

What does EHC bring to Eco-parishes?

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1. A shared purpose

EHC and Eco-parishes coincide in the why, the what for and the how: shared values as a compass for building community.

It means putting into practice the vision of Laudato si', Pope Francis' encyclical: bringing together care for people, the community and the environment through the reuse of what already exists.

It is in this connection between the social, spiritual, environmental and community dimensions that EHC converges with the Eco-parishes model.

*Activating existing resources to care for our common home, our homes
and our communities.*



2. How EHC works

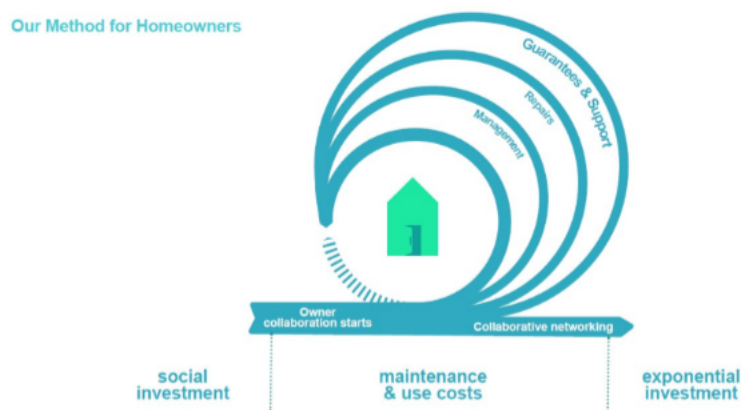
EHC brings a relational methodology, successfully tested, that builds trust among the owners of empty homes and other spaces and transforms them into resources for the community.

Through the Conscious Collaborative Accords (CCA), each parish can activate its own resources and those of its parishioners, and generate housing solutions adapted to its environment.

The resources are of two types, depending on who the owner is:

- Parish resources, which due to a lack of means in many cases are not even inventoried.
- Parishioners' resources, closed or underused for many different reasons.

“By helping you, you help yourself”: this is shown by the experience of the EHC pilot in Vitoria-Gasteiz, documented in the [impact report prepared by COMGO](#). It can also be seen in [this video](#).



3. What EHC brings

EHC’s contribution is organised into three blocks:

SHARED RESOURCES	TRAINING AND SUPPORT	LEGAL AND SOCIAL INNOVATION
Methodology to activate empty homes and unused spaces	The value of values as a compass	Affordable and inclusive housing solutions
Team, ecosystem, technology and tools to support the process	Facilitation and conflict management	Development of welcoming parish communities
A global, scalable and replicable model	Training for care in shared living (co-living)	Support and accompaniment from the community
Connection between owners, parishes and local actors	Knowledge for the sustainable reuse of existing buildings	Social, environmental and community impact

3.1. Shared resources

a) Methodology to activate empty homes and unused spaces

A structured process to identify, prepare and put into use homes and spaces that are currently empty or underused.

b) Team, ecosystem, technology and tools to support the process

An ecosystem of strategic partners, with digital and management tools that systematise information, coordinate the actors involved and make it possible to follow the progress of each project.

c) A global, scalable and replicable model

The methodology is applied in different parishes and territories without the need to design a new system each time.

d) Connection between owners, parishes and local actors

EHC and its ecosystem facilitate the relationship between owners, parishes, social organisations and the other actors needed to activate a home or a space.

3.2. Training and support

a) The value of values as a compass

Becoming aware of one's own values has proven to be a key element in EHC's experience. The work uses the methodology that Simon Dolan has developed over more than 40 years, through The Value of Values game.

Zinquo will be the qualified organisation to provide this training, which fosters collaborative relationships. Values are the basis of agreements sustained by trust, clear expectations and shared responsibility among all parties.

b) Conflict prevention and management

In EHC's experience, beliefs rooted in spirituality and love, regardless of religious affiliation, help to prevent blockages, facilitate difficult conversations and seek solutions acceptable to all the people involved.

For EHC, collaborating is loving, and that is the energy that moves us.

c) Training for care in shared living (co-living)

At this initial stage, EHC continues to focus on homes that do not require refurbishment, as has been the case with most of those activated in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

d) Knowledge for the sustainable reuse of existing buildings

Priority is given to reusing what already exists, reducing the consumption of land, materials and other resources. It is a paradigmatic example of the circular economy: it avoids CO₂ emissions and the waste associated with new construction.

3.3. Legal and social innovation: collaborative law

a) Affordable and inclusive housing solutions

Activating empty homes generates new housing opportunities for those who have difficulties accessing decent and affordable housing: from young people to workers whose presence is necessary in rural areas to promote territorial balance and their revitalisation.

Rural areas in Spain contain some of the largest concentrations of empty housing, which opens up the opportunity to connect existing resources with local needs.

b) Development of welcoming parish communities

Housing is not only a physical resource: it is the gateway to a community that welcomes, supports and integrates people. EHC builds relationships based on trust and connects empty spaces with the needs and opportunities of their surroundings.

c) Support and accompaniment from the community

Housing solutions must be accompanied by social, employment and community support, provided through the parish environment and its networks. This has been EHC's experience in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

There, accompaniment from the parish environment was not deployed to the extent we had imagined. Perhaps, simply, it was not yet the right time. The experience has nevertheless been valuable: from it come the project's learning and its international vocation in search of greater impact. A framework such as Eco-parishes is precisely the context that was missing at that time.

d) Social, environmental and community impact

Environmental impact has been one of the greatest discoveries for EHC. Empty homes represent an opportunity to promote social justice, the ecological transition and territorial rebalancing.

A single intervention can improve access to housing, reuse existing resources, prevent properties from deteriorating through prolonged disuse, as happens to cars when they remain stationary, and strengthen ties within the local community.

4. From empty spaces to welcoming communities

This phrase summarises the central idea: transforming unused real estate resources into spaces that generate welcome, housing and community.

Eco-parishes brings its vision, its mission and its values through the church community. EHC brings the methodology and tools needed to activate homes and turn that purpose into action.

Agreements and alliances for coordination and accompaniment are essential to bring existing resources back to life.



Drawing designed by a refugee participant in the EHC project.