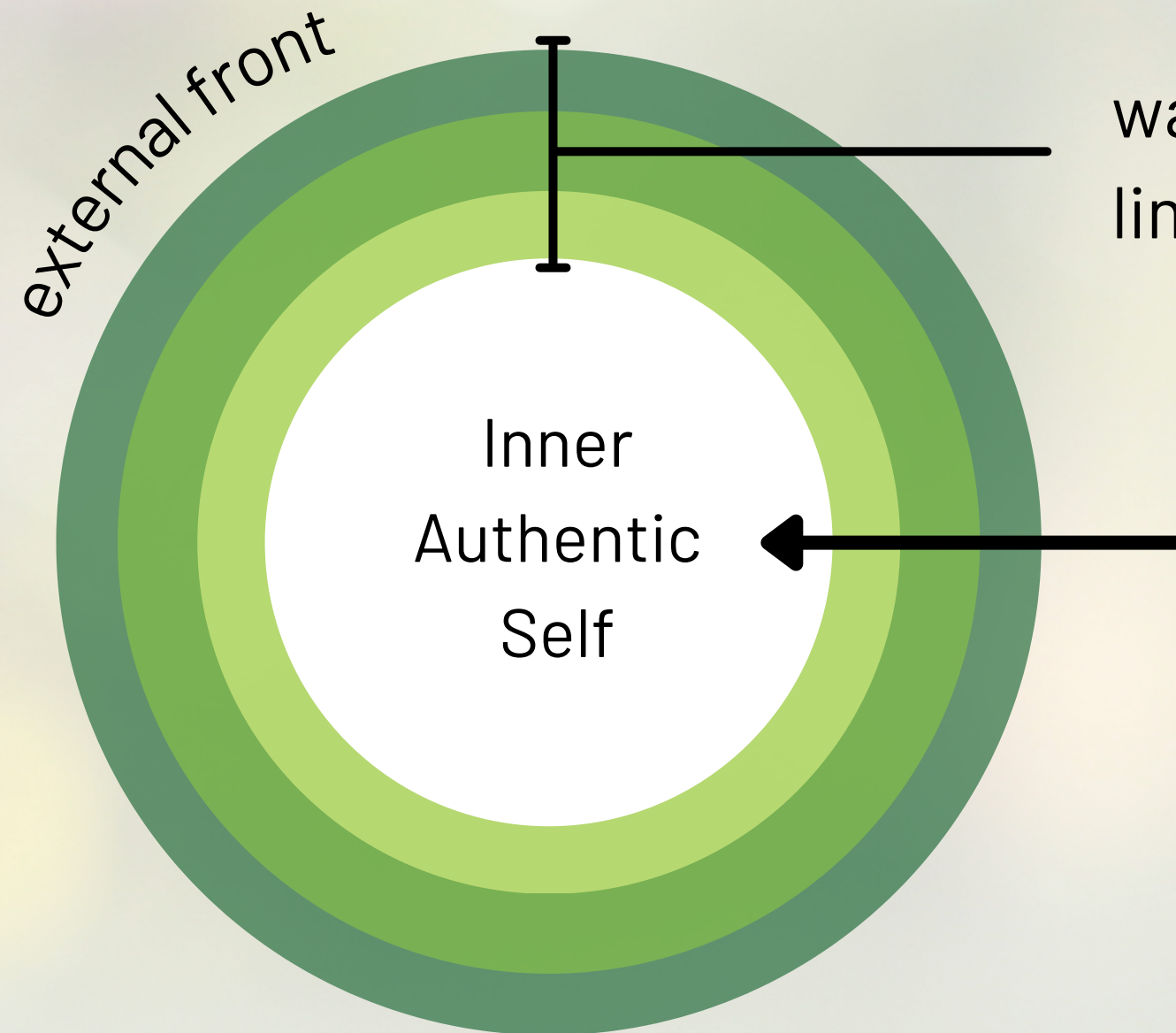
Examples: recycling, being resource (water, electricity) conscious,  
reducing waste & using reusables when possible

\*Does not mean staff are expected to be perfect! It is simply bringing explicit  
attention to achievable, feasible behaviours when possible :)



# Pillar 2: Inner Curriculum

- Honing self-awareness & self-regulation through inner peace
  - Controlling our inner world to better navigate the outer world



walls & layers built from negative and limiting experiences

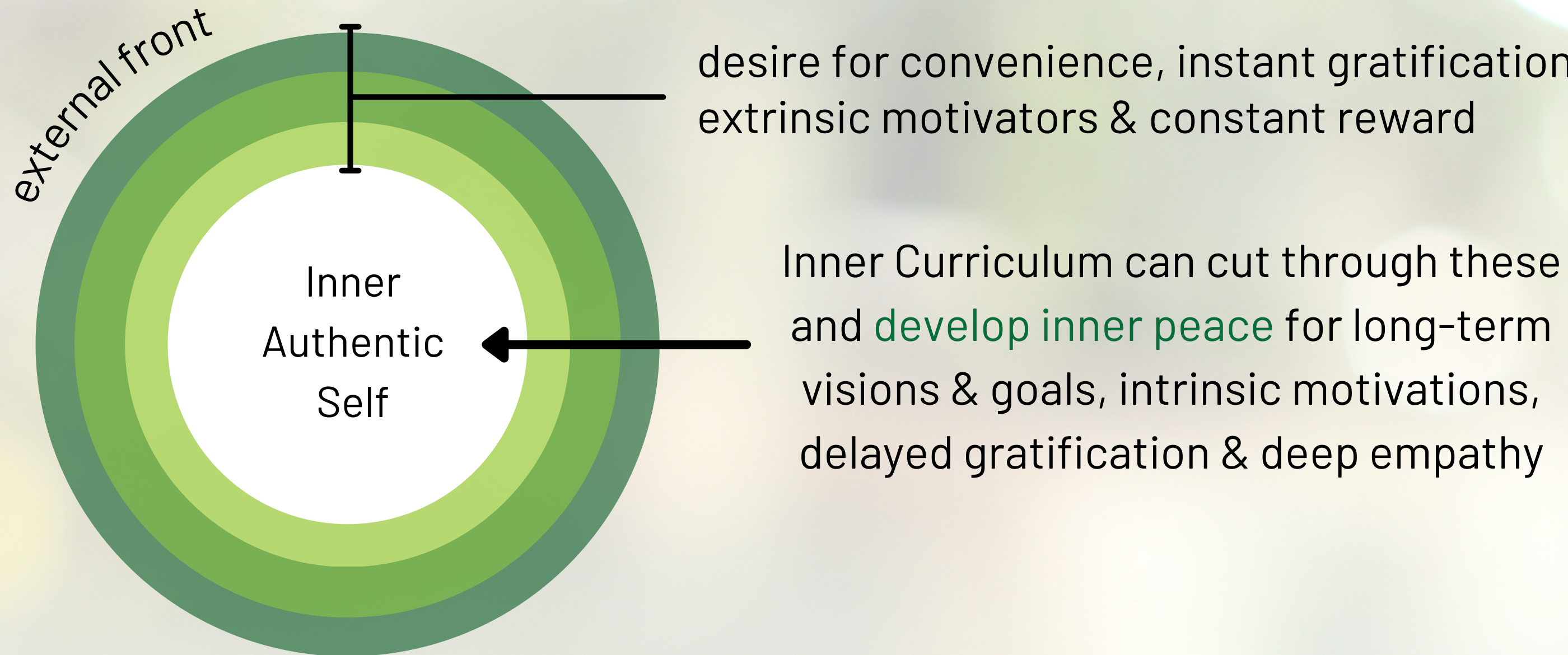
Values-based educators **cut through** these layers to the authentic self by **relating to the student with their heart**, with authentic self to authentic self, separate from the external front

- attunes to the child's inner emotions



# How does the Inner Curriculum relate to sustainability?

- With activities that allow the child to focus on themselves and look inside, self-understanding, self-regulation & self-leadership emerge.





# Pillar 3: Reflection



There is dedicated time in VbE schools daily for guided & unguided reflection

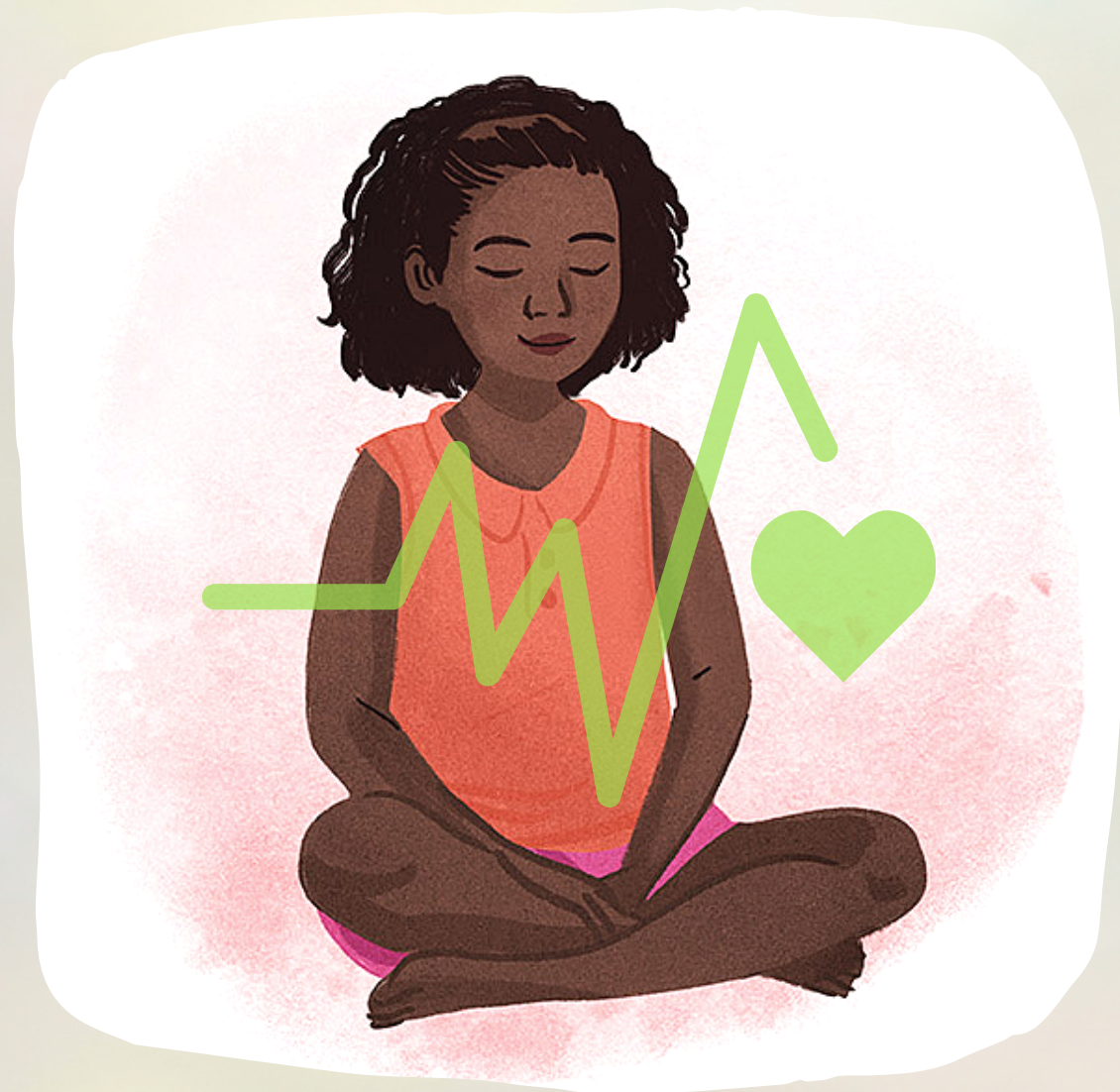
- A calm and peaceful period where students are actively taught how to relax and sit in purposeful silence and visualizations

They learn to adjust to the silence, and develop maturity of thought & emotions

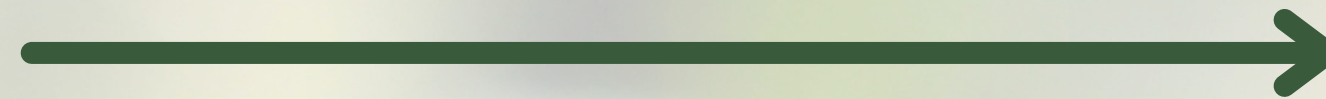
With regular, sustained & intentional reflection comes inner optimism, motivation and calm that can be expressed outwardly.



# Pillar 3: Reflection in VbESD



Embeds a connection to sustainability *within* the VbE Reflection pillar



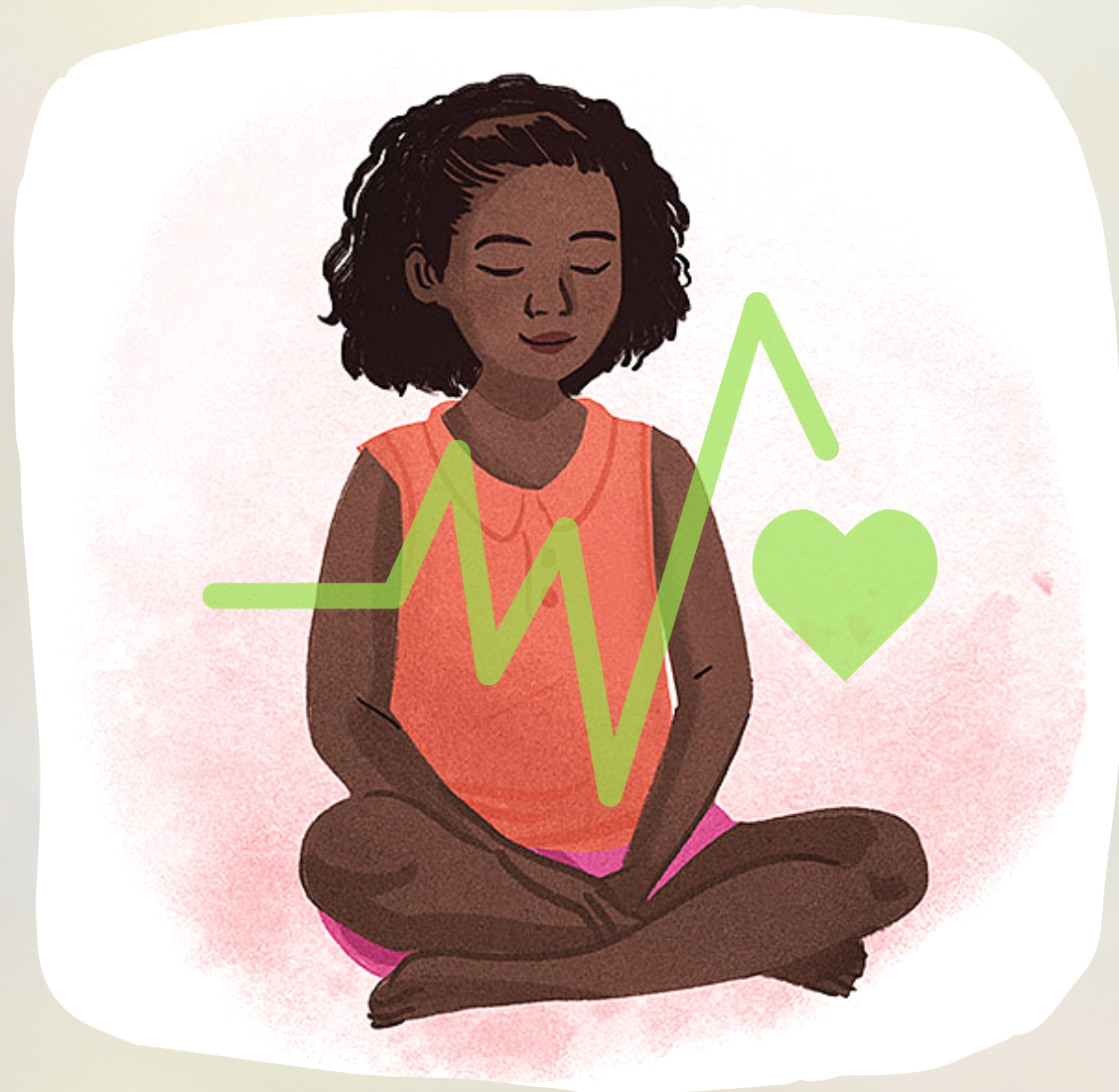
(connects the VbE reflection to sustainability!)



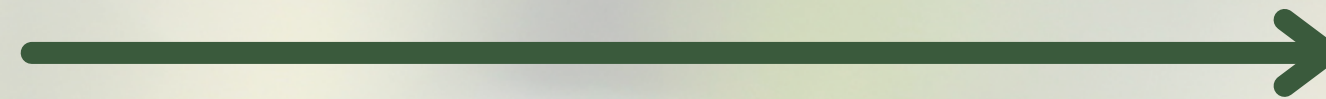
## How do we do this?



# Pillar 3: Reflection in VbESD



Embeds a **connection to sustainability *within*** the VbE Reflection pillar



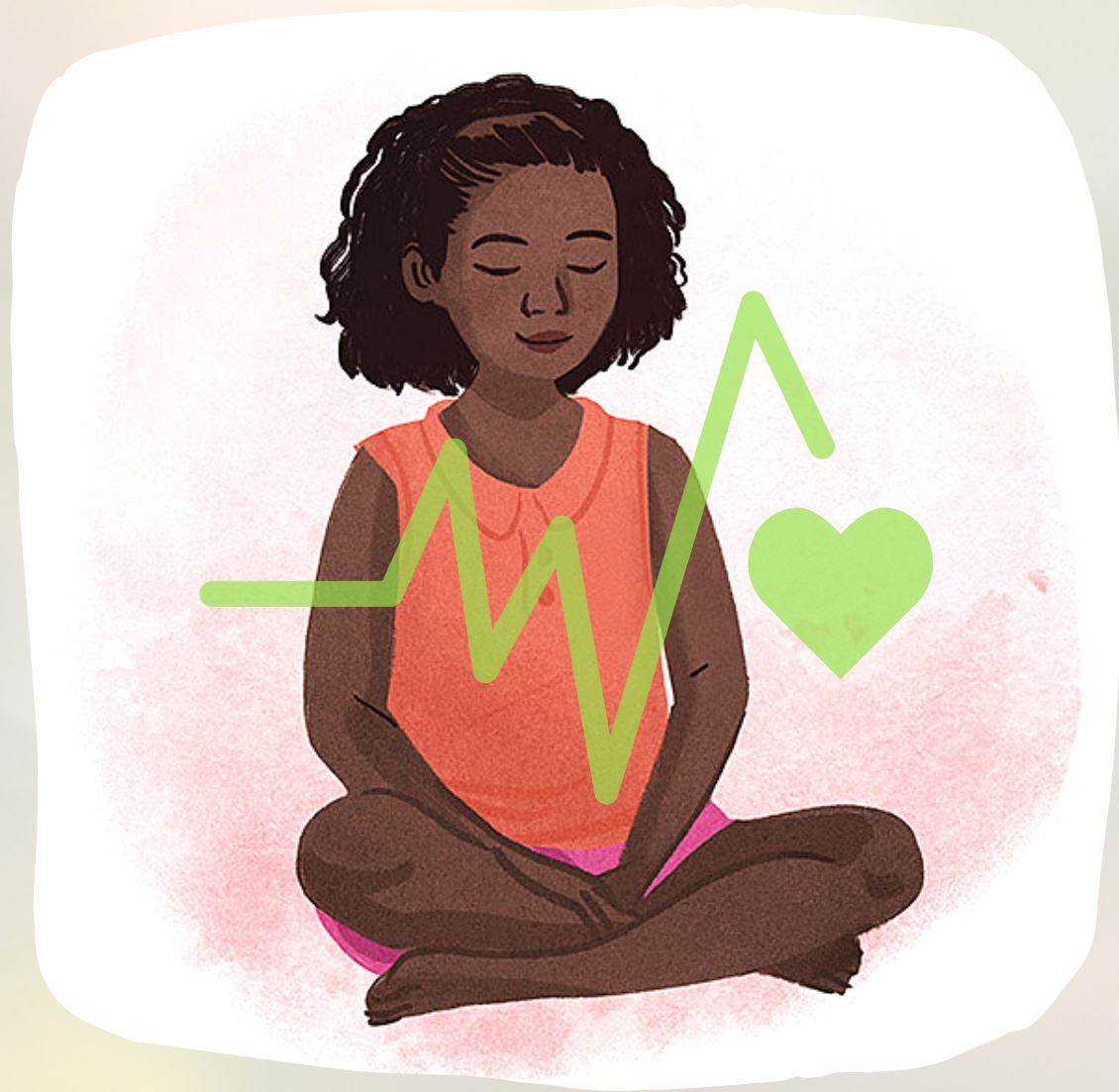
(connects the VbE reflection to sustainability!)



**How do we do this? Here is an example.**



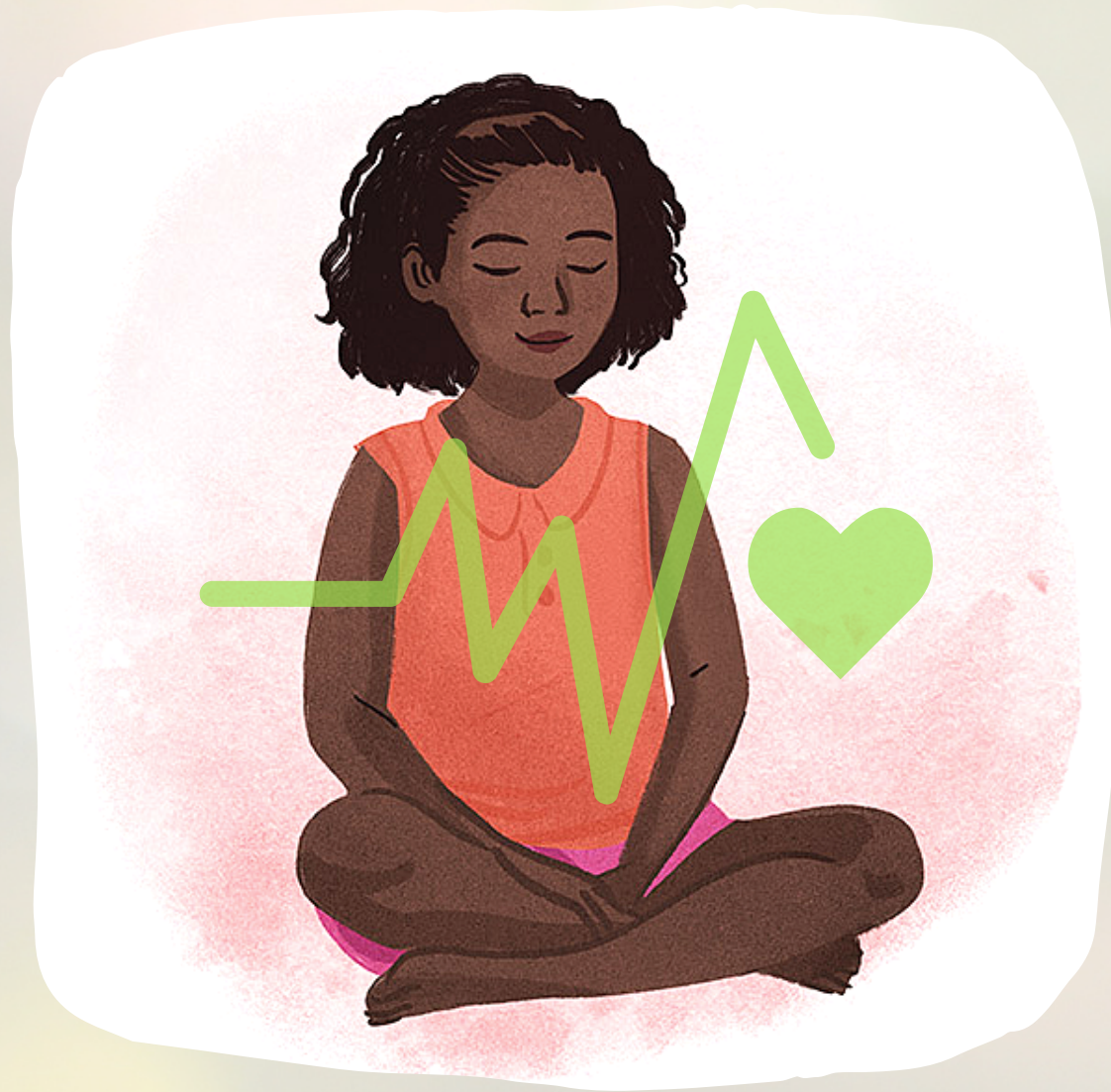
# Reflection in VbESD - an example



everyone, take a  
deep breath and  
close your eyes.



# Reflection in VbESD – an example



*"Reflect back to when you felt courageous. It could have been when you shared what you were grateful for this morning. It could have been you raising your hand in class, and sharing your thoughts. Now, grasping the light of courage in your hands, feel it rush into your heart, your soul, all within you. And imagine everything you can do with all that courage. The world needs courage to thrive and flourish. It is with courage that people follow their dreams and put in the effort to turn their ideas into reality. It is with courage that new technologies are invented and with courage that people speak up about issues in the world. It is with courage that people stand up for nature, for the environment, and ask the world to pay attention to protecting our Earth. It is with courage that people stand up for what's right, and for their friends in trouble, and for telling the truth when situations are hard. Imagine how the world would look if people had more courage."*

This example is in expansion to the example provided in the [VbE Online Training on Reflection](#), as an additional segment of their guided reflection on Courage.



# Pillar 3: Reflection in VbESD

\*example provided as an expansion to the guided reflection on Courage provided in [VbE's Online Training](#)

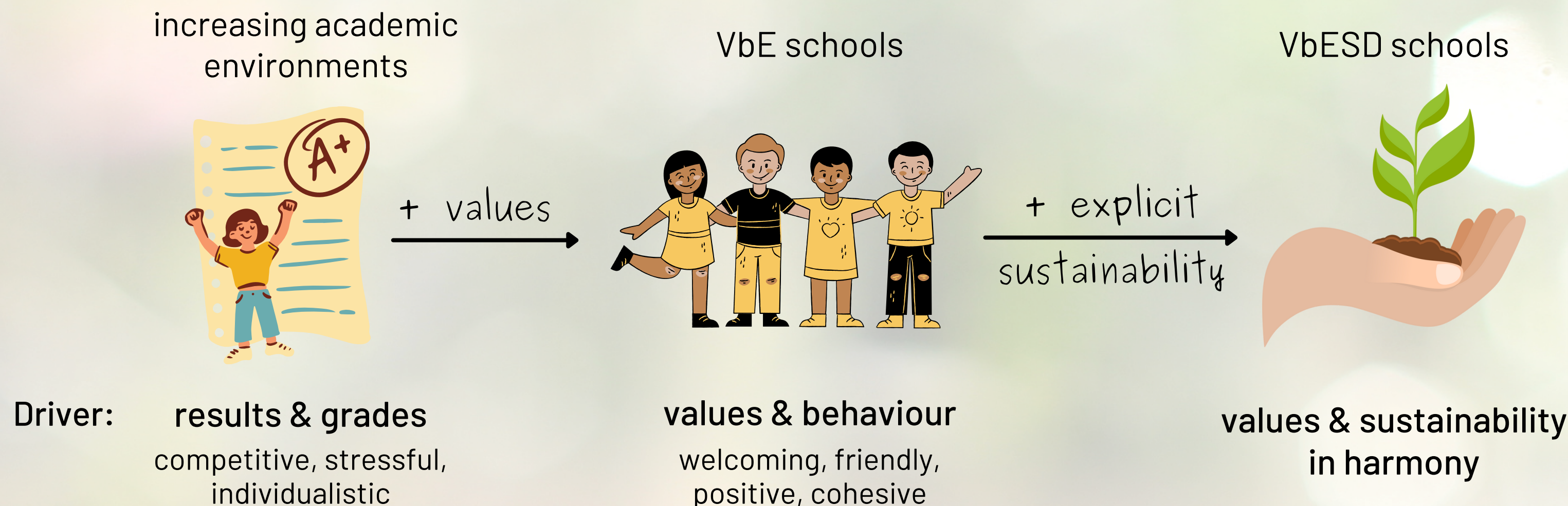
Embeds a connection to sustainability within the VbE Reflection pillar:

- Adds in prompts and visualizations for **how each value relates back to a more sustainable, peaceful, better world.**
- Guided to image a world where the value at hand (i.e. Value of the Month) is abundant and visualize their community all practicing it

This **nurtures self-motivation & optimistic thinking and action** for that value and its explicit connection to sustainability



# Pillar 4: Atmosphere & Ethos



A VbESD school would have the same positive and friendly environment as a VbE school, while also having a focus on learning from and living in harmony with nature.



# Pillar 4: Atmosphere & Ethos - Examples



living walls & plants



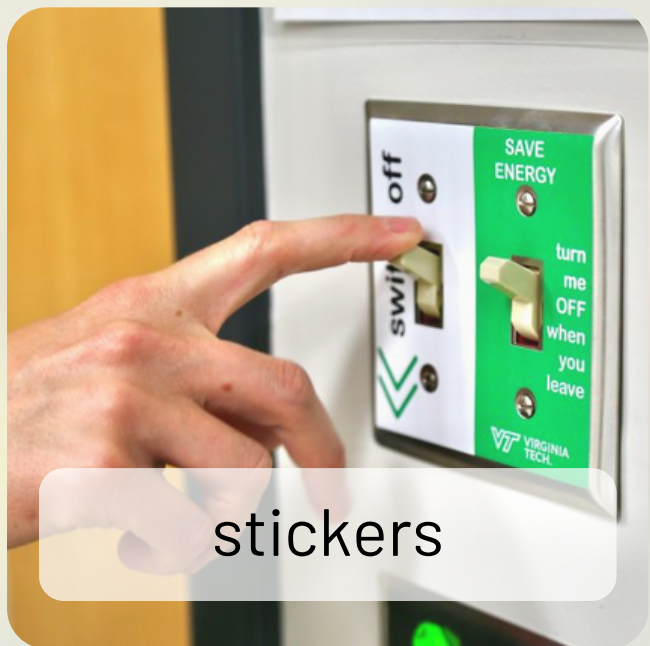
school garden



outdoor time & education



boards & displays



stickers



signage



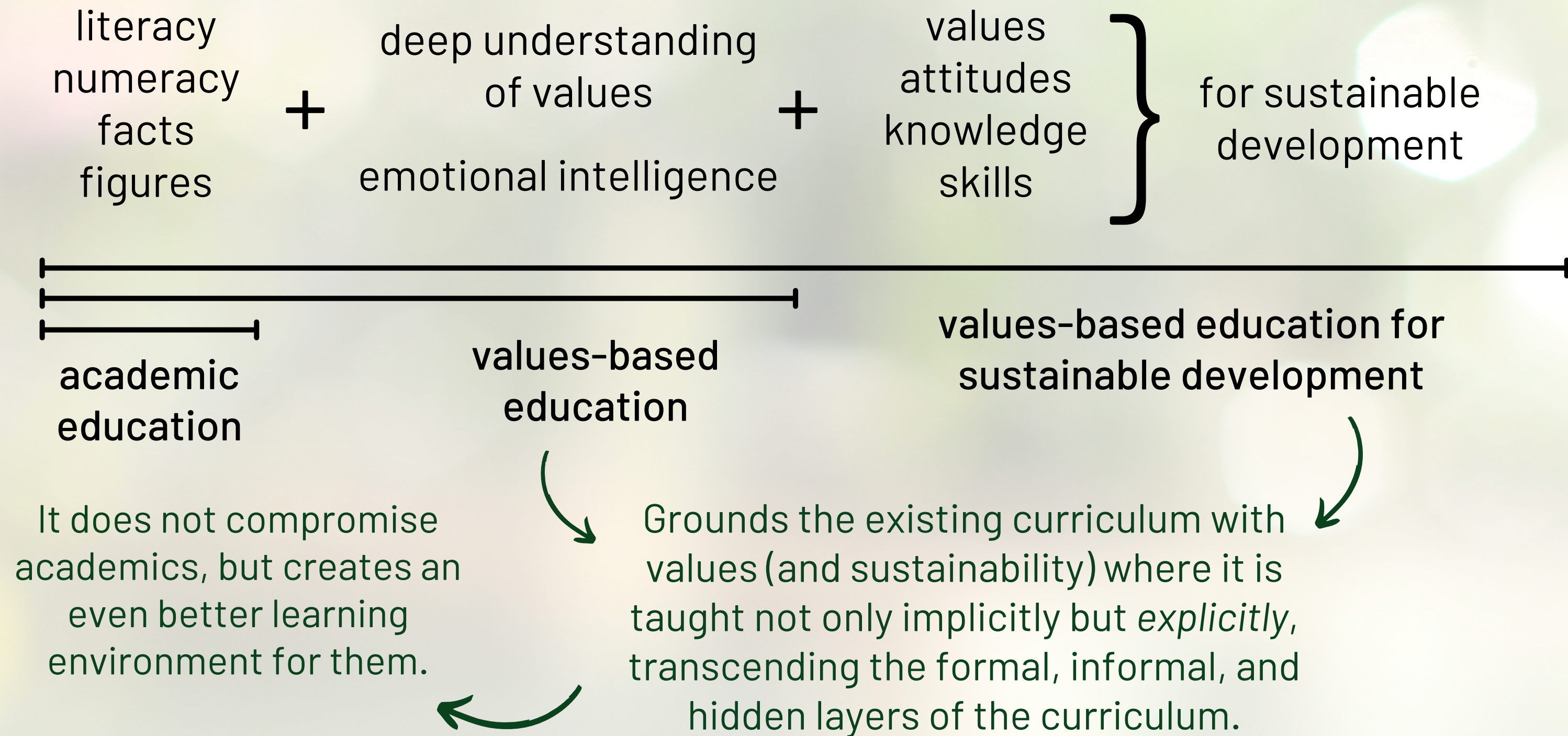
green space



natural architecture



# Pillar 5: Curriculum





# Pillar 5: Curriculum – beyond values & attitudes



*VbESD not only explicitly teaches the value of and attitude for sustainability, it also teaches the knowledge and skills required to become a responsible, engaged, global citizen & leader.*

## Examples of topics covered within VbESD:

- definition & types of sustainability
- importance of sustainability
- science behind climate change
- effects & impacts of climate change
- solutions to climate change
- intersectionalities of the above

The Learning Outcomes will be based off the [Competences of Education for Sustainable Development](#) (on page 8)



# Pillar 6: Leadership leading values & sustainable living

- In VbE & VbESD schools, leadership does not only encompass teacher-to-student leadership: it **starts from the student themselves**.

VbE & VbESD students lead these values on all levels:

**themselves** - self-leadership to live the values they learn

**classmates & peers** - to encourage and uphold them in their classroom

**home & family** - to bring them home and inspire their families

**community** - to showcase them in daily interactions

**world** - to create a ripple effect into the world





# Pillar 7: Ethical Vocabulary



An ethical vocabulary is the foundation for ethical intelligence:

*the "ability to self-regulate your behaviour for the good of yourself and others" (Neil Hawkes), even when two or more values are conflicting.*

- Provides VbE students a common language as a result of their shared understanding of the values

*In VbESD, schools choose their values alongside sustainability as an added value that connects all the others.*



# Ethical Vocabulary: rooting each value back to sustainability

- Values are not only important for humanity – they are important for the planet too! Here are some examples of how values can be related back to sustainability:

*Love is important for sustainability because that is how we will care about each other and the planet.*

*Teamwork is important for sustainability because by working together, we can solve the world's issues much faster and build stronger communities.*

*Hope is important for sustainability because hope creates and keeps the vision for a better world alive.*





# Using the Ethical Vocabulary in VbESD - example 1

- Here is how that vocabulary can look like in the classroom:

non-VbE school	VbE school	VbESD school
<p>"You did great up there today!"</p> <p>praise</p>	<p>"You showed a lot of courage today!"</p> <p>praise + value</p>	<p><i>"You showed a lot of courage today! That courage is so valuable because when you grow up and need to make harder decisions, you will be drawing on that courage. If you believe in something and there are things in your way, you will need courage to keep going and make it come true."</i></p> <p>praise + value + relate back to sustainability &amp; importance</p>





# Using the Ethical Vocabulary in VbESD - example 2

- Here is how that vocabulary can look like in the classroom:

non-VbE school	VbE school	VbESD school
<p><i>"I loved the story that you wrote! You have a great imagination."</i></p> <p>praise</p>	<p><i>"I loved the story that you wrote! There is so much hope filled inside."</i></p> <p>praise + value</p>	<p><i>"I see a lot of hope in this story you wrote! This hope is what will create our brighter future, and let us see the potential for the world, where people are happy and the planet is healthy. I love it."</i></p> <p>praise + value + relate back to sustainability &amp; importance</p>





# Pillar 8: Sustainable school operations

- A new pillar that provides the **final distinction** between VbE & VbESD
- Encompasses more **technical and systemic institutional sustainability** that is not always controlled by the teachers



- Examples:
  - foodservice (i.e. school cafeteria, breakfast or snack programs)
  - resources used (i.e. water, heating, electricity, gas usage)
  - building design (i.e. materials used, natural light, green space)
  - equipment used (i.e. energy-efficient lighting, heating)
  - products used (i.e. cleaning products, toilet paper)
  - classroom materials (i.e. recycled, reusable items)



# Summary of VbESD Pillars



**Modelling** — leading the values & sustainability by example

**Inner Curriculum** — developing self-understanding and regulation

**Reflection** — learning to make silence purposeful and revitalizing

**Atmosphere & Ethos** — setting the space for values & sustainability

**Curriculum** — grounding knowledge and skills with values & attitudes

**Leadership** — leading others through leading yourself

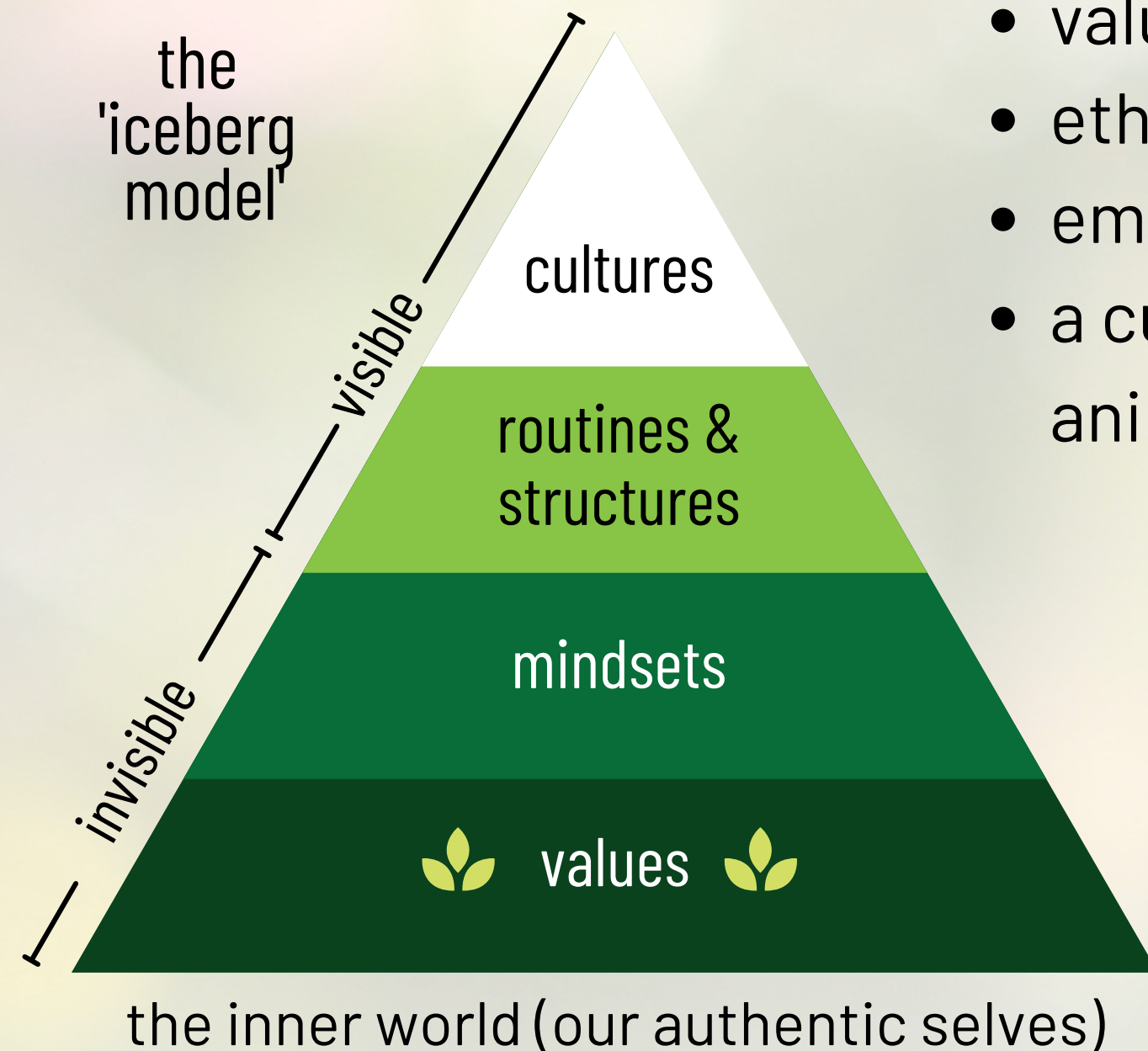
**Ethical Vocabulary** — building the language for ethical intelligence

**Sustainable school operations** — reducing the school's carbon footprint

Let's go create **miracles!**



# In conclusion...



VbESD will sprout:

- values deeply intertwined with sustainability
- ethical mindsets
- empowering routines & structures
- a culture of **social transformation** where people, animals, and nature can all **flourish** together

VbESD is what can change the world's unsustainable culture.



# Resources

- [Sustainability and Resilience Conference 2021 Paper](#): Building a Pedagogical Framework for the Education of Sustainable Development using a Values-based Education Approach
- [Values-based Education](#) website | [VbE Online Training](#)
- [Education for Sustainable Development](#) website | [ESD Competences](#)
- More about VbESD & my thesis: <https://www.adventureswithwildheart.com/values>

Sharing this work:

- Blurbs, graphics & the most updated PDF of this presentation can be found [here](#)

A video of the VbESD presentation at the 2021 Sustainability and Resilience Conference can be found [here](#)





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# Thank you so much for listening!

*Vicky Huang is a joy-finding, purpose-seeking and adventure-loving human who grew up in China and Canada.*

*She thinks that the education system can do better at preparing children for the world, whether it be socially, emotionally, or in response to the climate crisis.*

*She has always been passionate about sustainability and the environment, but her undergraduate experience at the University of Guelph really sparked her to take this journey on sustainability and education. The VbESD working model was built through her Masters in the Management of the Sustainable Development Goals (MSDG) program at LUMSA University, and she hopes to continue building it through her life.*



Questions? You can contact her at [vickyhuanghere@gmail.com](mailto:vickyhuanghere@gmail.com)