A Symbiotic Transnational Model for Mental Health Scalability:

Integrating Technology, Neuroscience, and Public Policy between Oregon (USA) and El Salvador

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Acknowledgements

I am also grateful to my sister, my mother and Cristian Evora, as the decision to found Studio Legion Networking was for her−to help more people not feel hopeless, like her and like the friends and acquaintances I lost along the way. Even if I must walk this path alone, I will find the skills to forge the way and create an organization that helps people like my sister, or like the friends and acquaintances I lost along the way.

Abstract

This thesis addresses a critical duality in the global mental health landscape: the profound lack of accessible services in developing nations like El Salvador, and the systemic inefficiencies within well-funded systems like Oregon's. It identifies a ''''resources paradox'''' where financial capital in the U.S. often fails to connect with the immense, untapped human capital in Latin America. The central argument is that a new operational paradigm is required-one that moves beyond traditional aid to create a self-sustaining**, symbiotic relationship** between these two realities. The genesis of this research is a deeply personal journey.

Beginning in May 2023, following my own recovery process, I pursued a self-directed path of education, obtaining certifications as a Certified Recovery Mentor (CRM) and Peer Support Specialist (PSS). This path revealed critical systemic flaws: a severe shortage of specialized professionals for youth (evidenced by only eight certified CPS specialists in Oregon) and alarming complaint rates (68%) against existing mentors, indicating a gap in quality care. Facing language barriers and professional gatekeeping despite being highly trained, I experienced firsthand the systemic cracks this thesis aims to repair.

This thesis proposes a novel solution: a **symbiotic, transnational model** designed to correct this market failure. The model leverages Oregon as a hub for financial capital, governance, and technological strategy, while establishing El Salvador as a center for talented, culturally competent, and underemployed mental health professionals. This structure creates a form of ''social capital arbitrage,'' directing resources where they are most effective and creating high-value employment where it is most needed.

To prove the feasibility of this model, I developed, as an autodidact, a suite of prototypic digital tools that form the ecosystem's operational framework. This includes: (1) **A multilingual website (Studio Legion Networking)**. Serving as the global access point; (2) **Two mobile applications** built in Flutter Flow, one for secure client service delivery and another as an internal innovation incubator; and (3) **A video game developed in Unreal Engine 5,** designed as a unique methodological tool for psychoeducation and fostering empathy toward the experience of schizophrenia. Ultimately, this work presents a scalable and sustainable template for global mental health intervention. It is a blueprint for an organization that is not only effective in its mission but also equitable in its structure. The research is driven by the urgent, personal mission to build systems of support for individuals across all cultures-individuals like my own sister, whose battle with schizophrenia is the foundational inspiration for this entire endeavor.

Resume

La presente tesis doctoral aborda una dicotomía crítica en el ámbito de la salud global: la marcada deficiencia de servicios accesibles en naciones en desarrollo, como El Salvador, y las inherentes ineficiencias sistémicas en sistemas robustamente financiados, como el de Oregón. Se identifica una "paradoja de recursos", donde el capital financiero disponible en Estados Unidos no logra articularse eficazmente con el vasto, y a menudo inexplorado, capital humano de América Latina. El argumento central postula la imperativa necesidad de un nuevo paradigma operativo, uno que trascienda los modelos de ayuda tradicional para forjar una relación simbiótica y sostenible entre estas dos realidades.

La génesis de esta investigación es de naturaleza profundamente personal. A partir de mayo de 2023, tras mi propio proceso de recuperación, emprendí un camino de formación autodidacta, obteniendo certificaciones como Mentor de Recuperación Certificado (CRM) y Especialista de Apoyo entre Pares (PSS). Este trayecto reveló deficiencias sistémicas críticas, incluyendo una severa escasez de profesionales especializados en atención a jóvenes (evidenciada por la existencia de tan solo ocho especialistas en CPS certificados en Oregón) y alarmantes tasas de quejas (68%) contra mentores existentes, lo que subraya una brecha significativa en la calidad de la atención. A pesar de mi alta capacitación, la confrontación con barreras lingüísticas y un hermetismo profesional me permitió experimentar de primera mano las fisuras sistémicas que esta tesis aspira a rectificar.

Esta tesis propone una solución innovadora: un modelo simbiótico y transnacional diseñado para subsanar esta falla de mercado. El modelo estratégico ubica a Oregón como un epicentro de capital financiero, gobernanza y estrategia tecnológica, mientras establece a El Salvador como un centro de profesionales de la salud mental talentosos, culturalmente competentes y subempleados. Esta estructura conceptualiza una forma de "arbitraje de capital social", dirigiendo recursos hacia donde su efectividad es máxima y generando empleo de alto valor en las regiones donde más se necesita.

Para demostrar la viabilidad de este modelo, se desarrolló de manera autodidacta un conjunto de herramientas digitales prototípicas que constituyen el marco operativo del ecosistema propuesto. Este conjunto incluye: (1) un sitio web multilingüe (Studio Legion Networking), que funge como punto de acceso global; (2) dos aplicaciones móviles desarrolladas en Flutter Flow, una destinada a la provisión segura de servicios al cliente y otra concebida como incubadora de innovación interna; y (3) un videojuego diseñado en Unreal Engine 5, empleado como una herramienta metodológica singular para la psicoeducación y el fomento de la empatía hacia la experiencia de la esquizofrenia.

En última instancia, este trabajo presenta un esquema escalable y sostenible para la investigación en salud mental a nivel global. Constituye el anteproyecto de una organización que no solo es eficaz en su misión, sino también equitativa en su estructura. La investigación está impulsada por la misión urgente y personal de construir sistemas de apoyo robustos para individuos de todas las culturas, individuos como mi propia hermana, cuya batalla con la esquizofrenia representa la inspiración fundamental de todo este proyecto.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: A Crisis of Two Worlds

1.1. Contextualization of the Global Mental Health Crisis

The global mental health crisis is not a recent phenomenon, but a problem with deep historical roots that continue to shape the perception of psychological suffering to this day.

This historical framing originates with foundational figures like the German psychiatrist **Emil Kraepelin**(Engstrom & Kendler, 2015) . Working in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Kraepelin laid the groundwork for modern psychiatric classification by categorizing severe mental illnesses into two primary groups: dementia praecox (what is now known as schizophrenia) and manic-depressive psychosis (now bipolar disorder). However, his framework was heavily influenced by the prevailing ''degeneration theory,'' which posited that mental illness was a sign of hereditary, biological decay. As historians of psychiatry like Joseph Zubin(Engstrom & Kendler, 2015) and his colleagues have argued, this theory generated immense fear and shame, creating a powerful stigma that persists to this day. This thesis will directly challenge Kraepelin's deterministic, genetic-centric view from a modern neuroscientific perspective. The legacy of this stigma is not merely an academic footnote; it remains a destructive force, particularly in developing nations and within Latin culture, where the dialogue around mental health is often silenced by accusations of being ''loco'' (crazy) or explained away throat a pre-scientific lens or demonic possession. Without accessible education, this distorted paradigm continues to prevail, leading to preventable tragedies.

The persistence of this stigmatizing paradigma, even when scientifically outdated, cannot be attributed solely to a lack of information. It is deeply intertwined with the profound and often unaddressed collective trauma that characterizes the history of many regions, including El Salvador. Generations of exposure to war, systemic violence, abuse, and profound humiliation create a psychological landscape where the line between sanity and its decline becomes dangerously this. This constant barrage of trauma acts as a powerful environmental trigger, creating what this thesis identifies as a ''perfect storm'' for psychosis when combined with any latent neurobiological vulnerability. Furthermore,the very culture steeped in this trauma can provide a powerful cognitive framework that shapes the psychotic experience. In many Latin communities, there is a strong belief in the mind's power to influence reality- a belief in willpower and manifestation. This same neurological capacity for profound belief is what the brain hijacks during psychosis, creating hallucinations and delusions that are not perceived as symptoms of an illness, but as an alternative, equally valid reality, thus making clinical intervention even more complex.

This deterministic view was notably challenged by the Swiss psychiatrist **Eugen Bleuler**(*Paul Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939) | Enciclopedia del Proyecto Embrión*, s. f.), who in his seminal 1908 work, Dementia Praecox or the Group of Schizophrenias, reframed the entire condition. Bleuler argued that the core feature was not an inevitable decline but a ''splitting'' of psychic functions, which he summarized in his theory of the ''Four A'S'' (Affect, Ambivalencia, Associations, and Autism). It is particularly in his concept of **Ambivalence**-the coexistence of conflicting and contradictory emotions- that we find the historical precursor to his thesis's argument of the ''subtle scrums.'' This is observable in the rapid emotional shifts that can make an individual appear lucid one moment and completely altered the next. A poignant example is that of a talented lawyer with schizophrenia who, despite his high-functioning exterior, cannot see his own reflection in a mirror without triggering a violent reaction. His mind, as he described it, deforms his own image, causing a chemical chain reaction in the brain. Bleuler's focus on these internal, conflicting emotional states provides a richer framework for understanding the lived reality this thesis seeks to address.

This legacy of stigma was not confined to theory; it was carved directly into the brains of patients through the practice of psychosurgery. While early procedures began with Swiss psychiatrist **Gottlieb Burchhad in**(*Gottlieb Burckhardt (1836-1907)*, s. f.), the practice was refined and popularized as the prefrontal lobotomy by Portuguese neurologist **Antonio Egas Moniz in 1935**. In a shocking testament to how the medical establishment viewed the mentally ill, Moniz was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1949 for this procedure. The technique was brought to the United States by **Walter Freeman and James Watts in 1936**,''icepick'' lobotomy, a brutal, 10 minute procedure. In the United States alone, an estimated **50,000** lobotomies were performed, peaking in the post-world war ll era as a crude method to manage overflowing asylums. The story of lobotomy is the ultimate physical manifestation of the ''degeneration theory'': a belief that individuals with mental illness were so fundamentally broken that removing parts of their frontal lobes was considered a prize-worthy ''cure.''

1.2. The Core Problem: A Duality of Crises

The central argument of this thesis is that the mental health crisis is not a monolithic problem, but a **duality of crises** that manifests in opposing yet interconnected ways in the developed and developing worlds. This project uses Oregon and El Salvador not merely as case studies, but as the two poles of a broken system that requires a new, symbiotic model to be repaired.

1.2.1. Systemic Inequity and Chronic Trauma in El Salvador

The systemic inequity in El Salvador is powerfully evidenced by analyzing the health system's own official documents, such as the ''**Clinical Guide for Mental Health and Psychiatric Care.**(*Guías Clínicas para la Atención de Salud Mental y Psiquiatría*, s. f.) On the surface, the document is comprehensive; it presents a detailed table of contents covering common to severe disorders and includes complex intervention guides, such as the one shown for ADHD. However, this document represents not a solution, but a form of **state-level cognitive dissonance.**

This plan, with its promise of first-tier care, is in practice a mirage accessible only to the **wealthiest 5% of the population** who can afford private services. For the other 95%, it is an irrelevant document. The guide meticulously details how to care for children with ADHD, yet the public school system lacks the trained professionals and resources to implement such directives. If even a country like the United States finds it a monumental challenge to provide adequate education for children with ADHD or autism, the expectation that the underfunded and overburdened Salvadoran system can is a fantasy.

El Salvador's health system avoids collapse not through its own strength, but through the resilience of its people. This is where the concept of **emotional anesthesia** becomes crucial, not on an individual level, but on a **collective** one. To survive in a system that pretends to offer support that never arrives, the population learns to expect nothing. A widespread emotional anesthesia to constant disappointment develops. This psychological survival mechanism is what prevents a total societal breakdown; if people were to truly feel the weight of this systemic deficiency, the country, as you rightly noted, ''would be a country of madmen."

1.2.2. The Oregon Paradox

The ''Oregon Paradox" is irrefutably confirmed in state-level reports such as the ''**Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025,**(Li et al., s. f.)"prepared for the Oregon Health Authority. This analysis reveals that, despite funding, the system suffers from a **critical shortage of bilingual and culturally competent behavioral health professionals.** The true bottleneck lies not in a lack of organizations, but in the state's inability to recruit and retain the human capital necessary to serve the growing Latin community.

The few existing NGOs that operate in Spanish are completely overwhelmed. The high demand, exacerbated by a political climate that generates fear and trauma through deportations, spikes mental health needs to alarming levels. However, this ''fear data" is not easily measured by traditional statistics, creating a blind spot in public policy planning.

Furthermore, the system often prioritizes resources for alcohol and drug addiction services, while foundational mental health-the trauma, anxiety, and depression that are often the root cause of addiction- is relegated to a secondary concern. The question then arises: where does mental health fit? In practice, it is hidden and ignored, not for lack of will, but because organizations with the qualified, bilingual personnel capable of fulfilling that role do not exist in sufficient numbers.

Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025

January 2025

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Figure 1: Cover of the "Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025," prepared by Oregon State University for the Oregon Health Authority.

1.2.3. The Failure of State Institutions

This duality of crises in El Salvador and Oregon is not a coincidence, but a symptom of a deeper malady: the failure of state institutions to fulfill their mandate. In El Salvador, the historical inefficacy of entities like **ISNA and CONNA** to protect children from trauma and violence created a vacuum that perpetuated suffering. This is not a mere perception, but a documented pattern of behavior. A flagrant example of this dysfunction was reported by(**Paises, 2022**), who revealed that **CONNA** had rushed to close over 60,000 files concerning child rights violations. This action, motivated by a legislative transition, prioritized clearing a bureaucratic backlog over the actual protection of thousands of children at risk.

In Oregon, the inability of the **Oregon Health Authority (OHA)** to build a culturally competent workforce and effectively regulate its providers demonstrates a similar failure of execution. In both cases, the result is the same: a system that exists on paper but abandons people in reality.

1.3. Author's Positionality

This thesis's ability to interconnect sis disparate specialities is not a mere academic exercise; it is a direct reflection of the author's mind, a mind forged in a world that did not comprehend it. The person I am now is no different from the person I was in the past; the difference is that life has crashed over me like an ocean wave, and those waves were the catalysts to arrive here.

My story begins with the traits of a child with ADHD and on the Autism spectrum, in an environment where the health system never arrived. A father who expressed love with contempt and beatings taught me firsthand what **emotional anesthesia** is. A corrupt state institution that should have protected children instead protected its employees. I could have become a delinquent or taken my own life, but my brain devised a way to survive in a world that does not protect its youth. In a family where affection was based on merits and titles, my unparalleled innate talent was extinguished for not fitting a traditional, linear mold. For a long time, I just turned off my intellected and continued as an empty shell. Years passed, and when I saw my younger sister heading down the same path, I advised her to keep studying, perhaps sensing that she would not be able to endure the chains that darkness gives you when

you are alone.

The opportunity to immigrate to the United States was my only way out. The journey was a trial by fire: a year of rejection in Mexico, exploitation and humiliation in McAllen, TX, and a point where life hit me again and again. It was then I learned my sister was suffering from schizophrenia and had attempted suicide. I pushed forward and made it to Oregon, where my own DUII, after many stumbles, forced me to change. These are emotions that leave a mark; you must continue, but you can't. In the United States, it is not about helping the one with the skills to prove their iron will, but the one who can be docile and manageable-those are the ones who get jobs.

In September 2024, I earned my first two certifications. I felt happy, but that happiness faded over time. I was advised to enter a sober living house despite having my sobriety under control, was rejected for jobs for which I was overqualified in favor of others with connections, and was exploited by an organization I helped build from scratch. After many failures, I learned that these people and NGOs do not value ability, out of fear. They even told me, ''Why don't you go to Canada'' It's easier to get a visa there.''The extent of their fear was clear.

After suffering multiple consequences from a system I thought was meant to help, I decided to create my own NGO, born from pain and overcoming. As my mission states: welcome to a world where creativity is the door to developing your personal and professional skills. Studio Legion Networking, from day zero, was conceived to help people with their mentalities in Spanish across multiple countries. It's a giant dream, but that is how leaders and innovators like Jobs and Einstein begin. My story is about building a bridge. El Salvador has highly capable people, but they lack the funding and the types of NGOs that currently exist.

With my sacrifice, I have developed a suite of tools that current NGOs do not have, which is why I designed an effective board of directors to work with the human heart before corrupt friendships or inefficient systems. Although I am its sole founder, I want to leave my legacy to a multifaceted team that I have chosen carefully. I trust that they can reach more people. Meanwhile, my thesis will open the doors for me to create my own private company to self-finance Studio Legion in the future, opening more NGOs in every country, knowing that the mental health sector is inefficient in developing nations. Mental health doesn't just affect my native country: it affects all countries. That is why my resilience and adaptability are my greatest strengths: finding how to correlate point A with Y, and point Z with B.

1.4. Objectives and Thesis Question

Based on the identified duality of crises and the author's lived experience, this thesis pursues three primary objectives:

To Design a symbiotic, transnational, and sustainable organizational model (Studio Legion Networking) that corrects the market failure between the financial capital of Oregon and the human capital of El Salvador.

To Justify the viability of this model through an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates psychology, neuroscience, technology, political science, economics, and the humanities.

To demonstrate the model's execution capacity through the presentation of an ecosystem of tangible and already-prototype technological assets (website, mobile applications, and video game).

To achieve these objectives, this thesis will seek to answer the following central research questions:

How can a non-profit model, born from the experience of trauma and grounded in autodidact innovation, leverage technology and transnational collaboration to deliver scalable and ethically responsible mental health solutions in systems that have traditionally failed?

Chapter 2: Context and Justification for the Model

2.1 Geopolitical Context Analysis in El Salvador

The analysis of El Salvador's geopolitical context must begin by recognizing that the current ''pattern of fear'' is not a recent phenomenon, but the direct sequela of an unresolved generational trauma, the deepest wound of which is the **El Mozote Massacre.**(«El Mozote massacre», 2025) On December 11th and 12th, 1981, in the department of Morazan, Salvadoran army units, such as the Atlacatl Battalion, murdered more that 811 civilians in cold blood, including hundreds of children, during a counter-insurgency operation.

This inhuman act was not merely a battle in the civil war; it was a brutal statement about the balance of power. Peasants and farmers, tired of exploitation, had rebelled against a corrupt state, only to be met with a disproportionate force that chose massacre over dialogue. This event solidified a message in the national psyche: dissent would be punished with annihilation and the state's power would be used not to protect, but to terrorize.

As a direct result, thousands of families fled, initiating a wave of forced migration to the United States. The ''aftermath'' of El Mozote, as you rightly analyze, did not end with the war. The violence merely changed form: the power once held by the National Guard was inherited by the gangs (maras). The balance of power shifted hands, but the civilians always remained in the same position: caught in the middle, suffering the consequences and accumulating a trauma that the country's mental health system was never equipped to address.

2.2. Justification for an Interdisciplinary and Autodidact Approach

The failure of existing systems, as has been detailed, is not the result of a single flaw, but of an inability to view the problem of mental health holistically. A psychologist cannot solve a funding crisis; an economist cannot design a therapy; and a technologist cannot understand geopolitical trauma. Attempting to solve a multidimensional problem with a single-discipline solution is why failure is the norm. Therefore, this thesis adopts a **radically interdisciplinary approach,** arguing that only by integrating psychology, neuroscience, technology, political science, economics, and the humanities can one begin to design a solution that addresses the problem in its totality.

However, simply combining these specialties is not enough if done from a traditional mindset, which often creates experts in isolated ''silos.'' This is where the **autodidact approach** becomes the core methodological strength of this research. Unlike the traditional expert, whose learning is guided by a pre-established curriculum, the autodidact is guided solely by the **problem**. This freedom allows for the synthesis of disparate knowledge in novel and unconventional ways connecting the neuroscience of trauma to the design of a video game, or the theory of NGO management to the lived experience of systemic exclusion.

The autodidact approach is therefore not a limitation to be justified, but a strategic advantage. The evidence of its efficacy is not theoretical but tangible: the creation of a functional digital ecosystem with minimal resources is proof that this method of ''learning by executing'' can produce innovations that traditional models, with their bureaucratic and financial barriers, deem impossible.

2.3. The integrated Competitive Advantage Argument

The viability of the Studio Legion Networking model is not based on hope, but on a deliberate and integrated competitive advantage, designed to operate differently in two distinct ecosystems. Instead of applying a one-size-fits-alls solution, the strategy bifurcates: in El Salvador, it operates on the principles of a ''Blue Ocean'' strategy by creating a new market space; whereas in Oregon, it functions as a ''Systemic Integrator,'' filling the gaps left by existing organizations.

2.3.1. In El Salvador: The ''Blue Ocean'' Advantage

A ''Blue Ocean Strategy'' is defined by the creation of new, uncontested market space rather than competing in an existing one. In the context of El Salvador, Studio Legion Networking does not enter to compete, but rather **To create a service category that does not currently exist.** While isolated and high-cost psychiatric or counseling services may exist, there is no organization that offers a holistic ecosystem integrating:

1. Accessible clinical mental health support
2. Customized technological tools (apps, web)
3. Professional and educational development pathways.

By being the ''first in its class'' to offer this integrated model, the organization faces no direct competition, giving it a fundamental advantage to establish itself and create a profound impact.

2.3.2. In Oregon: The ''Systemic Integrator'' Advantage

To illustrate the advantage of the ''Systemic Integrator'' model, we can analyze the case of **Latino Network**,(*Discover the Heart of Latino Network: Our Mission, Values, and Impact — Latino Network*, s. f.) one of Oregon's most respected and established Latino organizations, founded in 1996. Their website is robust, and their programs, focused on education and community for youth and families, demonstrate years of experience. However, a deeper analysis reveals the gaps that Studio Legion Networking aims to fill:

1. **Limited Linguistic Scope**: Despite their experience, their resources are primarily available in two languages, English and Spanish. This excludes other immigrant cultures and communities also in need of support, a niche that Studio Legion's multilingual approach directly addresses.

2. **Outsourced Mental Health Model**: Their mental health service does not appear to be a core, in-house pillar, but rather operates in collaboration with a third party (Equipo Zenit). While a valid model, this can create dependency and potential fragmentation in client care. Studio Legion, in contrast, proposes mental health as the central and inseparable core of its ecosystem.

3. **Technological Gap:** Despite their years of operation and resources, they do not appear to have proprietary, customized technological tools, such as a client-facing mobile application or an empathy-building video game. This demonstrates the innovation barrier that traditional NGOs often face.

In conclusion, while Latino Network is an example of an excellent organization in its field, its model proves the need for a ''Systemic Integrator.'' Studio Legion Networking does not seek to replace them, but to complement the ecosystem with an approach that fuses mental health, technology, and professional development into a single platform- an approach created by a single person with minimal resources, demonstrating a new model of efficiency and innovation.

2.4. The Innovation Barrier in Traditional NGOs

A deep paradox exists within Oregon's social ecosystem. On one hand, the state actively promotes innovation through initiatives like the '' **Oregon Innovation plan**,(*Business Oregon : Oregon Innovation Plan : Innovate and Participate in R&D : State of Oregon*, s. f.)'' which seeks to foster new companies and attract talent. On the other hand, non-profit organizations (NGOs), which are vital to the community, face nearly insurmountable barriers to technological innovation, creating a massive gap between state-level ambition and the real-world harm experienced at the grassroots level.

The answer to why NGOs do not innovate technologically is simple: innovation depends on an **investment of capital and talent that the standard NGO funding model does not allow for**. Field research conducted by the author at the '' Latinos Unidos" conference-where approximately 30 organizations were present-revealed that only 5 of them had a mobile application, and these were mostly simple appointment-scheduling tools.

Technological development is a luxury that NGOs, especially new ones operating on initial budgets of $10,000 to $40,000 for 6 months, cannot afford. A basic mobile app can cost between $5,000 and $30,000, consuming an unsustainable portion of the budget. But the cost is not just initial; the complexity of funding continues with database maintenance (SQL), security, and constant updates. Added to this is the cost of human talent: a minimum team of two developers (backend and fronted) is required, with rates ranging from $100 to $150 per hour. Building a video game, an empathy tool of even greater complexity, is simply unthinkable.

This barrier can only be overcome by a radically different model: one in which the founder possesses the time, the technical ability, and most importantly, a passion so profound that they are willing to attempt a project with a 0.01% chance of success without a financial incentive. If the mission is not the fuel, frustration guarantees an unfinished project.

2.5. Local Ecosystem Analysis: Nepotism and Resistance to Disruption

The final argument justifying the need for a new model is not theoretical but is a conclusion drawn from a series of case studies lived by the author within the Oregon NGO ecosystem. These experiences reveal a systemic pattern of exploitation, nepotism, resistance to change, and a fundamental ethical failure that makes true innovation from within impossible.

The author's trajectory within the local system began with the **exploitation of his talent,** where his high-level work in web design and presentations for an organization was met with minimal payment and a lack of respect for his professional value. This was followed by **nepotism,** as he was rejected for a job for which he was overqualified in favor of a candidate with preexisting connections, despite the initial support of his mentor.

This resistance also manifested as a **rejection of interdisciplinary thinking.** In multiple training sessions, his solution, though effective, was initially dismissed by colleagues with more seniority, and he was warned ''not to be a know-it-all'' by a leader who perceived his multifaceted approach as a threat.

The most dysfunctional dynamic was revealed in a transitional house, where his progress was actively punished. He was denied permission for a professional deployment with the Red Cross but was allowed to participate in precarious, high-risk work in another state. This **systemic hypocrisy** demonstrated that the structure preferred to keep him in a dependent ''recovering resident'' role rather than support him as a successful volunteer colleague.

The culmination of these failures was a case of **explicit harassment** from certified mentors. Despite a formal documented complaint, the certifying body (MHACBO) refused to intervene, forcing an escalation to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Although the OHA validated the complaint, the system imposed no real consequences, and the author was subsequently marginalized and ostracized by the professional community at the ''Latinos Unidos'' conference.

These experiences, taken together, form an irrefutable proof: the current system is not just broken, but is self-protecting, actively undermining the talent that could bring about real change, Studio Legion Networking is therefore born not just as an alternative, but as a fundamental necessity to create a space where ethics, merit, and true humanitarian service can finally thrive.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Foundations in Philosophy of Science

The conceptual framework of this thesis is grounded in a modern philosophy of science (Giere, 1988), which posits that we understand the world not by studying it directly, but by first building models that represent it. This thesis, therefore, is not merely a description of a problem; it is the presentation of a functional, multi-layered model-comprising the symbiotic organizational structure, the digital ecosystem, and the psychoeducational tools-designed to actively represent and solve the global mental health crisis.

3.2. Foundations in Neuroscience: The HPA Axis and the Biological Scar of Trauma

The argument that chronic stress in El Salvador creates a vulnerability to psychosis is supported by research on the **hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.** Constant exposure to trauma during critical years of brain development causes the HPA axis to become dysfunctional, flooding the brain with the stress hormone cortisol. Research from the NIH has shown that elevated cortisol levels can be neurotoxic, damaging brain areas crucial for emotional regulation. The experience of ''emotional anesthesia'' is, therefore, a survival mechanism with a real biological basis. Early intervention is not just a social measure, but a neuroprotective one.

3.3. Foundations in Psychology and Humanities: The ''Subtle Crumbs" Thesis

This thesis refines historical psychiatric models with a central proposition: the true essence of conditions like schizophrenia and paranoia lies in the ''**subtle crumbs**'' of an early age. It is not the dramatic symptoms, but the small cognitive and behavioral lapses-forgetfulness, subtle withdrawal-that represent the true window for early intervention. Our organizational model is built on this principle: to make these often-invisible symptoms visible and actionable for families and communities, shifting and actionable for families and communities, shifting the focus from crisis management to prevention.

3.4. Epistemological Foundations: The Autodidact and Knowledge from the Unknown

This thesis champions the role of the **autodidact** as a superior research methodology for solving complex, real-world problems. Driven by an internal mission rather than an external curriculum, the autodidact is forced to synthesize disparate fields and build new knowledge from the ground up. New knowledge emerges from the perspective of ''**the unknown within the transparent world**'. the everyday reality where signs of mental distress are present but systematically ignored. The solution, therefore, lies not in perfecting existing systems, but in building new models that allow us to finally see and act upon the truths that have been hiding in plain sight all along.

Chapter 4: Methodology: Designing the Symbiotic Ecosystem

4.1 Operational Philosophy and Governance

The methodology of Studio Legion Networking is not just an action plan; it is a governance philosophy designed as a direct antithesis to the broken systems analyzed in the previous chapter. It is founded on three unbreakable pillars that guide every decision, from financial management to workplace ethics.

4.1.1. The Principle of '' Principled Frugality"

The financial model rejects the bloated budgets that often plague the non-profit sector. It is governed by a principled frugality, where every dollar is maximized for impact. As a case study, the mobile application, which could have a market cost exceeding $300,000, was prototyped with an investment of under $1,000. This ethos is inspired by those who build value from nothing and ensures a culture of financial stewardship, preventing waste and guaranteeing that resources are directed toward the mission, not bureaucracy.

4.1.2. The Founding Board and Operational Structure

In its initial phase, the organization will adopt a **Founding Board of Director** model, where members not only provide strategic oversight but also assume key operational roles, ensuring that vision and execution are perfectly aligned from day one. In a foundational decision, the role of **Director Of Operations** will be held by a person with lived experience of schizophrenia. This strategic choice to place lived experience at the center of daily operations ensures the organization never strays from its mission and always maintains humanity as its primary directive.

4.1.3. A Model of Workplace Ethics Based on Talent Valuation

Explicitly designed to prevent exploitative dynamics, the model is governed by three ethical principles: 1) **Fair and transparent compensation** that values skill over credentials; 2) **Respect for professional boundaries** to avoid uncompensated labor; and 3) **A culture of genuine recognition,** ensuring the organization's success honors all who helped build it. Unlike models where a few take credit, Studio Legion will operate with a policy of explicit and collaborative acknowledgement.

4.2. The Community Integration Plan

The methodology of Studio Legion Networking rejects a one-size-fits-all approach and instead implements a two-pronged community integration strategy, tailored to the unique realities of Oregon and El Salvador.

In **Oregon**, the plan leverages existing professional networks to address a validated community need: the lack of Spanish-language mental health resources. The entry point into the ecosystem will not be direct clinical service, but **preventative psychoeducation.** The initiative will begin by offering free and accessible workshops for parents, focusing on a vital skill: how to identify the ''subtle crumbs'' of psychological distress (stress, paranoia, burnout) in their children. This approach is designed to build trust organically, normalize the conversation around mental health, and combat the social isolation that often treats affected children ''like a virus,'' giving families a shared language and practical tools.

In **El Salvador**, a **phased and culturally-grounded approach** will be implemented. The initial stage will be led by the team's Health and Technology expert, who will serve as the ''**Phase 1 Navigator**.'' Their initial role is not clinical, but contextual to use their deep understanding of the local social environment to map community needs, build relationships with local leaders, and prepare the ground, This resource-efficient strategy allows the organization to establish a presence and gather crucial data before deploying a full clinical team, ensuring that services are perfectly aligned with the community's real-world need from day one.

4.3. Ethical Framework: The ''HIPAA Sanctuary" Model

The ethical framework of Studio Legion Networking is founded on a principle of active protection, leveraging existing laws to create a space of psychological safety for the most vulnerable communities. The cornerstone of this framework is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (**HIPAA**), which, in a political climate marked by the fear of deportation, becomes a fundamental shield.

As stipulated by federal law, HIPAA explicitly prohibits healthcare providers from disclosing any personally identifiable information to third parties, **including immigration agencies like ICE,** without the patient's explicit consent or a specific court order (subpoena, warrant). Recognizing that this fear is one of the greatest barriers preventing immigrants from seeking treatment, Studio Legion Networking will adopt a ''**HIPAA Sanctuary**(*Acceso del Inmigrante a la Atención Médica | Weinberg, Roger & Rosenfeld*, s. f.)'' model.

This strategy moves beyond mere passive compliance with the law. It involves:

1. **Explicit Education:** Clearly, directly, and in Spanish, communicating to every client that their participation and their information are protected from immigration agencies by federal law.

2. **Data Minimization:** Following the best practice of never asking for a person's immigration status, as it is not necessary to provide mental health care.

3. **Building Trust:** Actively positioning ourselves as a sanctuary of trust, transforming a legal obligation into a proactive guarantee of human safety.

This approach is not a policy but an ethical intervention, designed to dismantle fear and build the necessary bridges for healing to begin.

4.4. Technological Methodology: A Case Study in Autodidact Innovation

The methodology of this thesis is not limited to theory; it extends to the creation of functional technological artifacts that serve as a proof of concept for the proposed model. The development of a mobile application and a video game, undertaken by the author as an autodidact exercise, represents a case study in how mission-driven innovation can overcome the financial and talent barriers that paralyze the traditional non-profit sector.

4.4.1. The Mobile Application: Architecture and Design

Recognizing that the prohibited cost of software development (which can exceed $300,000) is a fundamental barrier for NGOs, a ''principle frugality'' approach was adopted. The functional prototype of the Studio Legion Networking application was developed with an investment of under $1000.

The app's architecture is not that of a simple tool, but a sophisticated CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system with a **privacy-first mandate**, evidenced by the integration of biometric unlocking (Face ID, fingerprint) and screenshot blocking to protect young users. Its core is a **5-tier login architecture** based on roles (e,g., Client, Volunteer, Partner Organization), which allows for secure permissions management and lays the groundwork for scalable inter-organizational collaboration.

4.4.2. ''The Lapse'' Video Game: Design and Symbology

The video game ''The Lapse'' was developed in Unreal Engine 5 not as an entertainment product, but as an **experiential methodological tool**. The design philosophy was based on ''**engineering discomfort**''.

using a first-person perspective and the psychological horror genre to simulate the subjective experience of paranoia and psychosis. The game's core mechanics reflect the thesis's themes: the objective of finding 6 ''shackles'' (collectibles) in the form of narrative notes represents the arduous process of reconstructing a fragmented, arduous process of reconstructing a fragmented memory.

The enemies are not monsters, but **symbols of the internal struggle**: the humanoid (self-criticism), the prisoner (external negativity), and the parasite (the weight of trauma). ''The Lapse'' is, therefore, a playable essay, an academic artifact designed to generate empathy and communicate the psychological truths of this thesis in a way that text alone cannot.

4.5. Needs Assessment and Strategic Alliances

The validation of the Studio Legion Networking model is not merely theoretical; it has been confirmed through an **organic needs assessment** and the creation of preliminary strategic alliances. Interactions with community leaders have revealed unanimous enthusiasm for the project.

Conversations with professionals such as **Irma Aguilera a Life Skills Specialist at Centro Cultural**, and the **Executive director of another community NGO** at the ''Latinos Unidos'' conference, confirmed two key points:

1. There is a critical gap in mental health services that are technologically integrated and culturally competent.
2. The founder's profile as an autodidact with live experience resonates deeply and generates a high level of trust.

These interactions have laid the groundwork for **strategic alliances** with established organizations like **Centro Cultural,** which will serve as a crucial bridge to the community for the implementation of pilot programs.

4.6. Risk Analysis and Mitigation

Three primary areas of risk have been identified, each with a proactive mitigation plan built into the organization's design:

1. **Political/Legal Risk:** The complexity of operating between the U.S. and El Salvador.

- **Mitigation:** The implementation of a **Dual- Entity Model** (a 501(c)(3) in Oregon for fundraising and a local non-profit in El Salvador for operations) ensures legal compliance and transparency in both countries.

2. **Financial Risk:** Dependency on grants and potential donor fatigue.

- **Mitigation:** The ''**Principle Frugality**''philosophy and in-house technical capacity drastically reduce operational costs.
Furthermore, the **'' Catalyst play''** diversifies funding sources, and the long-term vision of a self-funding private company creates a path toward complete independence.

3. **Operational and Ethical Risk:** The risk of hiring personnel who do not share the mission's values thereby replicating the failures of other systems.

- **Mitigation:** A rigorous **Values-based recruitment process** and the **Model of Workplace Ethics** ensure that only individuals with a demonstrated commitment are hired. The position

of the Director of Operations, a person with lived experience, acts as a constant ethical safeguard at the heart of the organization

Chapter 5: Sustainability, Impact, and Scalability

5.1. Financial Strategy: The '' Catalyst Play"

The organization's financial model is based on a ''Catalyst Play'' strategy designed to ensure long-term viability. Starting from a ''bootstrapped'' (Self-funded) foundation that demonstrate the ability to execute with minimal resources, the strategy seeks to use academic validation-specifically, admission to a top-tier institution like Reed College-as a catalyst to unlock grants from major philanthropic foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This thesis itself is designed as a fundraising asset presenting a low-risk, high-impact investment case to the philanthropic community.

5.2. Impact Measurement Methodology: KPIs

The model's success will not be measured anecdotally, but through a rigorous system of Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) across four primary areas: 1) **Clinical,** measuring symptom reduction and increased well-being in participants through standardized scales; 2) **Educational,** measuring workshop attendance and increased mental health literacy in the community: 3) **Social,** measuring the number of local professionals trained and employed, and the strengthening of community alliances; and 4) **Technological** , measuring the adoption rate and user engagement with the digital tools.

5.3. The Scalability Model: The Transnational Professional Development Pipeline

The model's scalability is designed as an **transnational professional development pipeline** with the goal of replicating the model and founding multiple organizations. This is achieved through a bidirectional flow of talent: Salvadoran professionals will travel to Oregon for advanced training, while experienced U.S.-based personnel will train teams in El Salvador. This ''train the trainer''strategy turns the organization into an incubator for leaders, with the ultimate goal of founding a minimum of three interconnected and self-sufficient organizations.

5.4. First- Year Implementation Timeline (Agile Model)

The project's execution will follow an Agile methodology, broken down into quarterly phases. **Q1** will focus on legal incorporation and securing seed capital. **Q2** will focus on establishing operations, hiring the initial team, and launching the first workshops in Oregon. **Q3** will mark the beginning of the pilot program in El Salvador, the deployment of the mobile application, and the collection of initial impact data. Finally, **Q4** will be dedicated to iteration based on community feedback and strategic planning for year 2.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 The Founder's Doctrine: Trust and Delegation

Unlike leadership models where the founder becomes indispensable, the doctrine of Studio Legion Networking is based on trust and delegation. The initial development phase, undertaken in solitude, was not by voice, but by necessity. The ultimate goal, therefore, is not to maintain control, but to build a system and a team so strong that they can thrive without their creator. A true leader is not one who gives all the commands, but one who, like a great coach, trusts in the capability, fragility, and camaraderie of their team to carry the mission forward, knowing that the vision is larger than any single individual.

6.2.   The six Foundational Pillar as a Manifesto

The organization's ethics and mission are summarized in six foundational pillar that act as its constitution. These are not were values, but operational mandates:
1) **To eliminate language barriers** to ensure access;
2) **To be a global philanthropic project** that addresses resource scarcity;
3) **Inclusion is our mandate,** creating safe spaces where all can thrive;
4) **To empower students** with academic resources;
5) **To champion resilience** through concrete opportunities; and
6) **To foster collaboration**, because united we stand.(*Portafolio*, s. f.)

6.3. Final Conclusion: A light Born from Darkness

This doctoral thesis spans multiple specialties because a single discipline is not enough to explain or solve a problem that the system pretends to hide. Studio Legion Networking is not just a model; it is a response. It was born to support those the system rejects: the autodidacts, the people with schizophrenia, those who suffer from paranoia, and those afflicted by burnout. The author's change is real because his fears were real. Every theory in this thesis was not merely found in books, but was validated by the truth found in the flesh. The most powerful theses, those created from nothing, are not the result of academic speculation. They are the inevitable consequence of a life lived.

Chapter 7: References and Appendices

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7.2. Appendices

Appendix A (App Diagrams)
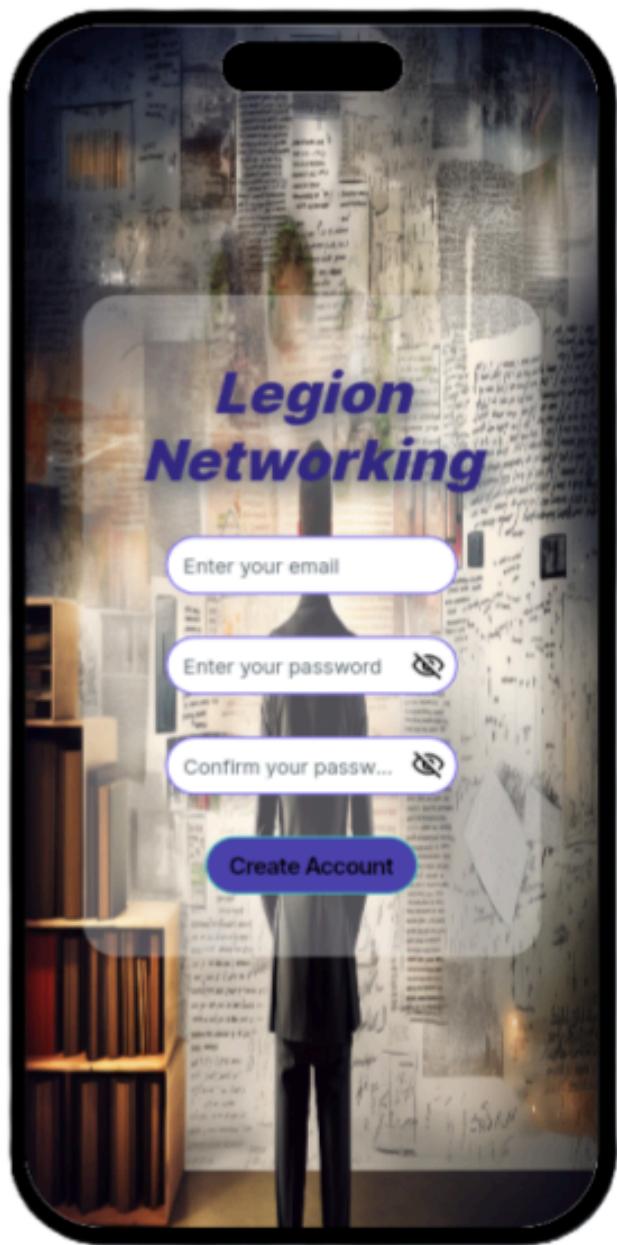
Figure A.1: **Home Screen and Account Creation.**
This image displays the user interface of the **Legion Networking** apps home screen, which is designed for new user to register and create an account.
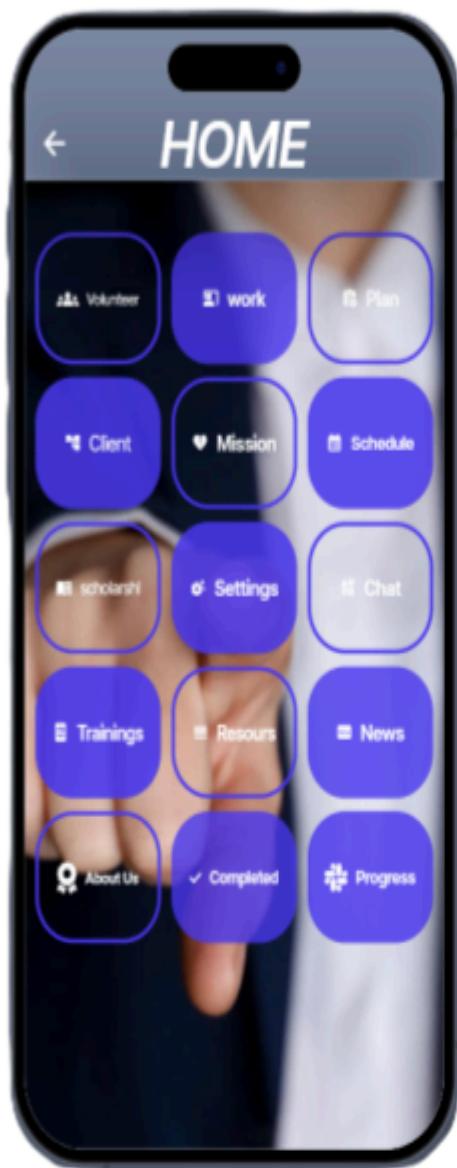
Figure A.2: **Main Menu Interface.** This image illustrates the app's main menu. From here, users can navigate to different sections such as **Volunteering, Philanthropic Project, and Communication.**
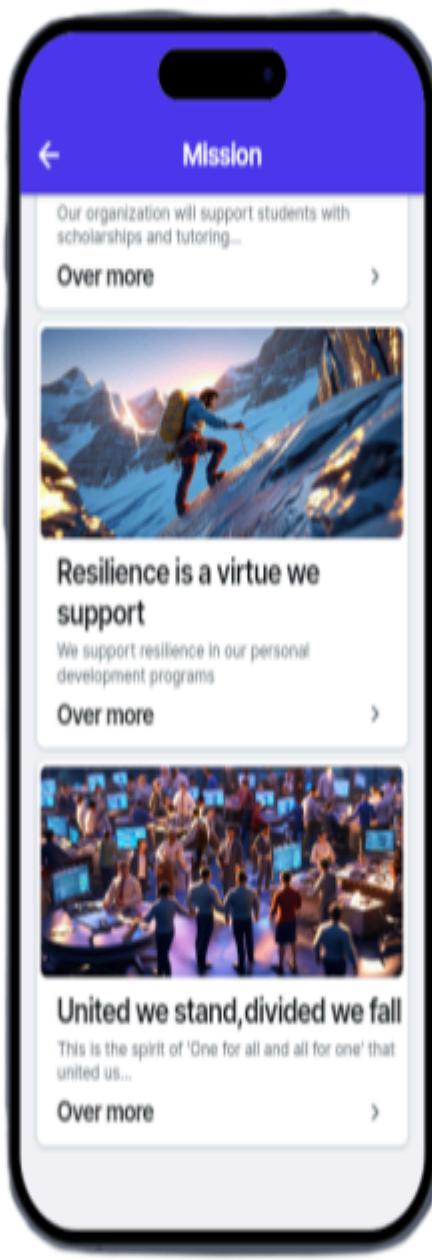
Figure A.3: **Mission Pillars.** This screenshot show the app's ''Mission'' section, which details the organization's key principles and projects, including linguistic diversity and philanthropic initiatives.

Appendix B (**Game Design Document**)
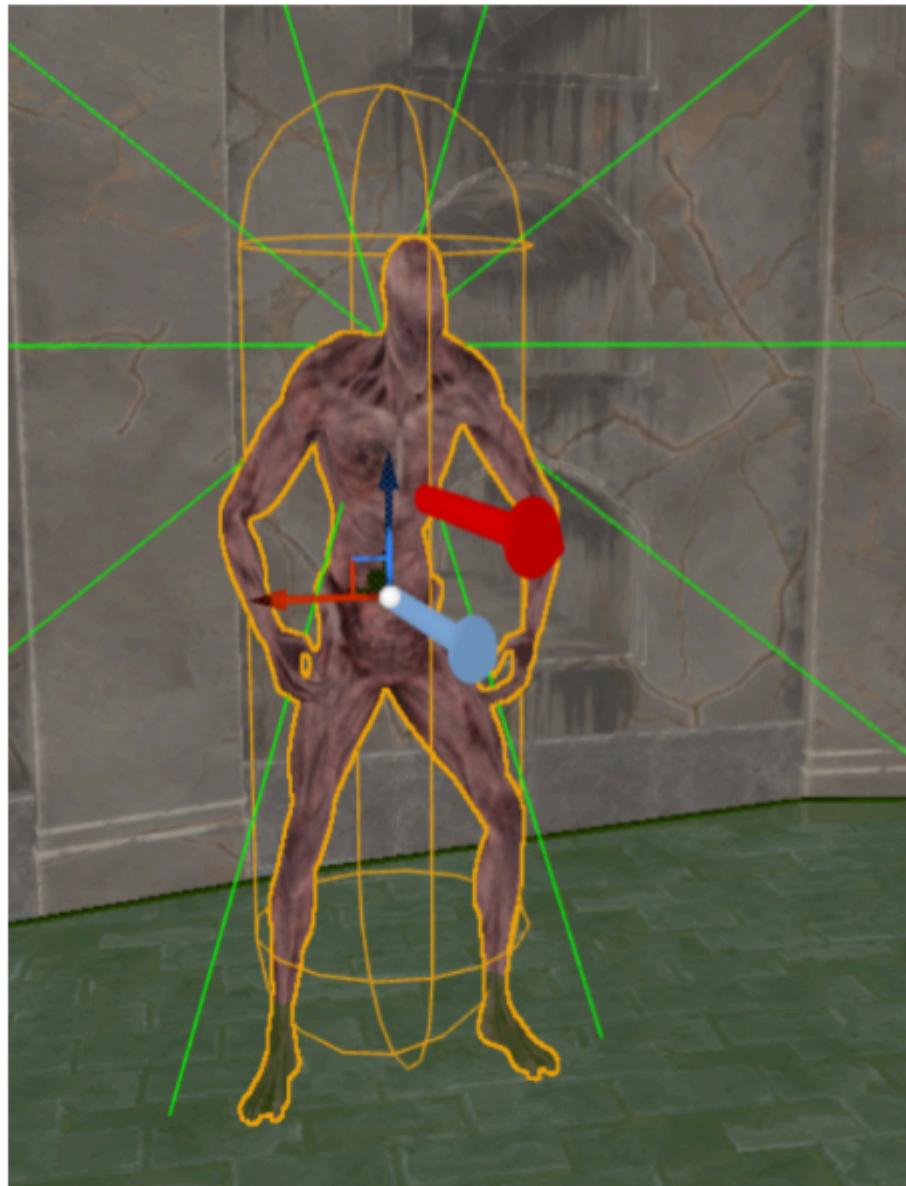
Figure B.1: **Design Concept for the ''Humanoid'' Enemy.** This conceptual drawing illustrates the ''Humanoid'' character, which was designed to symbolically represent the personal fears that a player must overcome to progress.
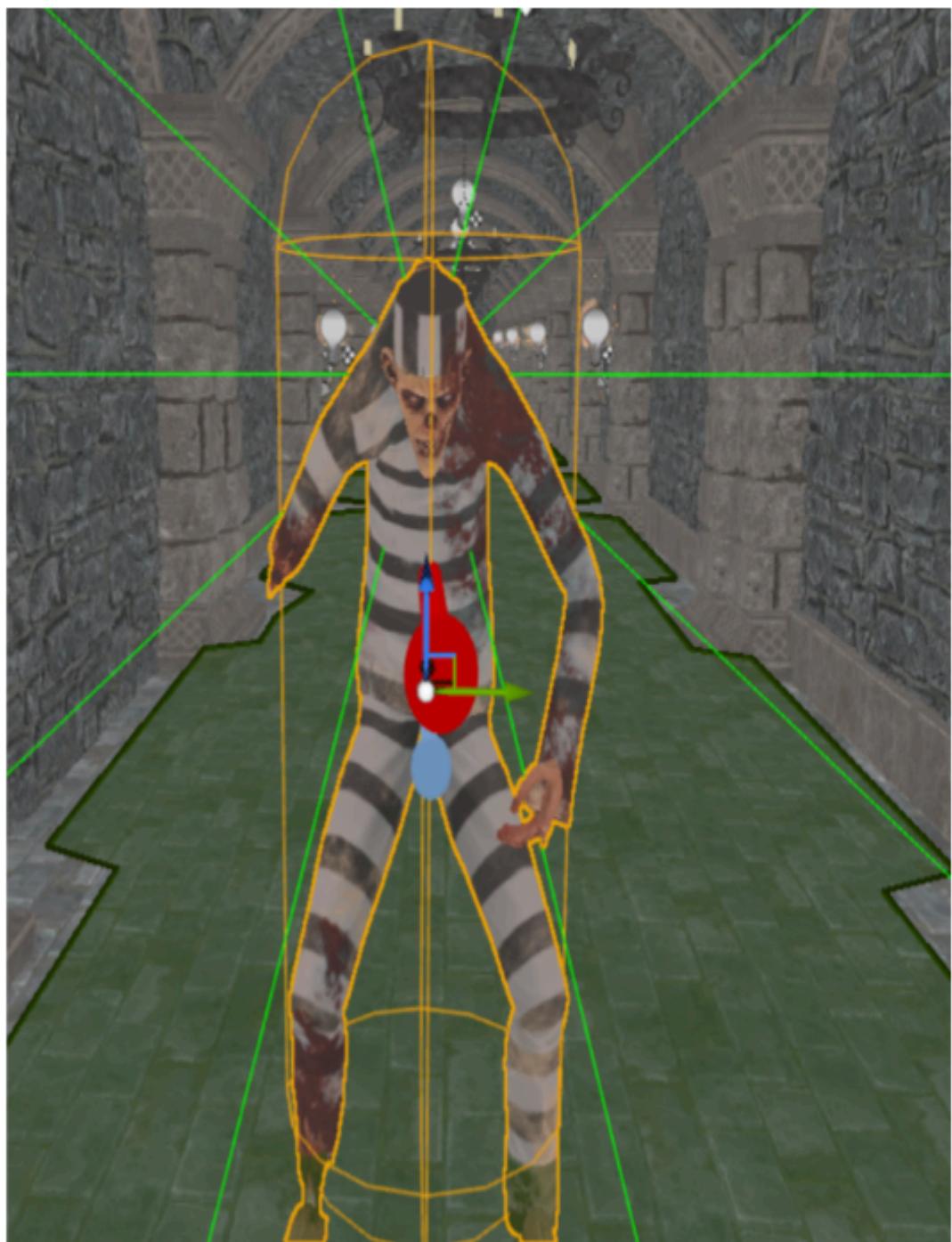
Figure B.2: **Design Concept for the ''Prisoner'' Enemy.** This image displays the ''Prisoner'' character, created to symbolize the negative voices and discouragement from others that tell the player they cannot succeed.

Figure B.3: **Design Concept for the ''Parasite'' Enemy.** This illustration shows the ''Parasite'' enemy, which was designed to represent the individuals or influences that actively work against the player, hoping to see them fail.

Appendix C: Detailed Seed Funding Budget ($40,000)

This appendix outlines the proposed allocation for the initial $40,000 in seed funding for the first year of operations. The budget reflects the organization's ''Principled Frugality'' philosophy.

Item	Estimated First-Year Cost	Notes
El Salvador Team Salaries (2 Therapists, 1 Coordinator)	$24,000	Provides competitive, dignified wages.
Safe Space Rental & Utilities (El Salvador)	$6,000	A secure, welcoming office for families.
Program & Workshop Materials	$3,000	For psychoeducational materials.
Administrative & Operational Costs	$4,000	Internet, supplies, legal fees.
Contingency Fund	$3,000	For unforeseen expenses.
Founder's In-Kind Contribution (Tech Dev.)	($500,000+)	(Estimated market value, not a cash cost)
Total Seed Funding Required	$40,000	

Appendix D: Community Needs Assessment Questionnaire

This appendix contains the draft list of questions to be used in initial focus groups and interviews with the target community in Oregon.

1. What type of mental health support do you feel is most needed in our community?

2. What are the biggest barriers that would prevent you or your family from seeking help for stress or anxiety?

3. Would a mobile application to connect with services and resources be useful to you? Why or why not?

4. What does a ''safe space'' for discussing mental health look like to you?

5. If free workshops on managing stress were offered in Spanish, would you be interested in attending?

Appendix E: Relevant Correspondence

A continuación se presenta una transcripción de la correspondencia por correo electrónico recibida de la Autoridad de Salud de Oregón (OHA) el 11 de abril de 2025, que sirve como evidencia primaria para el análisis de la falla sistémica discutida en el Capítulo 2.

De: Jacki Stanley, Health Equity Workforce Assistant, THW Program, Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
Fecha: 11 de abril de 2025
Asunto: [Asunto del correo original]

Cuerpo del Correo (Original en español)

''Hola Jose,

Quería informarle que envíe la queja a la gerencia. Es posible que se pongan en contacto contigo para obtener más detalles sobre tus preocupaciones.
Lamento mucho lo que experimentaste en el centro de entrenamiento. Procesaré y aprobaré tu solicitud hoy. Estás haciendo un trabajo increíble y espero sigas haciéndolo.

Respetuosamente,

Jacki Stanley''

The following is a transcription of the email correspondence received from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on April 11, 2025, which serves as primary evidence for the systemic failure analysis discussed in Chapter 2.

From: Jacki Stanley, Health Equity Workforce Assistant, THW Program, Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
Date: April 11, 2025
Subject: [Subject of the original email]

Body of the Email:

''Hello Jose,

I wanted to let you know that I sent the complaint to management. They may contact you for more details regarding your concerns. I'm very sorry for what you experienced at the training center. I will process and approve your request today. You are doing incredible work and I hope you will continue to do so.

Respecttfully,

Jacki Stanley''

By transcribing the email, you maintain all the strength of the evidence but present it in a safer, more professional, and more respectful way. It's the right decision.