

Topic: Community and Housing

Let's get started...

Where do you live now? Do you like your housing? Do you have any community organizations or community services near your home? How many community services or community organizations can your Talk Time group think of?

Background:

Housing and shelter are important for all humans. Community organizations and community services develop around areas of housing, to provide support and interaction among people living in the area. There are several different types of housing for people in the United States. For some housing, such as apartments, people pay a monthly rental fee. For other housing, people pay to buy the house or condominium, usually with a loan (mortgage) from a bank. For neighborhoods with a community association, people often pay an additional monthly fee (dues) to cover some of the costs of the community facilities, such as meeting or party space, playgrounds, swimming pools, parks and gardens.



In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

- Where do you live now (what city)? Do you live in an apartment, a townhouse, a single-family home, a rooming house, a mobile home, a condominium (condo), or another type of housing? Do you like where you live?
- Where did you live in your native country? Did you live in an apartment, a townhouse, a single-family home, a rooming house, or another type of housing? Did you like where you lived?
- If you could live in your “dream housing,” where would you live, and why?
- What is your ideal kind of community? Do you like a lot of interaction with your neighbors, or do you prefer to live a more private life, interacting only with family or close friends?

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Where you live now, is there any formal community association? If so, do you pay dues or fees? What services does the association provide?

Is there a “clubhouse” or a fitness center, a daycare center or a playground for children, or a community swimming pool in the area near where you live?

Tell a partner about the facilities surrounding your housing.

Where you lived in your native country, were there any formal community associations? If so, what services did the associations provide? Tell a partner about community associations and services in your country.

In your native country, are there community centers to provide social or recreational services to people? If so, what ages do the centers serve? Are these centers financially supported and run by the government, by religious groups, or by non-profit organizations? Tell a partner about community organizations in your country.

What are the important qualities of a good community? If you could design an ideal community or neighborhood, what would you want to include?

What are the important qualities of a good community association? If you could design an ideal community association, what services or programs would you want to provide? How would you bring people together to become active in the association?

What are the important qualities of a good community center?

If you could design an ideal community center, what facilities, programs, or services would you provide? Who or what groups would finance the center? Who or what group would manage the center? Who or what group would make decisions about what services to provide?

Do you think that community organizations are important in the lives of people living in a community or neighborhood area? Do you think that community organizations are a good idea? Why or why not? Tell a partner your opinions, and your reasons for your opinions?

New words and Idioms:

Shelter; community; develop; areas; support; interaction; apartment; townhouse; single-family house; rooming house; mobile home; condominium; surrounding; rental fee; loan; mortgage; formal community association; dues; fees; facilities; non-profit organizations; programs; services; provide; qualities; design; meeting or party space; playgrounds; private life; amenities; formal community association; community center; clubhouse; Ideal; decisions; finance; manage; opinions.