

Black and white and read all over

What's the best way to introduce children to the concept of climate change? **Rachel Clode** talks to Rebecca Mørch about a book that has sparked an environmental education project

Rebecca Mørch is a woman who is passionate about penguins. As an artist she painted them for 10 years and was struck by the effect of climate change on penguin populations. Two years ago, she decided to write a book for children and adults that could be used as a tool to educate and inform about climate change, as well as what could be done to help prevent further damage.

Who Will Save Us? was published in August 2007 following extensive and painstaking research – with the help of husband John – on the content and production. Despite a positive response from publishers, the couple decided to self-publish the book, researching others who had gone this route, sourcing sustainable printers and papermakers, and setting up Rebecca Mørch Publishing Ltd.

Rebecca's family were a crucial support and inspiration. She credits son Olly with the idea to ask polar explorer Pen Hadow, who lives close to the family's home in Devon, to write the foreword. It was a simple statement from Olly – 'Turn the lights off for the penguins' – that prompted John, a keen walker and

climber, to suggest the book should be introduced by an explorer.

In less than a year, interest in *Who Will Save Us?* and the consequent environmental education project has rapidly expanded. Support has come from individuals, many of whom have provided their expertise for free, as well as from organisations such as WWF, Oxfam, Greenpeace and Sustrans. Many of these big players in the environmental sector, along with popular attractions such as the Eden Project and the Centre for Alternative Technology, are now selling the book and benefiting from the profits.

What started with one book has developed into the *Who Will Save Us?* Children & Young People's Project,

Rebecca Mørch's tips on green self-publishing

- Ensure books are produced with minimum environmental impact
- Get your book trialled with its audience before publishing, and be prepared to re-draft
- Have a creative marketing strategy to reach your audience, not necessarily the normal routes for selling books. Network like never before!
- Give the book credibility by getting supporting statements from those that know your subject
- Information is available from Jonathan Clifford, see www.vanitypublishing.info/pack_intro.html



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Rebecca decided to write a book that could be a tool to educate and inform about climate change

recognised by many UK education authorities as a comprehensive tool for environmental education in primary and secondary schools.

Books are sent to schools with information packs on how to take action. The children sell the books at environmental events they organise and use the profits to set up their own climate change projects on a local, national and global scale. Rebecca explains enthusiastically about one school that held a candlelit supper to fund low-energy bulbs for the whole community. Councils across the South West are now buying a book for every primary and secondary school in their area, Oxfam is including it in its catalogue for schools and the couple are already talking to other national and global organisations about further distribution.

Considering how recently *Who Will Save Us?* was published, what

Rebecca Mørch calls a 'grassroots project still in its infancy' has developed at an astounding rate. 'Climate change is an incredible opportunity to change our behaviour,' she says. 'You can keep walking away, but ultimately we have to change'. **E**



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