

GLOSSARY

clustered: *raggruppato*
gatherings: *incontri*
commitment: *impegno*
spread: *diffuso*

 www.cohousing.org

Cohousing lessons

Cohousing communities offer comfortable places where people of all ages grow and age well, and where there is the old-fashioned sense of neighbourhood. These communities are usually designed as attached or single-family homes along one or more pedestrian streets or clustered around a courtyard. They range in size from 7 to 67 residences, the majority of them housing 20 to 40 households. Regardless of the size of the community, there are lots of opportunities for casual meetings among neighbours, as well as for planned gatherings such as celebrations, clubs and business meetings.

The common house is the social centre where communities usually serve optional group meals at least two or three times a week.

The need for community members to take care of common property builds a sense of working together, trust and support. Because neighbours hold a commitment to a relationship with one another, almost all cohousing communities use consensus as the basis for group decision-making.

The cohousing idea originated in Denmark, and was promoted in the U.S. by architects Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett in the early 1980s. The Danish concept of a “living community” has spread quickly. Worldwide, there are now hundreds of cohousing communities, expanding from Denmark into the U.S, Canada, Australia, Sweden, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria and elsewhere.

In a cohousing community, you know who lives six houses down because you eat common meals with them, and everybody listens to what you have to say even if they don’t always agree, so you feel your voice is being heard. Cohousing residents generally aspire to improving the world, one neighbourhood at a time. This desire to make a difference often becomes a stated mission, as the websites of many communities demonstrate. The goal of many is to create a place where lives are simplified, the Earth is respected, diversity is welcomed, children play together in safety, and living in a community with neighbours comes naturally.

ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

1  Read the text and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Only elderly people live in cohousing communities.
- 2 A cohousing community can start with less than 7 people.
- 3 The members trust each other because they all look after the community.
- 4 Cohousing started in the USA then spread to Europe.
- 5 At meetings everybody has the chance to express their own opinion.
- 6 Community members want to make the world a better place to live in.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOCABULARY

2 Complete the description of cohousing with a word from the box.

children • residents • owns • shares • needs • communities • condominiums

Cohousing (1) _____ are different from standard (2) _____ because they are designed by their own (3) _____. Each family (4) _____ a house and (5) _____ facilities such as recreational rooms for both adults and (6) _____. Choices are made according to the actual (7) _____ of the people living there.

WRITING

3 Imagine you and your friends decide to set up a cohousing community. Describe how you would organise it and its main features.