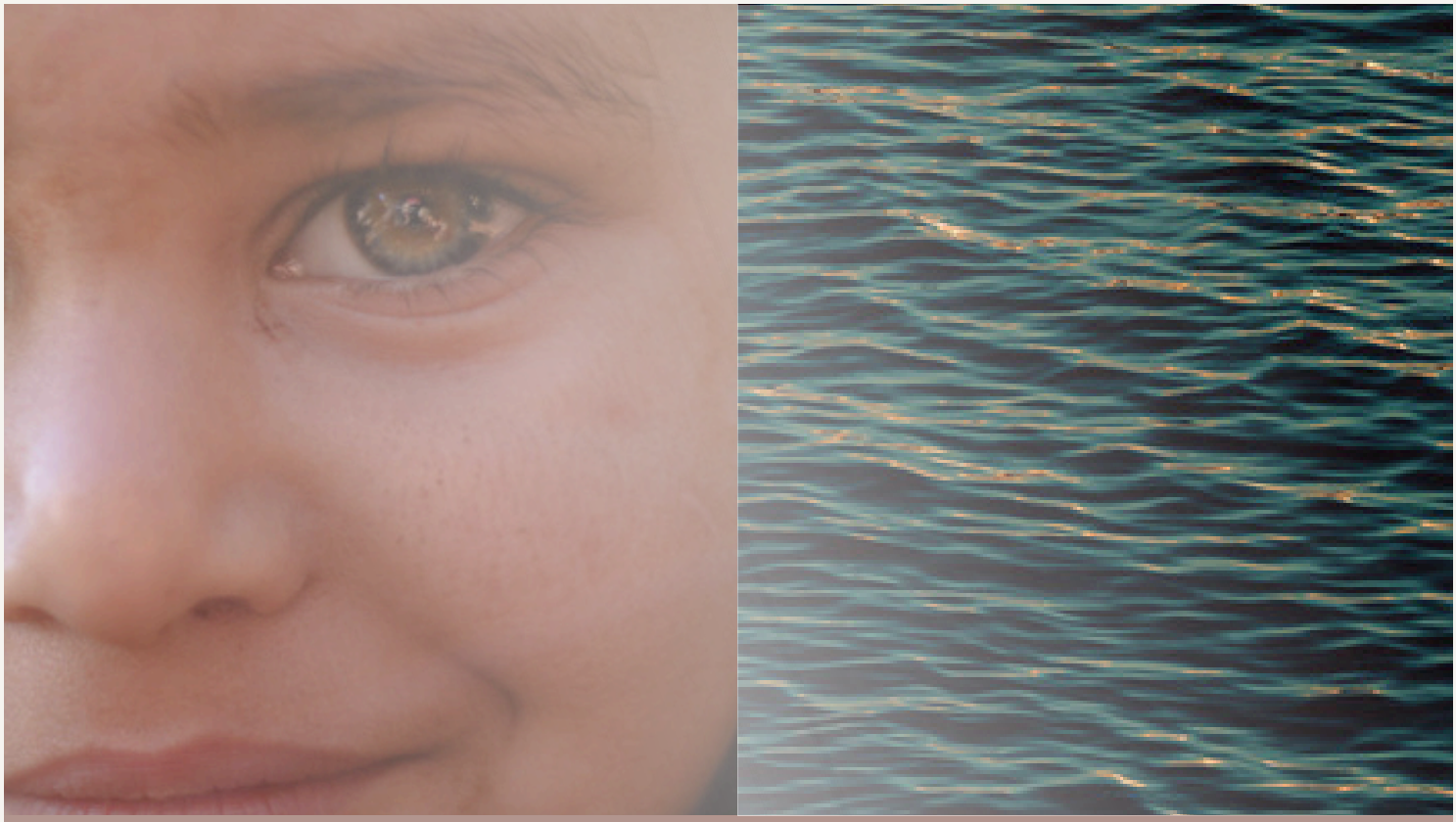

Education Beyond Normal Jurisdiction (EBNJ)
A New Sustainable Framework to Tackle Climate Change

BERGEN SUMMER RESEARCH SCHOOL POLICY BRIEF | JUNE 2026

Climate mitigation demands a fundamental shift: expanding education beyond normal jurisdictions (EBNJ) is the key to replacing economic growth-oriented metrics with ecological and human wellbeing indicators. The transformations we propose are centred around values-based, culturally diverse, and nature-centric learning, distributed across local actors, artisans, workers, and indigenous knowledge holders. In doing so we will build the intergenerational responsibility and distributed intelligence essential for regenerating social and ecological systems.

BACKGROUND

Current education systems largely focus on economic growth and productivity measured through the metric of gross domestic product (GDP). However, GDP does not fully capture human wellbeing, social justice, or ecological wellbeing.

Following the human development approach of Mahbub ul Haq (1995) and Amartya Sen (1999), development should be understood in terms of people's wellbeing, capabilities, and opportunities to live meaningful lives. Contemporary education systems exclude or overlook other important actors, including communities, Indigenous peoples, artists, parents, and local governments, limiting opportunities for collective learning and action.

Addressing climate change requires more than technical solutions. It requires changes in values, lifestyles, consumption patterns, and relationships with nature.

Therefore, educational frameworks should promote human wellbeing, justice, and ecological wellbeing while engaging communities as active participants in learning and regeneration.

THE EBNJ FRAMEWORK

Education has been recognised as an essential vehicle for environmental protection and has been formalised within international agreements (UNESCO & UNEP, 1977) and studies support the effectiveness of investing in these systems (van de Wetering et al., 2022; UN, 2015).

Whilst there has been progress on the integration of environmental education into the traditional education systems including education for sustainable development, these approaches often remain focused on formal education and individual behaviour (Kopnina, 2012; Pavlova, 2013).

The triple planetary crisis is a wake up call for the global community to rethink not only educational frameworks, but also how local the community is defined and the need for values-based collective action, which sits at the heart of the **Education Beyond Normal Jurisdiction (EBNJ) framework.**

BOX 1 Application of the EBNJ framework

Flooding in Quezon City, Philippines caused by monsoon rain, July 24, 2024. CNN World

Many cities in the Philippines experience recurring floods that disrupt livelihoods, damage infrastructure, and threaten public safety. Adopting the EBNJ framework, the Philippine Government has integrated community-based climate education into the curriculum.

Students and residents collaborate on local flood mitigation projects such as river rehabilitation, rainwater harvesting, waste reduction, and urban greening. Local communities are becoming better equipped to prevent and adapt to flooding, leading to long-term climate resilience

The EBNJ framework operates at the community level and is adaptable by national governments to diverse contexts, each with distinct identities, cultures, resources, and social and ecological characteristics. It is centred on HJE values: Human Wellbeing, Justice, and Ecological Wellbeing (Figure 1).

It proposes an educational approach that extends beyond formal schooling and integrates learning as a community-wide priority. Environmental awareness, ecological literacy, HJE values, and engagement with local stakeholders support the development of responsible and engaged citizens, forming a long-term transformative approach.

Operationally, the framework recommends establishing a dedicated physical space for regular community interaction and engagement with local actors. Communities retain flexibility in defining the frequency and format of exchanges, including outdoor activities and visits to local infrastructures. This strengthens mutual understanding of local realities, challenges, opportunities, and values across all actors, including children (see Box 1).

In the short to medium term, this space supports climate change mitigation by improving awareness of local resources, strengthening connections between actors, and enabling more informed collective decision-making (see Box 2).
The EBNJ framework is grounded in placing trust in children and communities as key agents of HJE values.

YOUTH AND CLIMATE

Support Humanity Cameroon has adopted the principles of our EBNJ framework, placing students and young leaders at the center of their work through hands-on experience. Students are supported to lead and run activities such as regenerative school gardens, tree planting, and other sustainability initiatives, serving as a strong example of the power of locally grounded sustainability initiatives driving meaningful change and real-world action. (Ngwangung, 2026)

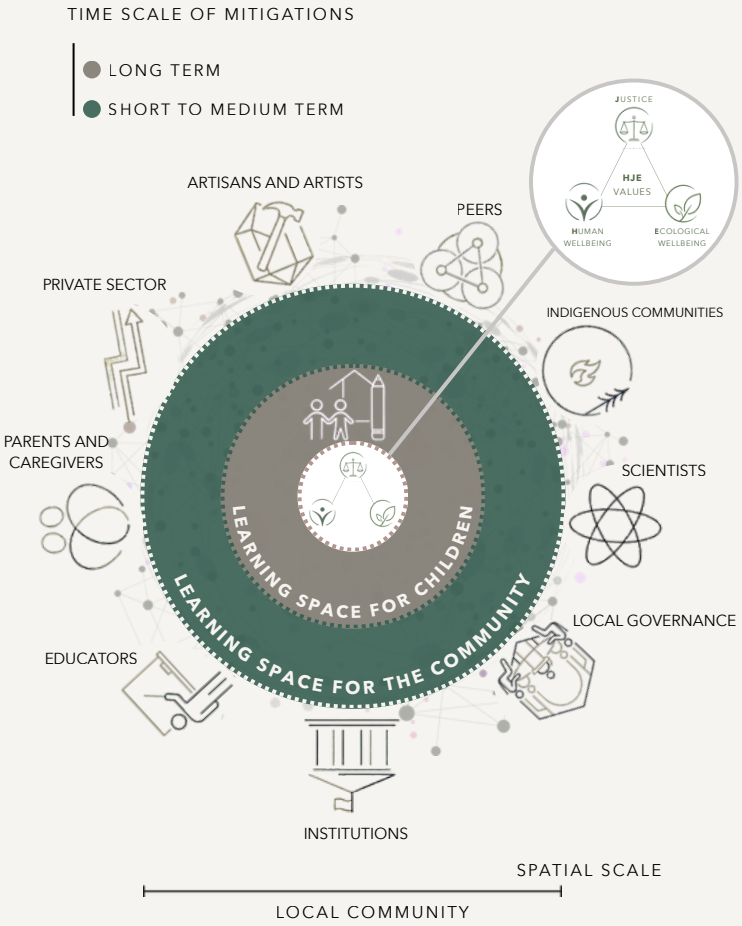

Figure 1. The EBNJ Framework

CONCLUSION

Climate mitigation demands transformation beyond technology and policy, requiring a rethinking of how education systems are designed and who participates in learning processes. The framework Education Beyond Normal Jurisdiction (EBNJ) repositions education as a community responsibility grounded in human, justice, and ecological wellbeing (HJE). By extending learning beyond formal schooling and integrating diverse actors across society, it challenges GDP-centered measures of progress and advances holistic development for people and ecosystems. The EBNJ framework allows us to place our trust in children and the community to become champions of HJE, strengthening collective action, resilience, and values-based learning for a sustainable and just future.

BOX 2 Zimbabwe: Black soldier fly larvae for sustainable aquaculture

The use of black soldier fly larvae produced from local organic waste offers a low-carbon alternative to imported aquaculture feed in Zimbabwe. This circular economy approach reduces reliance on fishmeal, lowers environmental impacts, and strengthens local production systems. According to the FAO, it represents a scalable climate mitigation solution that also supports small-scale farmers (FAO, 2024).

Black soldier fly pupae. Photo: Entocycle

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mitigate climate change through reform of traditional educational systems.
- Place Human wellbeing, Justice, and Ecological wellbeing (HJE) at the core of the education system.
- Integrate ecological justice, sustainable consumption, and diverse knowledge systems through the EBNJ framework.
- Recognise communities as educational spaces that support intergenerational knowledge exchange to strengthen collective responsibility, climate action, and the regeneration of social and ecological systems.

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GLOBAL CHALLENGES