A.R.C PROJECT

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1. Summary

Inspired by the Mexican coat of arms, the name of the project is A.R.C (Águila Regresa a Casa/ Eagle Returns Home).The eagle has been used as a symbol of power and leadership and that is what the H.S.R.M (high-skilled return migrants) represent to us. They are people empowered by knowledge and experience that can lead the way to entrepreneurship.

The A.R.C project is set in Mexico, one of the countries with largest number of emigrants. This makes Mexico one of the countries that might experience major changes due to return migration, which could have a positive effect on the economic and social situation in the country. However, to rip the benefits of return migration, Mexico needs more integration programs that will make the country a compelling place of return for all groups of return migrants, including people with high educational level, work experience and an entrepreneurial mind-set. The project is dedicated to addressing the needs of a specific group - high-skilled migrants. A.R.C is a project aimed at providing help for return migrants in Mexico both prior to their departure from abroad and after their return to the home country.

The project will lead to the creation of job opportunities for both return migrants and other people residing in Mexico through the implementation of actions promoting and facilitating re-integration of return migrants. The project is taking into account Finland's experience in promoting immigrant integration and entrepreneurial activities among all the population groups. The project will work closely with high-skilled migrants willing to return home to Mexico as well as a number of private and public companies, governmental organizations and Mexican educational institutions.

The project will have three stages before its transition into a program that will contemplate two more stages. The first three stages are to be implemented online and will take three years. After three years the project will stop being online-only, and the A.R.C headquarters will be established.

Info Bank will be running since the first stages onwards. Info Bank is a website that contains information about work-related matters in Mexico, the legislation and its possible

effects on return migrants, re-integration services provided by the government, existing funds that may help sponsoring a start-up for entrepreneurial-minded migrants, emergency situation guidance.

The Info Bank will be created several months after the establishment of the forum. The forum is aimed to become a platform where return migrants and people contemplating their return to Mexico can exchange their knowledge about the job market situation and the problems they might face after their return to Mexico. The contents of the forum will be analysed and the contents of the website will be based on the questions that return migrants most often ask from their compatriots.

The website is based on a Finnish example – Infopankki[i], a website dedicated to giving guidance to migrants on the issues that are the most common ones after migration. The project's website will be bi-lingual (English and Spanish) to facilitate return migrants access to the needed information.

2. Description of present situation

2.1. Background studies and problems to be addressed

As has been mentioned, Mexico is seen as one of the countries with the largest number of emigrants[ii] and it can potentially become one of the countries most effected by the return migration both positively or negatively. In 1990s, Mexico was one of the leading countries when it concerned emigration of people having at least a college degree[iii].

When it comes to research on return migration to Mexico, the information covers mostly migration from the US to Mexico. It concerns both people who migrated to the United States via legal means as well as undocumented migrants. It is a fact that more than 98% of all people migrating from Mexico choose the US as the country they would like to go to, partly due to the geographical location[iv]. It was predicted that in 2005 around 11 million Mexicans lived in the US after migrating there[v]. However, the 2% that are not part of the Mexico-US migration flow are also in need of being taken into account. The calculations show that the 2% would compose around 200 000 Mexican migrants. This group is often forgotten in the projects targeting return migration to Mexico and this fact is in need of being remedied.

Research conducted by Christian Dustmann, Itzhak Fadlon and Yoram Weiss[vi] (2009) shows that low-skilled and high-skilled migrants were the groups most likely to return. Their study concentrates on several groups of return migrants in Central and Latin American countries, including Mexican return migrants from the United States and Spain. This is a rare case when return migration to Mexico from a country other than the US has been studied[vii].

Unlike the low-skilled migrants who are often seen as a vulnerable group and are more likely to receive assistance for returning to Mexico, the high-skilled migrants are forced to deal with all the issues by themselves. They are seen as a group that is economically capable of arranging their own relocation, however, they might need assistance for integrating into the life in Mexico. They are, like other types of migrants, likely to experience acculturation stress[viii] that would make their return into a stressful and burdensome activity.

IOM[ix] lists several reasons why return migration can be seen as a positive tendency for their home communities. Return migration, especially of high-skilled migrants, stops the brain drain and gives the migrants home country additional economic opportunities. Return migrants act as a work force since many of them are of the working age, which means they are able to contribute to the social security funds in their home country and pay their taxes. To add to this, return migrants bring new knowledge they acquired while working or studying abroad that can be used for progressing their home country's services and industries. While acquiring the aforementioned knowledge return migrants are likely to establish business contacts in the receiving country. After heading back, those contacts are not lost, so return migrants are likely to establish international companies due to knowing whom to contact abroad and due to having the necessary language and cultural competences.

Return migrants after their arrival to the home country might choose to become self-employed and to start their own business. This often leads to them hiring local population and, thus, decreasing unemployment[x].

IOM report on International Dialogue on Migration in 2008[xi] outlined the major problems that return migrants might face while moving back to their home country. Pre-departure orientation is seen as one of the ways to combat the problems since many of them need to

be addressed in advance. One of the issues is connected to the migrants' lack of information about the existing opportunities in their home country or the projects that may facilitate their return. Return migrants often do not have necessary information about the job market situation in their community of origin, healthcare, banking system, education opportunities, social security and pension system. They might also face difficulties with their diploma recognition if their education was received abroad or their job qualification recognition if they have been working abroad. The skills they received might not be seen as transferable to their home country that is Mexico in this case.

Some other problems are connected to the legal systems in the country their live and their home country where they plan to return[xii]. The countries have different political systems and codes of law. So pre-departure orientation is needed to provide return migrants with the up-to-date information about their home country's legislation and legal changes that might affect the migrants' lives. IOM emphasizes that return migrants need to know about their rights and obligations concerning their home country, as well as about the documents they need after the arrival. If return migrants have been living abroad for several years they might find themselves in the situation where they need to obtain new identity documents. They previous ones might have expired or have been rendered invalid due to some legislation changes.

The same issue about return migration and its connection to the creation of employment opportunities and possible issues are discussed in a number of research articles[xiii].

2.2. Other projects in the area/country

Mexico has several large-scale projects connected to return migration and migrant aid. The newest of them, Somos Mexicanos (We are Mexican), is a project that aims to provide help to return migrants to Mexico after their arrival into the country. According to IOM website, the project was created in cooperation between Mexican and the US governments to combat some of the existing problems among return migrants. It should help in providing migrants a safe return to their home communities. The project currently works on helping migrants returning from Texas to their home states in the Northern Mexico, as can be seen at the project's infographicsxiv. According to IOM websitexv, since

2012 return migrants from the US have also been able to receive help after their arrival to the Mexico City airport. This service has been provided by IOM Mexico.

Another project for return migrants in Mexico is called Programa de Atención a Migrantes Retornados (Return Migrants Assistance Program). Through this project, Mexican government can provide logistical solutions for the return of migrants into their home communities. As with Somos Mexicanos, one of the aims of this project is to ensure the safety of migrants on their way home. This project is as well aimed to provide post-arrival assistance. Programa de Atención a Migrantes Retornados also includes a return migrant integration component, specializing on giving the return migrants the information about employment options and various social and economic opportunities, according to IOM Mexico[xvi].

As can be seen, there has been a number of projects dedicated to providing help to return migrants in Mexico, however, the previous projects have so far concentrated on migrants returning from the US. Even though the US is the biggest receiving country when it comes to Mexican immigrants, it is not the only one. The return migrants coming from countries other than the US do not fall under any of the aforementioned.

What is more, the existing projects provide post-migration help, while return migrants might be in need of pre-departure assistance. Some certificates they might need after their arrival to Mexico might be easier to obtain while they are still abroad. Finding housing, applying for a job and securing a place in a kindergarten for their child, for example, also might fall into the category of activities that can be done before the arrival. Thus, the need for pre-departure assistance exists and the A.R.C is created to provide such a service.

2.3. Stakeholders and beneficiaries

The range of stakeholders involved in the project will include:

- Academia

- Civil society (NGOs, community associations, student organizations etc.);

- Private sector (private companies etc.);

- Governmental organizations

The project will create networks among a number of educational institutions that work on the topic of research migration. Students from these universities might participate in the project's work as collaborators or interns.

Civil society and private sector organizations can help the project to establish a network of people who are interested in entrepreneurship.

Mexican governmental organizations will be contacted since they have the latest information on the issues of return migration. They might also become a source in promoting our project if they agree to have the project's banner on their web page since it will provide the project with an opportunity to reach a large number of Mexicans.

The range of beneficiaries involved in the project will include, but is not limited to:

- Return migrants to Mexico and people contemplating their return

- Local communities to which migrants will return

- Vulnerable groups in Mexico who can act as the project's collaborators

- Students from Mexican educational institutions who will get involved in the project's work through student organizations or university networks

The project aims to lead to increase link between the stakeholders and beneficiaries. This will let people with various knowledge set and skills meet and create projects of their own. This project can lead to the involvement of more Mexicans from various social groups and to promoting entrepreneurship in the society (see Figure 2).

3. Definition of the intervention

3.1. Overall objective

The overall objective of the project is as follows: return migrants have integrated into the life in Mexico after the return and produce social and economic welfare to the society.

3.2. Project purpose (specific objective) and its indicators

The purpose of this project is to create a network of Mexican high-skilled return migrants who have re-integrated or will reintegrate into Mexican society and have become a part of the country's work force and who are interested in getting involved in entrepreneurial activities.

The success of the project can be measured by:

- The number of people who received help online

- The number of people who become employed by the project during various stages

- The establishment of a running website

- The creation of the hub/network

3.3. Results

The project contemplate six general results that combined will lead to the main result, the creation of jobs.

The general results are:

- Online Info Bank that will include legal and economic information, existing programs, psychological advice, link to events for return migrants, relocation advice, social benefits existing in Mexico, and further information that may be relevant.

- Link between 3 main networks (universities/student organizations, return migrants and public/private institutions), in order to develop new projects/companies led by the H.S.R.M.

- A.R.C headquarters/office established.
- Seminars/start-up workshops to facilitate access to information related to entrepreneurship.
- Projects/companies led by H.S.R.M.
- Scholarship/grant fund for the universities/student network members for them to develop and acquire new skills abroad, under the clause of returning and start their own project/company with the support of the created networks.

3.4. Activities and implementation

Through the proposed activities, mechanisms that ensures employment opportunities will be created. The activities will focus on the 3 years of the project, which will lead to the creation of Info Bank, the consolidation of a strong network and the establishment of A.R.C permanent office. As has been mentioned earlier, after the first three years the project will be transformed into the programme (see Figure 1).

The focus of the first year is the creation of the online platform of information and communication- Info Bank- and the strengthening of the network. The project targets both online and offline networks. Offline network will link different agencies, stakeholders and H.S.R.M. The main activities include the recruitment of collaborators, identifying the stakeholders and starting a dialog with them, marketing the project online and offline, and creating Info Bank. Through the Info Bank website, online consultancy will be offered.

First a forum will be set up. The forum will act as the source of precious information about the needs of H.S.R.M. The information from the forum will be gathered before the actual running of Info Bank. The forum will be created two months after setting the project. The forum is set to encourage discussions on the topic of return migration to Mexico. The final version of Info Bank will be launched six months after the beginning of the project.

The second year of the project focuses on the consolidation of the network, and research on the needs of return migrants and updating of Info Bank will continue. In this period the first results of the project are expected, the results that materialize in job offerings and opportunities for H.S.R.M. Three evaluations are planned per year.

During the third year of the project, the emphasis is on the establishment of a permanent office. The establishment of the office requires such activities as personnel recruitment, finding a location, acquiring the logistics and negotiating contracts. In the third year of the project, we start offering seminars and consultations to H.S.R.M.

Marketing campaigns that intend to increase the visibility of the project will be implemented during the whole period of the project.

As has been mentioned, the project should transform into a program after three years. By then, the project aims to create a network of professionals from various spheres, including H.S.R.M., who will consolidate and create their own projects or companies. These companies will be able to sponsor scholarships and grants for Mexican students who wish to acquire specific skills abroad and return to Mexico after the end of their education.

In this case, the program will link students and companies together. Students will get the money for their education, and companies will get young professionals who work for them and who share the same entrepreneurial values (see Figure 3).

3.5. Assumptions and risks

Time frame may be consider one of the risk factors due to the length. The first stage of the project is three years and every activity has a specific timetable. Nevertheless, some activities may be delayed due to external factors or may have a longer implementation period than we anticipated. In order to prevent this risk, we plan quarterly monitoring.

There is the possibility for the project to reach other migrant groups as well. The project is intended primarily for high skilled return migrants and Mexicans who have the intention of returning to their home country from abroad. However, we are aware that other groups may find useful information stored in the online Info Bank or through the virtual network. Among these groups, we identified low skilled migrants, season migrants, immigrants with no intention of return or Mexicans that never migrated.

The corruption in Mexico is another important factor the project has to consider. There is a huge debate over corruption and according to Transparency International, Mexico ranks the place 103 out of 175 as corrupted state in 2014[xvii]. The effect of corruption lowers the trust of people in their representatives and it may have an effect on the A.R.C project

output. Moreover, the project may encounter difficulties regarding the legislation and bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the project seeks to have a strong, transparent relation with authorities and will try to involve them in the current activities.

The project may run in parallel with other similar projects. We identified the most important projects that focus on return migration in Mexico. We promote a good collaboration with people involved in similar projects; however, there is the possibility that small projects have been overlooked due to their limited visibility.

The project does not have control over the stakeholders and their actions. Stakeholders have a great liberty of action, for example, in organizing informational meetings or promoting job opportunities. The project acts as a space of information sharing and communication, trusting that the involved partners will share our mission and values. However, we must take into consideration that some information posted by the project's partners may not sufficiently supported or has an intention to misinform. To reduce the risk of possible frauds, the project coordinators will be constantly involved in checking the information related to job opportunities and investments, as well as in creating and updating a set of rules for the members to insure the safety of the people involved and to offer the possibility of give feedback and complain.

Stakeholders may lose their interest in the project hence their involvement may withdraw or lessen. In order to avoid this risk we plan to have regular meetings with the stakeholders to offer them information regarding the process of the project and to get their feedback. Involving the stakeholders in the decision-making regarding the project offers them the possibility to be actively involved and lowers the chances of withdrawal.

By creating a network focused on generating jobs/companies, the project can lead to several results that may occur as a consequence of this network. The intentional effect that the project aims for is to promote a Domino effect of creating and developing projects that include members of the universities network formed during the first stage. Students from those universities will have a chance to gain work experience and participate in the development of projects/companies with an expectation that they will get inspired and motivated to generate their own projects/companies using the already established networks. The H.S.R.M. returning to Mexico may come with their families who will also be

in need of a social/support network. We plan that the professional network created by the project will help to form new social networks that will help H.S.R.M. and their families settle and (re-)integrate to the Mexican society.

The last risk taken into consideration is related to the possible changes in the legal system. Due to this, some pre-established activities will have to be reconsidered.

4. Cross-cutting objectives

4.1. Vulnerable groups/ Human Rights

This project promote the protection of Human Rights, specifically articles 13.2 and 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[xviii].

> Article 13.

- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

> Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

The project will target not just returning high skilled migrants, but also will include the participation of vulnerable groups that will collaborate during the first stage of the project. The project will promote the involvement of single parents, indigenous people and people with special needs during the creation and maintenance of the Info Bank. These collaborators will work from home.

By doing this, we will discourage discrimination of vulnerable groups and promote the creation of diverse networks aiming to create jobs and more tolerant and active communities.

4.2. Environmental sustainability

Being a web-based project, this initiative is environmentally-friendly due to the fact that the project will avoid the use of printable materials as much as possible, and if they are needed the use of recycled materials will be prioritized. The project might lead to the development of companies with an eco-conscientious attitude.

[i] Infopankki website http://www.infopankki.fi/en/frontpage

[ii] Docquier F., Rapoport H. 2008. *Skilled migration: The perspective of developing countries.* In J. Baghwati and G. Hanson (eds), Skilled migration: prospects, problems and policies, Russell Sage Foundation: New York

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Fitzgerald D. 2008. *"Mexico." Focus Migration Country Profile no. 14.* Hamburg Institute of International Economics. http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/uploads/tx_wilpubdb/Cp_14_Mexico.pdf

[v] Ibid.

[vi] Dustmann C., Fadlon I. and Y. Weiss. 2011. *Return migration, human capital accumulation and the brain drain.* Journal of Development Economics, 95 (1), 58-67.

[vii] Another example of an article that researches Mexican migration flow to a country other than the US is F. Alba's article mentioning Mexican agricultural workers in Canada.
Alba. F. 2013. *Mexico: The New Migration Narrative.* Migration Policy Institute. http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexico-new-migration-narrative

[viii] According to J. Berry, acculturation (or acculturative) stress is a type of psychological stress and anxiety that people experience when migrating. It is caused by fact the migrants need to adapt to the host society. A.Tabor and T. Milfont argue that if a migrant has been living outside their home country for a long period of time, they might experience acculturation difficulties re-integrating after their return.
Berry, J. W. 1997. *Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation.* Applied Psychology: An International Review, 46, 5–34.
Tabor, A. S., & Milfont, T. L. 2011. *Migration change model: Exploring the process of migration on a psychological level.* International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35(6), 818-832.

[ix] IOM 2008. *Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities.* International Dialogue on Migration 2008, 96th session.
https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return_migration_challenges_120208/MC_INF_293_Return_Migration.pdf

[x] Panescu, C.A. 2003. *Brain Drain and Brain Gain: A New Perspective on Highly Skilled Migration.* Bucharest: Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of of Foreign Affairs. http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003399/01/brain_drain_brain_gain.pdf

[xi] IOM 2008. *Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities.* International Dialogue on Migration 2008, 96th session.
https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return_migration_challenges_120208/MC_INF_293_Return_Migration.pdf

[xii] Ibid.

[xiii] Cassarino, J.-P. 2004. *Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited.* International Journal on Multicultural Societies 6(2): 253-279.

Dustmann C., Fadlon I. and Y. Weiss. 2011. *Return migration, human capital accumulation and the brain drain.* Journal of Development Economics, 95 (1), 58-67.

De Haas J. 2005. *International migration, remittances and development: myths and facts.* Third World Quarterly 26 (8), 1269-1284.

Commander S., Kangasniemi M. and L.A. Winters. 2004. *The brain drain: a review of theory and facts.* Brussels Economic Review, ULB - Universite Libre de Bruxelles, vol. 47(1), pages 29-44.

xiv   Mexican   National   Institute   on   Migration   (in   Spanish)
http://www.inm.gob.mx/static/pdf/INFOGRAMA_SMX.pdf

xv   IOM http://mac.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-backs-mexican-efforts-to-aid.html#sthash.kKjp4Sqe.dpuf

xvi   IOM Mexico (in Spanish) http://oim.org.mx/?portfolio=mali-y-togo-intercambian-buenas-practicas-sobre-la-gestion-de-diasporas#sthash.827HzZop.dpuf

xvii   Transparency International. *Corruption by country. Mexico.*
http://www.transparency.org/country/#MEX

xviii   Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948), art. 13 and 23.
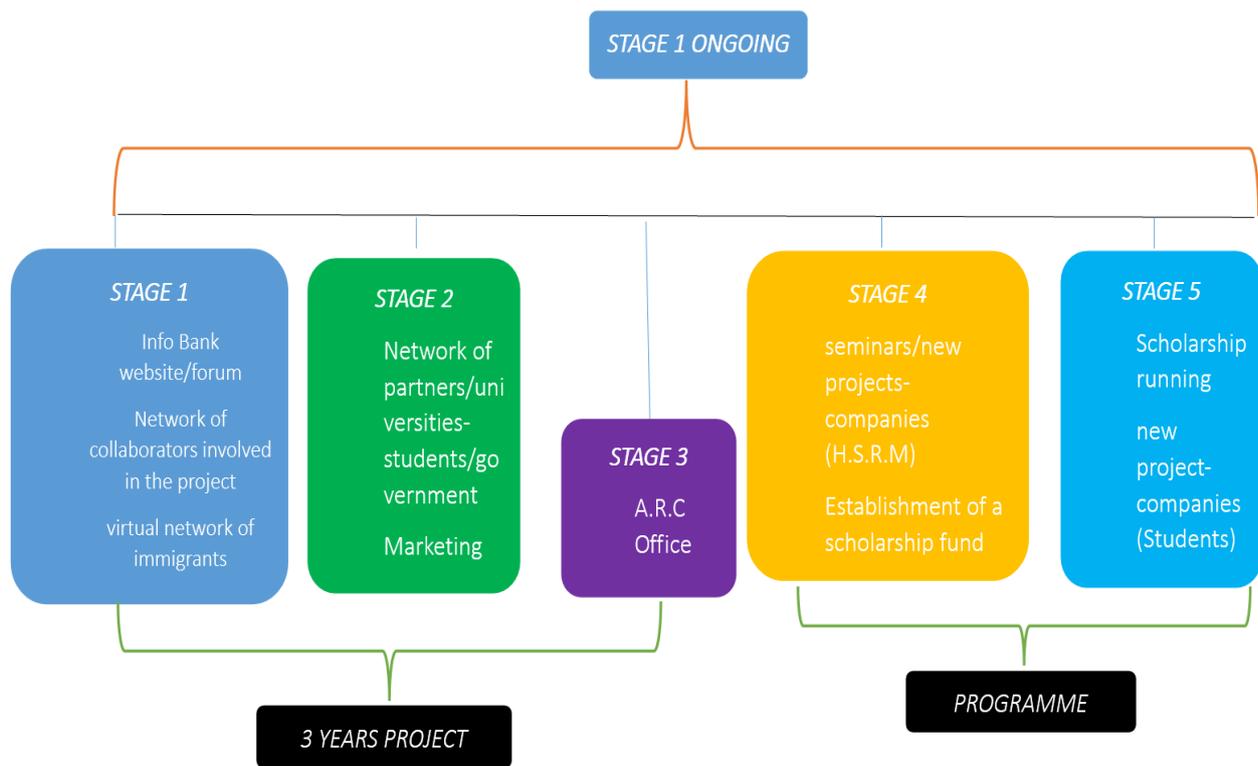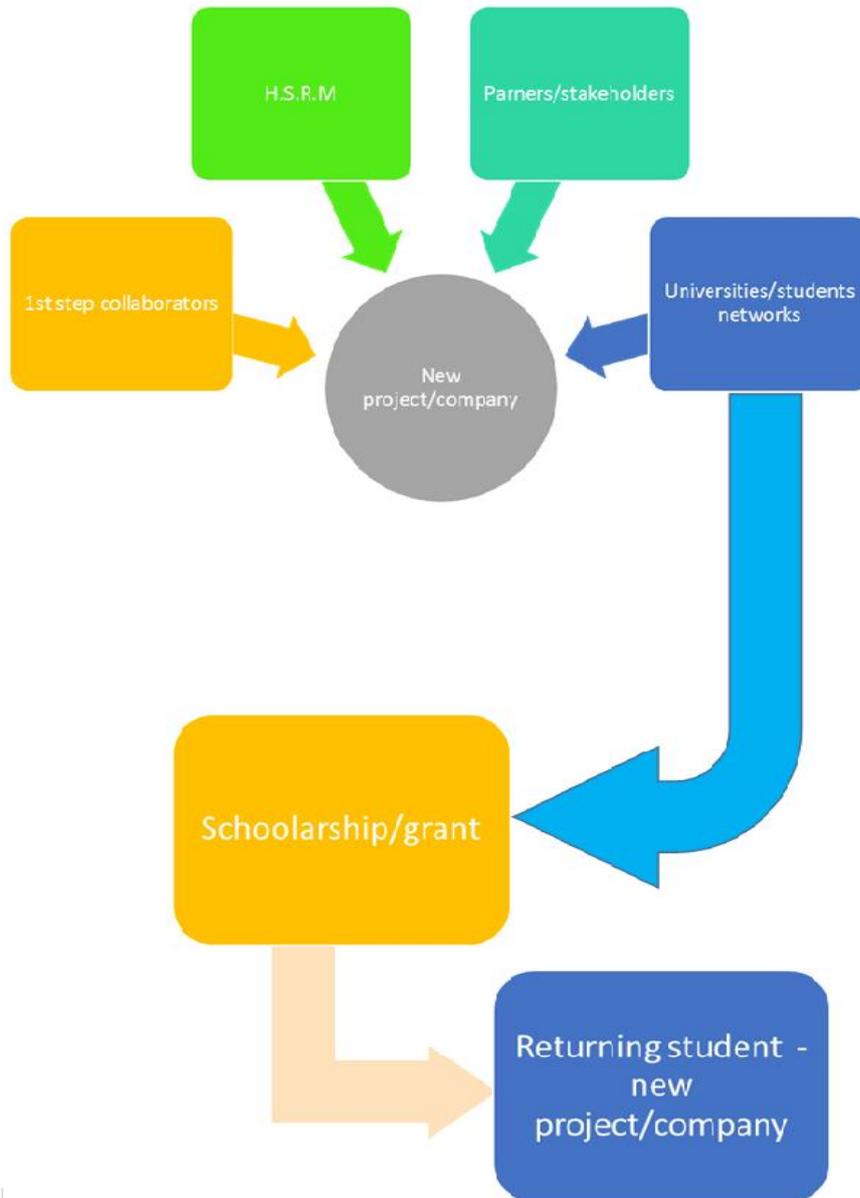
Fig. 1. The stages of the project

Fig. 2. Stakeholders and the process of the project.

The project creates a number of jobs by involving people that carry the proposed activities. They, along with the stakeholders (collaborators, H.S.R.M., partners and universities/student organization) consolidate the network and promote entrepreneurship. Students have the possibility to act as interns in the partner companies and to access scholarships and grants on the premise they will, in their turn, act as entrepreneurs and will contribute to the creation of jobs.
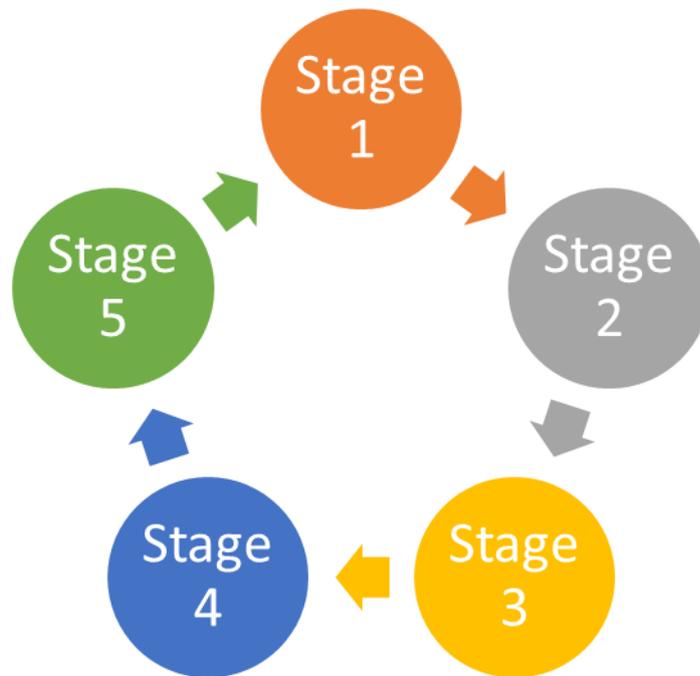
Fig. 3. The project/program circle. As has been mentioned earlier, the project hopes to create a Domino effect. Students who get involved in the project through student organizations and university networks are encouraged to make networks with other project participants and to start entrepreneurial activities of their own, thus, strengthening existing networks and creating jobs. This should lead to them creating the projects of their own and replicating the circle.

A.R.C

Águila Regresa a Casa