

PN-ABK-090
ISN 44944

FIELD NOTE

A "Live" Logo is More than Just a Logo

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is a program of the

**Bureau for Science and Technology, Office of Health and Office of Education
Agency for International Development**

through a contract with the

Academy for Educational Development

and subcontracts with the

University of Pennsylvania Applied Communication Technology Needham Porter Novelli and PATH

Contract #DPE-1013-C-00-5063-00

"Once Upon a Time..." is an appropriate way to begin a story about how the child survival logo of the Ecuador PREMI program came to life and how its three characters became the actors and actress (and one of them even the fictional "star") of the communication strategy. The story is an unusual one partly because of the fame its characters achieved and partly because the characters changed midcourse--not generally a good idea for a logo.

PREMI, or the Plan to Reduce Childhood Disease and Mortality (Plan de Reduccion de Enfermedad y Muerte Infantil), was Ecuador's first nationwide child survival program. It was created in 1985 by the Government of Ecuador to lower morbidity and mortality among children under five from four principal causes: diarrheal disease, vaccine-preventable diseases of childhood, malnutrition, and acute respiratory infections. PREMI had two basic components. The first aimed at strengthening the Ministry of Health's overall capacity to deliver health services, specifically through improved health systems management, logistics, supervision, and training. The second was a public health strategy designed to increase demand for the new services and provide mothers with information on how to care for children in their homes. The Instituto Nacional del Niño y la Familia (INNFA), a semiprivate charitable organization, was responsible for this communication component. The HEALTHCOM Project assisted in the INNFA-PREMI activities.

At the beginning of the PREMI program, Ecuador had no visual image for the concept of child survival or for its own programmatic effort. The UNICEF logo had been used to some extent and was recognizable to program managers as a symbol of maternal and child health, but Ecuador did not "own" this symbol. The design of a PREMI logo was considered important both to strengthen the program's identity at the administrative level, and to serve as an informational and promotional "hook" for audiences targeted by the communication activities.

SELECTING THE LOGO ELEMENTS

The project contracted a local advertising agency, McCann-Erickson, to help define the overall communication strategy. This also included testing several logo designs. The primary audience for the PREMI effort was mothers and other caretakers of children under five.

The process of designing a PREMI logo began with focus groups of mothers. The ad agency presented to the participants several possible design elements. Mothers then selected those they thought would be appealing and appropriate for conveying the theme

of child survival. They chose a plant--representing life; a sun--representing energy and life; and a boy and girl. Artists at the agency then produced drafts of these different symbols, and finally a composite for mothers to discuss. The participants proposed that the logo show a boy and a girl in relation to a small plant that was obviously green and healthy. Figure 1 shows the artists' interpretation of the mothers' description. (Figure 1)

Mothers objected to the rigidity of this drawing. The figures seemed too geometrical and the children's looks uninteresting. The artists then produced a second variation of their draft. (Figure 2) Variation two was better received, but mothers suggested the children's faces should be less cartoon-like and that their clothes should seem to fit more naturally. These suggestions inspired yet another version of the logo. (Figure 3) Mothers reacted positively to this third version.

A SLOGAN FOR THE LOGO

Mothers also helped select a slogan for the PREMI program, which was often used in combination with the logo (see Figure 2). They first suggested several words and concepts which they thought should be associated with a health program. Project staff then presented a variety of possible rhymes to the mothers, who initially narrowed down the selection to two:

"En mi casa y en la de toditos, tenemos niños sanitos."

("In my house, yours, and everyone's, we have healthy children.")

and

"Pongamos contentos, fuertes y sanos a todos los niños ecuatorianos."

("Let's make Ecuadorian children happy, strong, and healthy.")

The second slogan was finally selected as a logical "caption" for the picture. The underlying thought was that a healthy child should be easily recognizable through outward characteristics, such as a rosy skin, a happy face, a strong build, and an eager expression.

WHEN IS A CHANGE IN A LOGO JUSTIFIED?

Ordinarily an effective communication strategy avoids any midprogram change in major messages or symbols. Lack of consistency can confuse the audience and undermine

their loyalty to products or services in subtle ways. The PREMI experience, however, provides an interesting exception to this rule.

The initial target of child survival activities was defined as children under five. However, results of the first national health campaign (in October 1985) showed that most children over three years old had completed their vaccination doses, while children under two (and particularly children under one) remained significantly unprotected. The Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Association (PAHO) recognized the importance of these results and recommended changing the target audience to a lower age group. Prompt vaccinations were not the only goal of this change in focus. Staff of the nutritional component in the Ministry were also interested in lowering the target age because malnutrition is most devastating among those under two, and it is at this time that preventive measures can be crucial.

This programmatic decision meant that promotional activities had somehow to change the "image" of the target audience. This was a formidable challenge. Communication planners decided to put the PREMI logo to work on the difficult challenge of changing a target audience midprogram.

CARLITOS IS BORN

Project staff proposed that the logo "children" gain a little nine-month-old brother. The communication unit of INFFA-PREMI proposed that this fellow would have to be bright and spunky, have an innocent and winning smile, a chubby, healthy-looking stomach, a diaper, an under-sized T-shirt (indicating his constant growth), and bare feet. They drew a number of sketches and took several to the field for pretesting with mothers. (Figures 4 and 5).

Mothers contributed a number of excellent observations resulting in a slightly different image for the boy. The child's eyes and mouth seemed to indicate some sadness, and this was changed. They suggested the color of his skin should look healthier and the T-shirt should cover his belly to avoid the suggestion of an overblown stomach possibly filled with worms. He should wear some sort of shoes. The mothers confirmed that the child should be a boy.

They were asked to consider possible names for the child. The INNFA-PREMI communication unit had a preference for "Telmo," but mothers almost unanimously rejected this. They made up their own lists of names, narrowed them down to three favorites, and finally came up with "Carlos" and its diminutive, "Carlitos." The artists redrew Carlitos together with his brother and sister, as shown in Figure 6.

"AHI VIENE CARLITOS"

"Here comes Carlitos!" The new logo was very literally "born" through a campaign to introduce the little brother to the public. The announcement, "Ahi viene Carlitos," appeared in three major national newspapers over a period of five days. On the last day, the announcement changed to "Here is Carlitos!" Underneath was a picture of Carlitos riding a huge vaccination syringe, like a rocket, while his brother and sister awaited his landing. This campaign launch was followed immediately by a new comic strip series about Carlitos and his two siblings and their adventures in the land of child survival. Although the comic strip was geared toward teaching general health concepts to children, it became popular with a broad audience.

The comic strip was entitled "Carliman y el Hada PREMI," or "Carliman and the PREMI Fairy." (Figure 7) The star was Carliman--his name appropriately rhyming with He-Man, who was very popular at that moment among children. He was accompanied by Pikiko and Pilucha, his brother and sister who act as his protectors and friends. The ugly, sly goblin represents the force of evil which tries in numerous devilish ways to trip up Carlitos. Hada PREMI is a fairy who represents the forces of good (or rather good health) and helps Carlitos escape from danger. The strip proceeds through four adventures in which the goblin and the fairy struggle over the well-being of Carlitos. The children are led through a land of danger, magic, and assorted gimmicks (the magic wand of the fairy, the thunder bolt of the evil goblin, Carliman's magic suitcase which contains lenses to see inside the body, the magic powder which transforms a baby carriage into a miniature spaceship, a fourth dimensional TV set, and so forth.) Through these stories, health moves into the realm of magic and science fiction, and back again into reality.

The four-square comic strip appeared uninterrupted for 125 days in two nationally distributed newspapers ("El Comercio" and "Hoy"). It was also reprinted by one provincial newspaper.

"Carliman y el Hada PREMI" brought Carlitos to life. Although he was obviously just a baby (unable either to talk or walk) he was clever beyond his years. Carlitos had a personality--innocent yet wise, vulnerable yet heroic--and gradually became linked in the public's mind with child survival activities. The project staff saw more and more opportunities to put Carlitos to work.

CARLIMAN'S TEXTBOOK

Once all of the comic strips had appeared, they were edited and printed together as a soft-cover elementary school textbook. (Figure 8) The book is divided into four sections, each of which discusses all of the PREMI themes (diarrhea and dehydration, rehydration with Suero Oral, vaccinations, and growth monitoring). Each section ends with two pages of exercise/games. The book also includes a pre- and post-test. Copies were distributed in a pilot program to 30 primary schools associated with the "Fe y Alegria" organization (experimental schools). A total of 1,750 third graders and their teachers received copies. The teachers also received an evaluation sheet and a Guide Book suggesting how to use the Carliman textbook. (Figure 9)

After the pilot study, the Carliman textbook was distributed to 10,000 third grade children in both standard and experimental elementary schools, through the "Fe y Alegria" network and through OTIDES (a coordination and implementation unit created through a bilateral agreement between the ministries of health and education.)

TELEVISION SPOTS

Carlitos was also made the star of several animated television spots promoting different child survival themes:

Crystal Bell Campaign— This monthly spot reminded mothers to bring their children to the health center on a regular basis for growth monitoring, for vaccinations, to receive ORS packets, and so forth. Carlitos is featured ringing several crystal bells which are supposed to remind mothers to think about their children's health. He points out the services that a mother can get for her child at the health center, and cheerfully makes the rounds himself (sitting on the scale to be weighed, for example).

"Haga de su niño un campeón"— "Make a Champion of your Child." Carlitos is the appears as the "champion" and receives a trophy and a gold star for completing all of his vaccinations. He explains to mothers how they can receive a gold star for their child at the health center. (If a child is fully vaccinated his or her mother will receive a special certificate. If the child is fully vaccinated before the age of one, the certificate will also have a large gold star on it.)

"Mantenga un sobre de Suero Oral en su casa"— Carlitos has a sudden attack of diarrhea. His mother looks for an ORS packet and is unable to find one. The moral: always keep an ORS packet at home because "diarrhea does not announce itself; it just arrives."

What is dehydration?— Carlitos is suffering from diarrhea and becomes dehydrated. His eyes become sunken, his skin becomes dried and pinched, and he cries without tears. He loses weight and energy and becomes listless. When his mother gives him ORS solution, however, he recovers.

The project also created posters on the above themes, complete with the PREMI characters, to display in health centers.

HEALTHY CHILD CONTESTS

Carlitos was also the official promoter of a national contest in which mothers could become eligible for a raffle of 180 educational scholarships (primarily to buy books for their school-aged children). In order to participate, a mother brought her child's growth chart to the health center where a health worker confirmed that the child's vaccinations had been completed and that his or her growth had been registered at least five times on the chart. The card had to show that the child was under one year old. In addition, the mother had to recite or sing the ORS preparation jingle or the health baby song. She then received a pre-numbered ticket which allowed her to participate in the raffle.

Television, radio, and print materials promoted the contest. In two animated television spots, Carlitos explained to mothers how to fulfill the requirements of participation. The spots were aired on seven national television stations eight times a day for ten days. Three informational radio spots were aired over 225 stations, 15 times a day for ten days. In addition, the communication unit distributed two large color posters to health centers and other public places where mothers were likely to see them. The posters also featured Carlitos and his "champion" status. (Figure 10)

PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

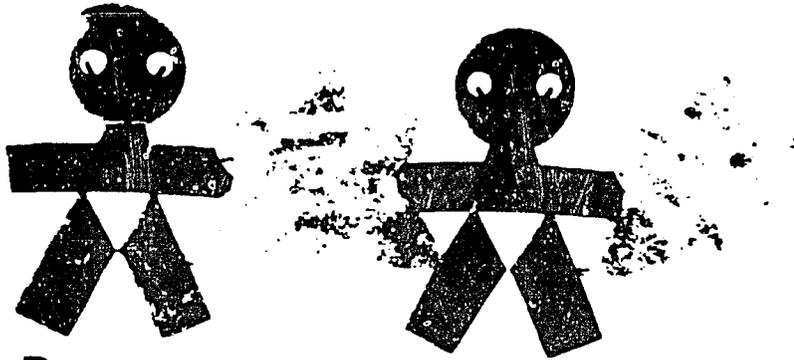
The communication unit designed two "thank you" items to distribute to all those people who had contributed substantially to the success of the three national health campaigns. One of these was a printed, colorful card, showing Carlitos sitting in his director's chair and pointing out various events, activities, and impressive results--all thanks to those institutions or individuals to whom the card was addressed. The card reads, "Gracias a Ustedes," or "Thanks to you, all of this was possible." (Figure 11) A total of 5,000 cards were distributed. The unit also designed a small pin engraved in color with the PREMI logo. A total of 300 were given on several special occasions to the most valued contributors. These pins became prized possessions. Partly because Carlitos

seemed to have become a real and endearing child, the logo had come to represent something far more than just a symbol.

CONCLUSION

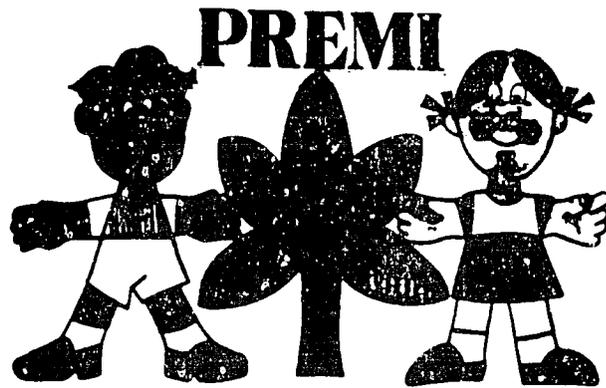
This field note has described just a few ways in which a successful logo can be used in imaginative ways. It also shows that every rule can be broken, if it is broken for a good reason and in a careful, considered way. Whereas a program should not usually change important messages or symbols midcourse, this sometimes becomes necessary. Carlitos was introduced in such a way that he did not confuse the audience, but rather helped clarify and highlight important health messages. He was able to serve as an integrating force among many media and provided a consistent image through a number of related interventions. Most importantly, through the imaginative drawings and applications of communication workers, he seemed to become "alive" and to win a place in the hearts of mothers and children, as well as communication planners.

Figure 1



Pongamos contentos, fuertes y sanos
a todos los niños ecuatorianos.

Figure 2



Pongamos contentos, fuertes y sanos
a todos los niños ecuatorianos

Figure 3

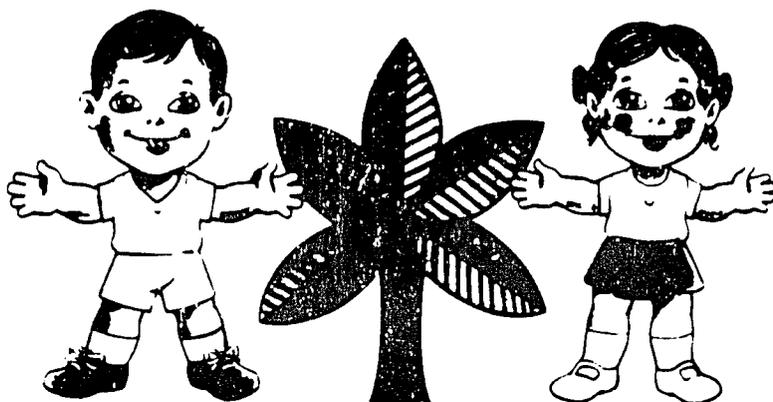


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Carliman y el Hada Premi

HOY-23-DIC



Carliman y el Hada Premi

HOY-22-DIC



Carliman y el Hada Premi

HOY-21-DIC



Carliman y el Hada Premi

HOY-30-DIC



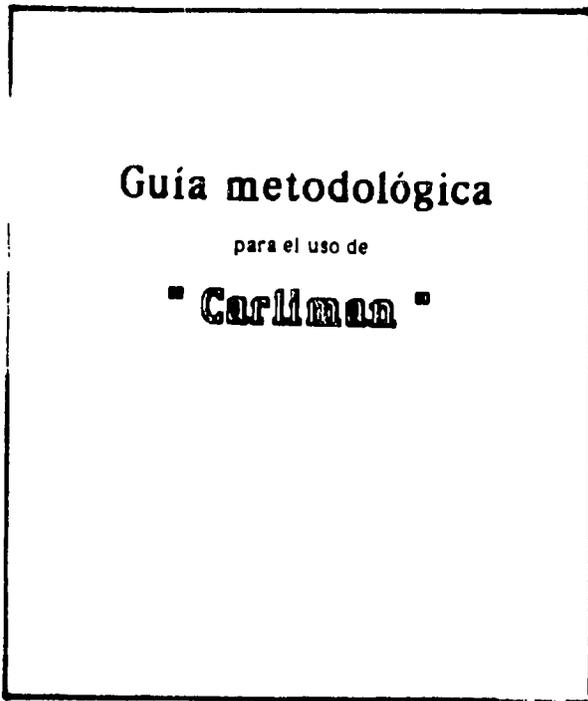


Figure 8

Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

