

RSC



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



**INTRODUCTION TO THEMES**  
EDUCATION RESOURCE

## EDUCATION

The value of education is important to the story of **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**. At the beginning of the story William is about to start at secondary school. His sister Annie wants to go to university. But because of a lack of money they are both not able to continue with their education.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- What are the different attitudes towards education expressed by characters in the production?
- What are the barriers young people face in fulfilling their potential? How are these different for William and Annie?
- There is a scene that intercuts William at school with William working with his father and the farmers. How are these activities connected?



## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

Throughout the production we see lots of interactions between children and their parents;

William and Annie with Trywell and Agnes

Gilbert with Chief Wimbe

There is a tension between the aspirations that parents have for their children and the hopes and dreams of the children themselves.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- What are the differences between Trywell's aspirations for William compared to Agnes?
- What traditions are the different parents trying to uphold and how do their children want to do things differently?
- How is Gilbert's relationship with Chief Wimbe different from William's with Trywell?



## NATURE, THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

The Kamkwamba family are subsistence farmers. This means that they grow the food that they eat by farming on the land around their home.

Trees are important to the story of **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**. Trees are cut down and sold to the tobacco company. The baobab tree has strong symbolism.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- How are the Kamkwamba family directly affected by extreme weather?
- Why does Jeremiah sell his trees to the tobacco company, against the wishes of Uncle Trywell and the Chief? What are the consequences of his decision?
- How is nature represented throughout the production? What techniques are used to show the extreme weather conditions?

## TECHNOLOGY

Although William lives in a rural village without access to mains electricity, he does interact with technology.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- How does William interact with technology throughout the production?
- How does the lack of access to electricity and technology impact the lives of people in Wimbe?
- What are the differences between how William thinks about technology compared with other characters in the production?





## MUSIC & STORYTELLING

Communal singing and storytelling are an important tradition in Malawi. The production uses a variety of musical styles and storytelling methods. There is music and singing that is diegetic (existing in the world of the story) and music and singing that is non-diegetic (outside of the world of the story - more traditional musical theatre)

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- What are the examples of diegetic singing and music?
- What are the examples of non-diegetic music and singing?
- What are the differences between how diegetic and non-diegetic music are used in the production?