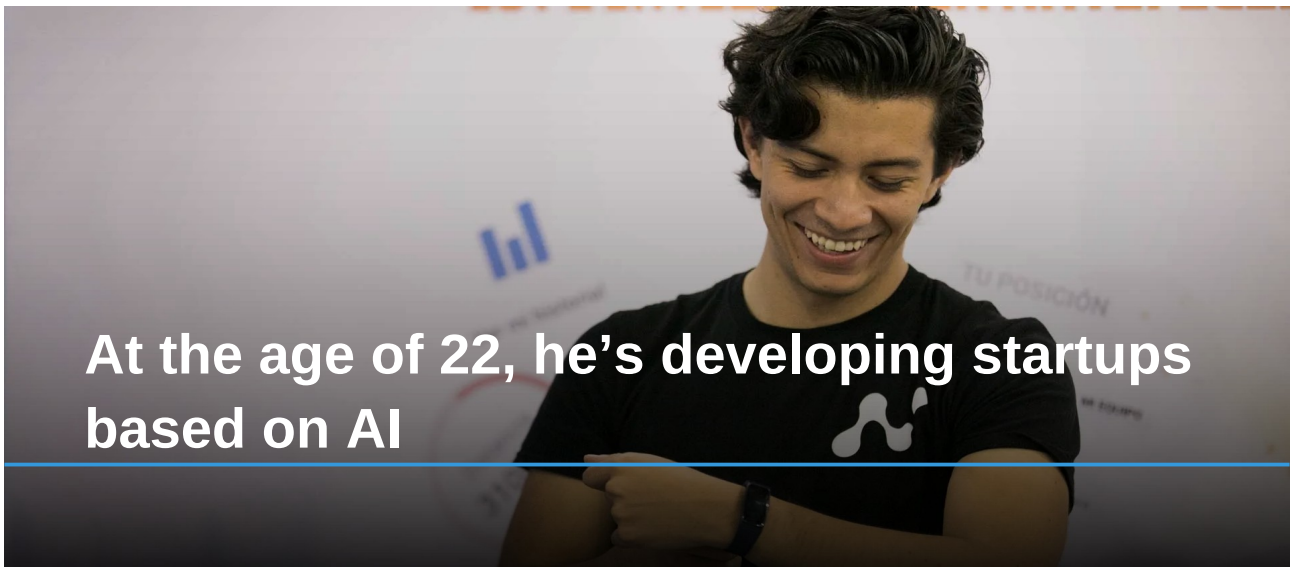


At the age of 22, he’s developing startups based on AI

*“When I was 9**, I converted my acoustic guitar into an acoustic-electric one**, literally. I went to Steren to buy all the components and transformed my guitar,”* says **Imanol Daran**.

Now, at the age of **22**, this student of **Business and Information Technologies Engineering** at the **San Luis Potosí campus** of **Tec de Monterrey** wants technology to improve people’s lifestyles.

Imanol is **the founder** and **CEO** of **Neuron**, a company **that develops software and apps using emerging technologies** such as **artificial intelligence (AI)** and **virtual reality (VR).**

*“People started approaching me to develop things. **They saw me as a creative thinker, a capable person**, which is how the **Neuron brand was born**,”* he told CONECTA.

As Neuron's leader, Imanol has managed to launch **6 startups of his own**: **3** based on **artificial intelligence**, 1 that uses **virtual reality**, 1 based on **geolocation technology**, and 1 that uses **blockchain**.

"People started approaching me to develop things. They saw me as a creative thinker, a capable person."

FROM STUDENT TO ENTREPRENEUR

Imanol has developed technological skills since childhood, and he believes that his student years have enabled him to **broaden his knowledge** and develop his **entrepreneurial vision**.

*"**Hard work, leadership, resilience**, and the ability to **speak in public** are skills the Tec gives you, and they've helped me a lot,"* he emphasizes.

He obtained some of his **programming know-how** when he was a **PrepaTec** student and captained the **LAMBOT** team in the **FIRST robotics** competition.

Activities such as the **Entrepreneurial Challenge**, which forms part of the new **Tec21 Educational Model**, also enabled him to visualize the potential of setting up businesses.

"It really opened my eyes about how to sell. It made me realize how you can take ownership of your own income, your options and your outcomes," he explains.

NEURON STARTUPS

Taking part in **INCmty, the Tec's entrepreneurship fair**, brought Imanol into contact with **artificial intelligence** when a course he took showed him the potential of this emerging technology.

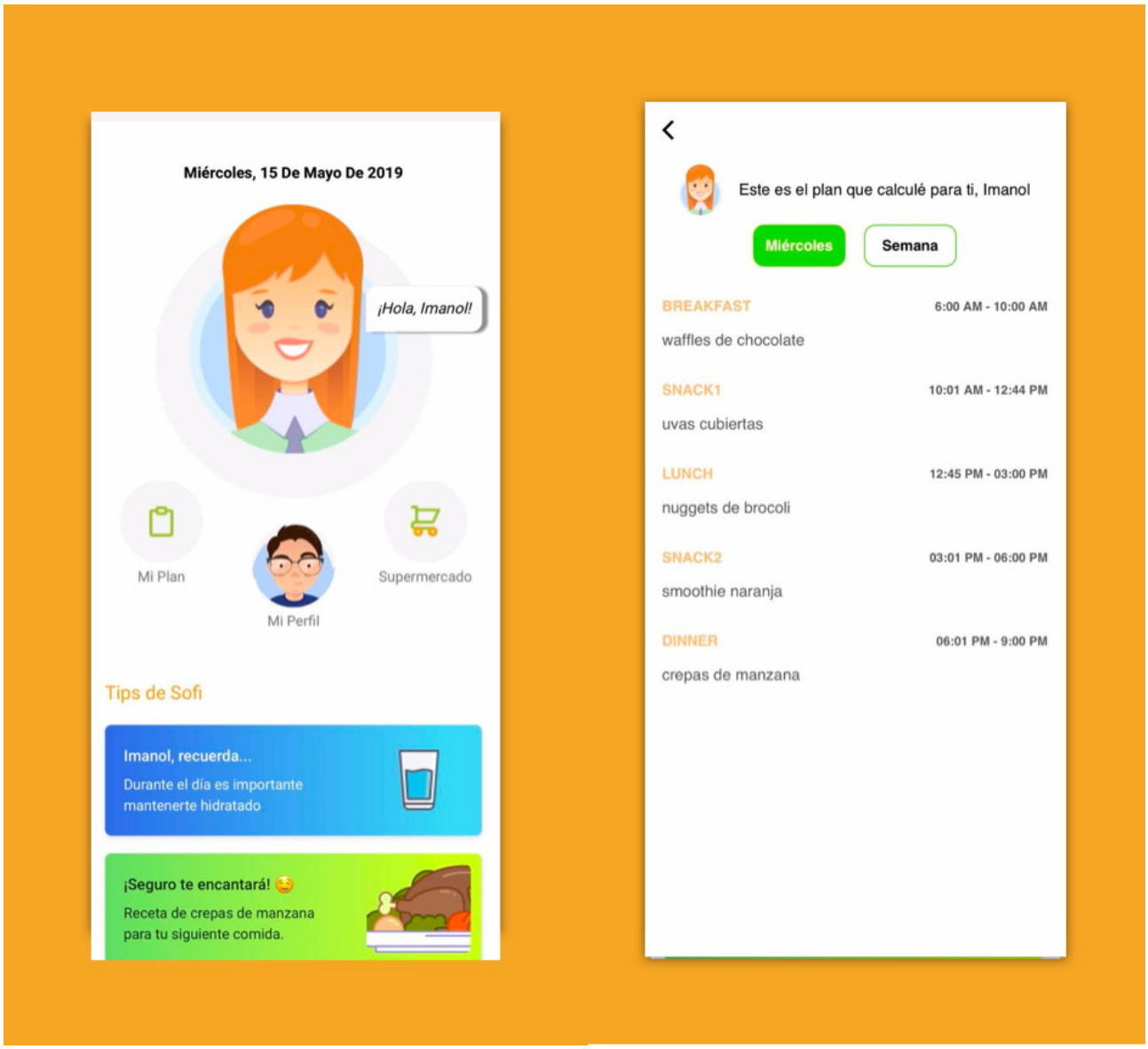
His company's name alludes to this type of technology. *"All the decisions in artificial intelligence are formed by **neural networks**, and that's where the Neuron concept comes from."*

The main startups developed by Neuron are as follows:

1.-ZipUp: your virtual nutritionist

This app collects user data and uses **artificial intelligence** to design a nutrition plan.

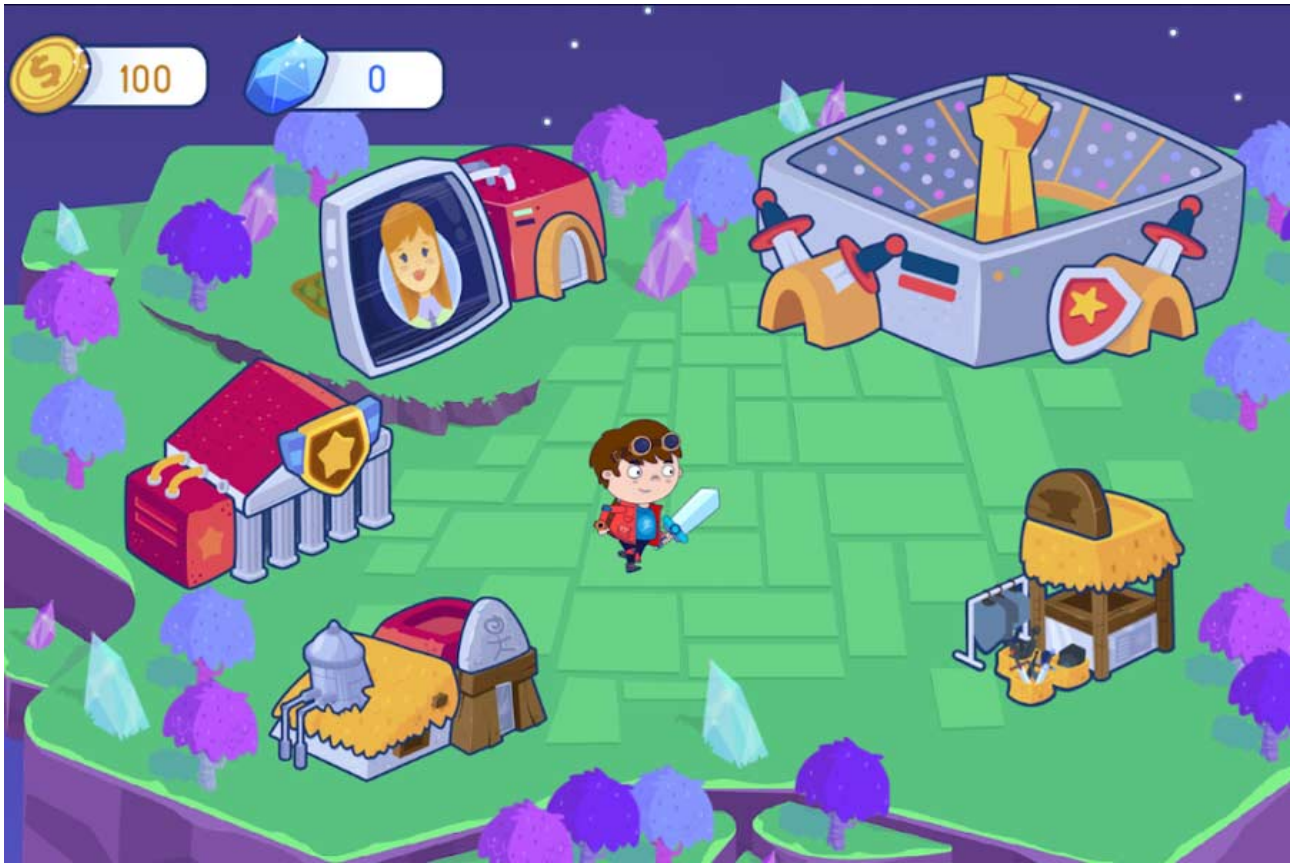
“If you eat something you shouldn’t, Sofi (your virtual assistant) will tell you about it and ***adjust that day’s plan so that you never lose sight of your objective,****”* explains Imanol.



2.-YUGO: a children's exercise video game.

The game uses a **sports bracelet** and **artificial intelligence** to motivate children to become more active, which is what lets them reach higher playing levels.

*"As they play, children meet Sofi, a character who gives them **advice on nutrition**. They also gain points and rewards by putting in the foods they eat,"* the entrepreneur adds.



3.- GUARÁ: a language and speech tutor

This is an assistant who uses **artificial intelligence** to help people practice oral presentations.

This app gives you automatic feedback on your tone of voice, expression, speed of delivery and linguistic crutches, in addition to recommending content.

4.- FUVE: virtual reality for training doctors

According to Imanol, this technology has the **potential to revolutionize** how doctors learn about fetal surgery.

FUVE uses **virtual reality** to simulate ultrasound. You can choose the pathology you want to learn how to diagnose.

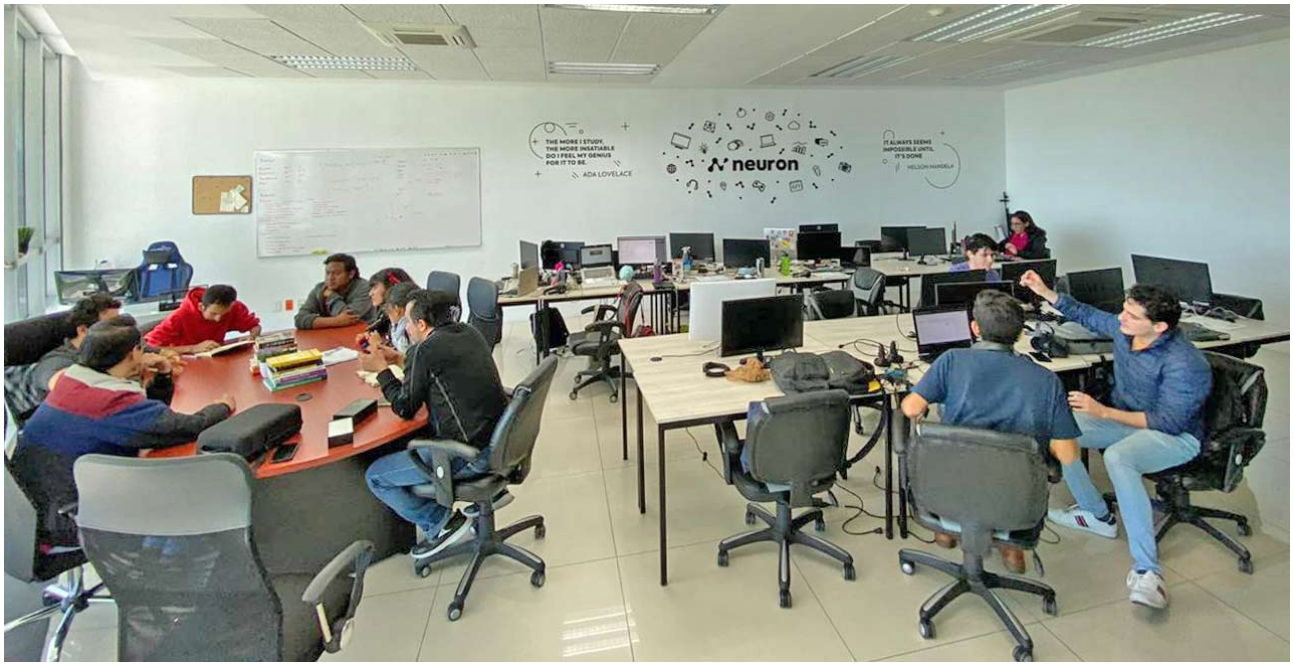
“We have over 5,000 clinical cases validated and approved by one of the most highly-recognized fetal medicine organizations in Mexico,” says Imanol.

5.- WAVE: a secure way of striking up a conversation

Using a **geolocation algorithm** and **user profiling**, this app lets you find people in your vicinity you can talk to about things you have in common.

*“It lets you **get to know people nearby** so you can make **face-to-face contact** with them in a **secure environment** like affiliated cafés, stores or public spaces,”* he says.

This application already has a partnership in Chicago, where it is already up and running.



6.- BUYLEGIT: so you can buy original products

A system using tokens on labels that makes use of **blockchain** technology for **security,** thereby **preventing the sale of counterfeit products**.

“When users buy something, they can see its transaction history and verify whether it’s completely new or if it’s ever been purchased before,” says Imanol.

PARTNERSHIPS AND THE FUTURE

Neuron has set up **partnerships** with other young entrepreneurs, specialists in a variety of areas, and foundations.

For instance, the **FUVE** startup involved setting up a partnership with the Mexican Fetal Medicine Foundation **(Fundación Medicina Fetal México)** and **Dr Rogelio Cruz Martínez**, a pioneer in fetal surgery in Mexico.

He has also i**nvested in other startups** such as the **GAMEX** platform.

*“This is a startup launched by students from the **Tec’s Santa Fe** and **Mexico City** campuses. We got talking and decided to collaborate. It was something special because it*

was Neuron's first investment.

"We developed all the infrastructure for them and the Yugo video game," Imanol told us.

Imanol's dream is to turn one of his startups into a unicorn company, which is what they call companies appraised at over a billion pesos during the capital-raising stage.

"In Mexico, there has never been a unicorn company as such. ***We've taken up the challenge and we're going to be the first. We're going to inspire more young people to do something impressive,****"* he predicts.

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