This case study of the planning and production of the Wemba Wemba Miromaa Language App can be used as a guide to assist your school or community to undertake a similar project. The App was produced for and by students at Swan Hill Primary School as a digital tool to assist them and the community in learning Wemba Wemba language.
Stakeholders

At the beginning of your project it will be important to outline all key stakeholders, including for example; Traditional Owner Groups, Elders, community linguists, language workers, education specialists, teachers, principals and partner organisations. Once you have identified all stakeholders, you can establish the project group who will work on the app.

Key stakeholders for the Wemba Wemba App:

Wemba Wemba Elders and Community
Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL)
Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre (MALTC)
Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI)
Swan Hill Primary School (SHPS)

From these stakeholders, the core working group was established:

Content Development
Aunty Stephanie Charles: Wemba Wemba Elder & Language Teacher, SHPS
Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir: Wemba Wemba Elder & Project Officer, VACL
Andrew Cameron: Koorie Education Support Officer, SHPS
Paul Paton: Executive Officer, VACL
Emma Hutchinson: Digital Projects Officer, VACL
Vaso Elefsiniotis: Policy & Research Officer/Community Linguist, VAEAI
Janet Barnard: Principal, SHPS
Rachel Moloney: Grade One Year Level Coordinator, SHPS
Grade One Students (Aboriginal & Non-Aboriginal): SHPS
Documenting Language

The Miromaa App is created by exporting data (words, audio files and images) out of the language database Miromaa. In the case of creating the Wemba Wemba App we decided to create a database set exclusively for the app, rather than select content from an existing database, which is also possible if you are already using Miromaa with your language.

Before entering any data, we first created our categories and wordlists in workshops with our language team, consisting of Traditional Owners, a Community Linguist and the Digital Projects Officer.

Categories
We used some pre-existing categories in Miromaa and also invented our own to suit the project’s needs. In this case, we related the categories directly to what the students were learning in class. We also wanted to include the phrases and songs children were learning.

The categories chose were:

- Animals
- Basic Words
- Birds
- Body Parts
- Counting
- Country
- Family and People
- Objects
- Phrases
- Placenames
- School
- Songs
- Time and Weather
Word Lists
It’s good to start with a rough plan of how big you want your app to be. Keep in mind this is a learning support tool and not necessarily a dictionary in which to put every single word. It’s a good idea to be selective about which words you include initially, knowing that you can always add to and update your app down the track based on audience feedback and community needs. We started with a rough plan of around 120 entries, which ended up blowing out to 229.

Initially, with the categories in place, we estimated an average of 10 entries per category, plus two songs. This was an estimate only, and we found that there were further essential words which the community needed to include. Once the wordlists were finalised, spelling and translation work was undertaken and checked in partnership with Traditional Owners and a community linguist.

Never used Miromaa before?
If you are in Victoria, VACL has project staff who can assist you with this process. To obtain a licence for using Miromaa, please contact the Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre.
www.miromaa.org.au
Art and Photography Workshops

Since the Wemba Wemba App was primarily designed to support the language program at school, it was considered that the children would be more likely to use and enjoy the app if they themselves featured in it and had created the content. With the word lists finalised, we consulted with Elders, teachers and year level coordinators to set up a series of workshops for children to use their creativity. The first workshop was arranged to coincide with a school excursion to Kyabram Fauna Park where children were given iPads and cameras to take photos of animals and other activities throughout the day. All children were encouraged to take turns using the technology. Kids who were not so keen were not forced to participate and those who showed a keen interest were able to gain confidence in building digital skills in an environment outside the classroom.

Three further workshops were held back in classes at the school where children were given the option to draw or take photos to illustrate each entry on the wordlists. This was done working alongside Elders who could communicate the cultural significance of what the children were working with. For example - describing a snare, what it was made of and how they were used - before the children embark on drawing the object.
Audio Recording

For this project we selected some of the Aboriginal students at the school to record some of the audio. This was a great experience for the kids in using new technology and gaining confidence in the language. For reasons relating to consistency, accuracy, location and logistics it was later decided that the two key Elders working on the project would undertake all audio recording tasks. The two songs were recorded in class with all students singing.

Identifying an appropriate recording space is important at this stage. Think about your local community resources such as radio stations, libraries, broadcasting studios, Aboriginal Co-ops, theatres and other places which do not echo and are sound proof. We were lucky enough to be able to use the conservation department’s audio recording studio at Melbourne Museum for this project.
**Project Summary and Launch**

Creating good quality content is the key to success for your app. Spending time identifying and confirming categories, word lists and spelling should not be underestimated in your planning. Creating the content is the fun bit, but make sure you know the requirements of what you need the end result to be before you start - what format should the images be in? What file size do you need? What audio recording device are you going to need to create quality .wav files?

Once we were ready to deliver all content to the Miromaa Team the process was very straightforward as the Miromaa Team handle the rest! Asking a group to test the app when in Test Flight is a good idea as fresh eyes will pick up any errors. All corrections need to be made at this stage before the app goes live as you want to release the best possible product and also, changes/additions/updates will incur additional fees once the app is launched.

We held the launch at Swan Hill Primary School general assembly where all students, parents, teachers and community were invited to attend. Contact your local papers and media outlets, write about it on your website and social media - get the word out and spread the good news about language in your community!
Teacher Resources and Further Development

Since launching the app the language journey has continued and we are now looking into developing teacher and community resources which further support language and cultural learning to accompany the app. These could be language based activities, printed booklets or interactive pdf’s using the audio and images from your dedicated Miromaa database.

Protocols and Contacts

All language activities must be facilitated by local Aboriginal people to whom the language belongs.

Contacts:
Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
P: 03 9600 3811 E: info@vaclang.org.au W: www.vaclang.org.au

Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre
P: 02 4927 8222 E: contact@acra.org.au W: www.miromaa.org.au
Miromaa and iOS Device Apps