

RSC



**THE BOY WHO  
HARNESSED  
THE WIND**  
A **NEW** MUSICAL



**SYNOPSIS**  
EDUCATION RESOURCE



Villagers from Wimbe in Malawi gather around a fire to tell the story of William Kamkwamba. The storytellers mix the real world events with fables and folklore; not necessarily all real but all true.

William is the 13 year old son of a farmer, and everyone expects that he will follow in his father's footsteps. He has lived his life in a rural village without electricity and running water. His family grows maize in the fields around their home and when the harvests are good, they sell some of their crops for "luxuries" like kerosene to provide lighting and school fees so that William can get an education. But William is curious and resourceful. He is eager to learn and understand how the world works beyond the boundaries of his rural village. When he is not in the fields helping his father, William enjoys taking apart broken radios and working out how to fix them. He is very excited to go school and in particular enjoys learning about science.

The lives of the farmers are at the mercy of the weather. When the rains are too heavy it floods, and seeds get washed away before they can grow. When there is drought, the maize withers and dies before it can be harvested. William's family no longer have enough money to send him to school and there is a serious risk that they will not have enough food to eat. But William's desire to learn is strong and in the school library he comes across a book titled "Using Energy". On its cover are rows of gigantic wind turbines and a plan forms in William's inquisitive mind.

As his community struggles with the effects of drought and failed harvests, William works to build a wind turbine using materials from a local junkyard. His friends and other villagers think he is crazy and just playing with toys. They call him a madman. William persists and builds a small prototype to show that his plan might work.

With the support of his friends, villagers and eventually his family, William is able to build his windmill. As the wind blows, the sails turn generating electricity, lighting up the darkness with electric light. By powering a pump, William is able to bring "rain". The crops can be watered, lifting the threat of famine. William and his family are able to look forward to a future of education and empowerment.