

Singapore study finds link between giving and happiness



Giving and well-being are strongly linked, according to a study in Singapore by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC).

Conducted by NVPC with Singapore Management University (SMU) psychology professor David Chan, the study showed that people in Singapore who volunteer or donate are more likely to be satisfied and happy with their lives.

The study found that among people who volunteered or donated or both, two-thirds (66 per cent) were satisfied and happy with their lives, NVPC said in a statement on Monday.

In contrast, among non-givers, less than half (45 per cent) had high subjective well-being, the organisation said.

The study also found that a higher proportion of those who served 12 or more volunteer hours in the past 12 months had high subjective well-being compared to those who served less (71 per cent vs 63 per cent).

Also, a higher proportion of those who gave \$100 or more in the past 12 months had high subjective well-being compared to those who gave less (72 per cent vs 59 per cent), according to the study.

It found that the pattern of findings remained after taking income status into account.

"Happy people are more likely to give, but people who give also tend to become happier. This is because the act of giving not only benefits the recipient but also leads to positive outcomes for the giver," said Chan, who is also director of SMU's Behavioural Sciences Institute.

"When you give, you derive a sense of personal meaning from helping others. You also become more grateful for your own life conditions as you appreciate the situation of those who are less fortunate," he added.

The study, using a nationally-representative sample, is part of NVPC's Individual Giving Survey 2012.