

# Level of trusting others doesn't affect giving

**Survey finds that even those who are less trusting are keen to volunteer or donate**

**Priscilla Goy**

Most Singaporeans do not trust others easily, but their levels of involvement in volunteer work and charity-giving do not differ much from the rest who feel that most people can be trusted.

These were the follow-up findings by two dons from the National University of Singapore Business School based on a previously released 2011 survey.

Close to 70 per cent of respondents believed they "can never be too careful" when interacting with others, while the rest thought "most people can be trusted", according to the analysis conducted last month.

From the group of respondents who were less trusting of others, 35 per cent of them often donated money to charity, while a quarter of them (25 per cent) often volunteered.

In comparison, the figures for the group who said most people can be trusted were 40 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively – a margin of difference of just around 5 percentage points.

Some studies in the West have

shown that those who are more trusting of others tend to have higher levels of civic engagement such as doing volunteer work.

Associate Professor Tan Soo Jiuan, who co-wrote the report, told The Sunday Times: "These findings were intriguing to us at first, as it showed that despite a low propensity to trust, they were not that different from those who are more trusting, when it involved giving in terms of time or money."

She and Dr Siok Kuan Tambyah had previously conducted a survey of 1,500 Singaporeans in 2011, in areas ranging from perceptions of their well-being to the values they find important.

In their latest findings, they also found out that those with a religion or are more satisfied with

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their lives tend to give their time and money to charity more often.

For instance, 38 per cent of those with a religion often donate to charity, compared to 21 per cent of those without a religion.

Also, 34 per cent of those with "high" levels of life satisfaction said they often find time to be involved in community work, compared to 25 per cent and 12 per cent of those with "medium" and "low" levels of life satisfaction, respectively.

Prof Tan said the link between life satisfaction and civic engagement could also apply the other way around. She said that those who volunteer or donate regularly are more likely to be satisfied with their lives.

Her comment is supported by the conclusion of a separate survey commissioned by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre.

Singapore Management University professor David Chan, who was the consultant for the survey, said in October: "Happy people are more likely to give, but people who give also tend to become happier."

Prof Tan agreed. "Our findings suggest the overall well-being of Singaporeans could have a positive impact on our society."

She added: "Social organisations could take this into consideration when designing campaigns to promote more charitable behaviour among Singaporeans."

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