

Mitsuyoshi Smyth

## The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind follows the journey of William Kamkwamba as he discovers the fascinating world of engineering and technology in his home country of Malawi, Africa. William grew up in a very poor country that was stricken with famine, drought, and little education. He worked his family's farm and tried to attend school but was unable to continue due to financial hardship and tough times. In his book, William describes his discovery of old physics and science textbooks in the community library and the resulting obsession with finding out how things work. The curiosity that William displays leads him to construct his own windmill despite being mocked and doubted by his community and even his family. Through trial and error, William completes his windmill and accomplishes his dream of providing electricity for his family and his neighbors. Throughout the book it can be seen that William possesses the mind of an innovator and someone who wants to affect change in his environment. This drives him to work on plans for water pumps, biogas, and much more. He does all this through self-education with borrowed textbooks and an immense ambition. Eventually, word spreads about the boy who harnessed the wind and William is brought to speak at a TED conference about his invention— an event that catapults him into a new world of education, internet, and even more innovation. The story of William Kamkwamba teaches determination, resourcefulness, purpose, hard work, and so much more. His ability to take what was around him and the knowledge that was available to create a machine that bettered the lives of his family and friends shows what appropriate technology can be. William's windmill wasn't the most advanced technology but it changed his family's life and the lives of those around them. Even something simple can change the lives of those who use it and William Kamkwamba's story is a testament to that.