

My New Appreciation for Polar Bears

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Those of you who have seen me speak recently know that I have had some pretty disparaging things to say about polar bears. Not because I have anything against polar bears (though I did visit a school in Alaska once where they had to put up a big fence to keep the bears from eating students), but because I don't believe that polar bears are deserving of being the icon for sustainability, or even climate change.

I know, I know - videos of polar bears hopping from iceberg to iceberg are heartbreaking, and I'm no exception to that. But I don't believe that polar bears have the kind of universal appeal that the health and well-being of our children have.

Polar bears are cute...so are kids. Polar bears experience harmful impacts of pollution and environmental degradation...so do kids. The livelihood of our children, unlike the health of the polar bears, is in my opinion a universal value that we all share. We all want our children to be safe and to thrive. We all want our children to succeed in whatever their ambitions are. And we all want to give our children that one extra advantage to help them get ahead in life. After all, when is the last time you met a polar bear with a college fund?

But now comes my admission – I met a glorious little girl, six-year-old Chenoa, who really made me reconsider all the previous comments I've made about polar bears and their rise to be the icon of the green movement. Take a minute to listen to this song that Chenoa composed and sang to me and the cameras during my visit to the [Green School in Bali](#), the Center for Green Schools' "[2012 Greenest School on Earth](#)."

If her performance doesn't make you melt, you very well might be glacial...

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