

# AKRAM KHAN COMPANY



THE TEACHING DOSSIER  
**CHOTTO XENOS**



IN THIS PACK

# Introduction

## Resources

### 1. DISCUSS

- **Across the Empire** - Who were the colonial soldiers of WW1?
- **The feeling of Xenos** - What might make someone feel like an outsider?
- **Lest we forget** - Why is it important we remember what happened?

### 2. MAKE

- Medal making
- Remembrance poppy activity

### 3. MOVE

- Basic training
- Soldier stuck in the mud
- In formation
- Helping Hands and Harming Hands
- Puppeteers and puppets
- Creating a dance

## Schemes of Work

## **A word from the *Chotto Xenos* director**

Aspects of the original *XENOS* have been interwoven with more child-friendly content to present a unique production. Children today are exposed to images of war through social media and the concept of conflict as fun through video games. They deserve to have some creative reflection time to ponder on what it means to them, the lives of those they are close to and the world they will grow up in. They are also subjected to a rather limited education about the history of war, often neglecting a very necessary re-telling of the soldiers experience, where they are from and what they believe they are fighting for. Our future peace processes rely on us inspiring a younger generation to be more tolerant and understand the triggers for conflict and ways to manage it. This begins in the playground but unfortunately doesn't end there.

*Chotto Xenos* will continue important audience development and inspires positive understanding of the danger of war whilst being a beautiful engagement with the best that dance and music has to offer.

**Sue Buckmaster**

---

## **Collaborators**

This pack was written by Emma Bellerby with additional support from Pran Patel and Inc Arts.

---

### **Emma Bellerby**

Emma is a dance education specialist, producing and delivering dance projects with schools and community groups across London. She is a passionate advocate for dance as a tool for learning, imagination and creative exploration. Her work engages new audiences in dance, uncovering new ways to feel, think and tell stories through movement. As a dance artist with a background in primary education, she has supported schools and family programmes for Sadler's Wells, the Royal Opera House and The Place before joining Akram Khan Company as Creative Learning Manager in 2022.

Emma trained at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and the Iwanson International School of Contemporary Dance. She also has a Certificate in Dance Education from the Royal Academy of Dance and an MA in Choreography from Trinity Laban

### **Pran Patel**

Pran has 17 years of teaching experience working recently as an assistant principal. He has an exciting career in leadership; leading standards; behaviour; data; professional development, curriculum and standards. His NQSL project was to lead whole-school coaching and has been a successful coach for over a decade.

His inspirational TEDx talk 'Decolonise the Curriculum' describes the moment he realised that the world was tiered away from an authentic truth and that started with the school curriculum. In this vein he recently featured in the Sky News Film 'Slavery in Britain: What don't we know?' Alongside Prof Davide Olugosa, Prof Christopher J Brown, Prof Diana Paton and Prof Olivette Otele. His website, the UK's first antiracist school's website [www.decolonisethecurriculum.com](http://www.decolonisethecurriculum.com), has over 80000+ online monthly views and has gained praise from TES, the Guardian, BBC, Schools Week, Buzzfeed and Eastern Eye.

### **Inc Arts**

Inc Arts is a national collective that champions the creative, economic and contractual rights of the UK's ethnically diverse workforce. We work collaboratively across the arts and cultural sector to create peer led solutions to redress under-representation and lack of diversity in our creative teams and workplaces. We do this through research and advocacy, creating bespoke Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) solutions to arts organisations, and providing a network of advice, support and fellowship to the diverse arts workforce, across all art forms and seniority, and throughout the UK.

## **Curriculum Guidance**

Schools play an important role in raising awareness of social issues that affect the school community and beyond, through modular delivery of British Values which promotes mutual respect and tolerance, and the new RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) curriculum topics that are part of primary education curriculum include respect for differences, understanding the danger of stereotypes and awareness of both welcoming and excluding behaviours. The SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development) curriculum promotes a celebration of the diversity of modern Britain and an understanding of moral and ethical issues amongst other relevant learning areas.

The above is also in line with duties that apply to all public bodies (including schools) under Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010) which require schools to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
  - Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
-

# INTRODUCTION



## **About *Chotto Xenos***

*Chotto Xenos* takes us back in time to discover the story of a soldier from a colonised nation in the trenches of World War One. The experience of the individual soldier we see on stage echoes the experience of more than four million, non-European people of the Global Majority who were involved in the First World War, but whose contribution is less well remembered by history. Throughout *Chotto Xenos* we see our soldier enlisting, training and fighting in the trenches, all on the behalf of a country that is not his own. Although he does not return home and we see his flame extinguish, there is a sense of hope that he was at least able to share his story. We are telling this story today because many of the soldiers and labourers from the Global Majority (whether European citizens or not) have, for a long time, been overlooked in this story. We want to remember them, think about their bravery and learn from their experiences.

*Chotto Xenos* examines the injustices and trauma caused by the British Empire and its involvement in World War One. It is consequently a springboard for crucial discussions around racism, colonialism, war and identity. By not confronting Britain's colonial past and the true history it played in the war, we cause damage to the communities that were, and still are, affected by racism, prejudice and colonial exploitation. This resource pack gives teachers the opportunity to fill in historical gaps within the National Curriculum, which omits much of Britain's colonial past, giving students perspective on current race relations and their origins.

Though a sombre and emotive subject, there is much to celebrate and value in paying tribute to forgotten soldiers from colonised nations. We hope that this pack will support classes in exploring the difficult themes with sensitivity and creativity, allowing powerful discussions and formative learning to take place. Whilst many children will be familiar with aspects of World War One, there will be much that is new from this perspective that we hope will be thought-provoking, relevant and meaningful for students today.

## **How to use this pack**

This pack provides a range of classroom based and dance based cross-curricular lesson ideas that link to the wider wellbeing curriculum. They are a combination of reflective, playful, imaginative and factual activities that all work alongside the National Curriculum whilst building skills in teaching dance creatively.

The pack is arranged for teachers to be able to select activities to create their own scheme of work with differentiation appropriate for the needs of each class. There are quicker, discussion-based activities to allow dialogic and exploratory learning and longer literacy activity ideas that will require additional scaffolding and differentiation. Different formats for longer tasks have been given to offer the opportunity for this work to link with existing schemes of work so that it can slot in within curriculum time. Suggestions of how schemes of work can be built to explore different themes are given at the end of the pack.

Links to external sources have been included to provide teachers with more information about the historical context of *Chotto Xenos*.

## **Why are we dancing?**

Dance is, and has always been a way to explore, communicate and experience ideas. Akram's work is rooted in mythology and telling the stories that speak of the universal experience of being human. Chotto Xenos is an example of how dance is political, because the body is political: we carry history in our bodies. Dance in this capacity is poetic, it is open, it is expressive - but it is not just for adults or for professional dancers and choreographers. By opening up this topic to dance, it is possible to give power over to children to respond in their own way through the creative activities and tell the story in their own words and feelings.

Dance is a fantastic resource to deepen pupils' understanding of the difficult and emotional themes covered in Chotto Xenos. While it may feel a bit intimidating to cover such a complicated topic through dance, its abstract and non-verbal nature makes it a powerful art form with which to tackle sensitive subjects. Because this way of teaching dance asks children to input their own ideas rather than replicating steps, the lessons are inclusive and should suit the needs for everyone in the class. By following the guide for different lessons, you will find that children can unpick the layers within Chotto Xenos and find their own critical and creative responses.

Start with short exercises with clearer outcomes to give your class an introduction into creative movement and break each lesson into smaller teaching chunks.