As part of its initiative Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS), and in association with the Warnayaka Art Centre and the French anthropologist/producer Barbara Glowczewski, UNESCO presents this outstanding CD-ROM, the result of her many years of work with the Warlpiri people of the Lajamanu community.

This CD-ROM represents only a fraction of the complex cultural, ritual and ecological knowledge of the Warlpiri people. It is based on the network of the fourteen Dreamings most often painted by the people of Lajamanu. In fact, all named things in nature and culture have a Dreaming, or jukurrpa, so there are thousands of stories and named Dreaming places marking the Warlpiri land, their ‘living book’, as they call it.

The transposition of Aboriginal cognitive mapping into an interactive map allows the user to experience the interconnectivity of indigenous cosmology, emulated by the logic of CD-ROMs or the Web. Unlike conventional linear text, multimedia is an ideal tool to convey the dynamism and wealth of oral traditions. By strengthening the dialogue between elders and youth, it reinforces the transmission of indigenous knowledge.

Travel in the desert country of the Warlpiri men and women
Discover the many links among animals, plants, places and people
Explore hundreds of Dreaming stories, song-lines and paintings
Read the signs painted on bodies, boards or canvas
Study films of sand stories, hand signs and ritual dancing
Learn Warlpiri words and meanings
Search notebooks on art, colonization, healing or land-rights
Understand the taboo on the deceased’s names and pictures

The author has succeeded in untangling the skein of myths based on the dream (jukurrpa in the Warlpiri language) that govern the life of Aboriginal people. But the dreaming in question is different from the one known to Westerners: dreaming is a “virtual space-time” in which all that exists on earth has been created at the onset by totemic heroes – plants, animals or representations of rain or fire. As they traveled, the ancestors left many traces of their passage in the form of hills, rocks or waterholes… All people that exist are thus the incarnation, the heroes, of these myths. But they must practise rituals in order to “reanimate the principles of these dreamings”, a virtual matrix of life and forms.

Christiane Galus, Le Monde, August 2000

Minimum system requirements:
32 MB RAM, colour monitor 600 x 800 pixels
PC: Windows 95/98, 16-bit monitor
Mac: OS 8, PowerPC processor, thousands of colours