

For Media Release

Good Samaritan Meter Survey Findings

Singapore, 26 April 2024 - In the month of March, REACH Community Services commemorated Good Samaritan Day by conducting a survey with over 1,000 members of the public through both online and face-to-face interviews with the help of student volunteers. Our aim was to better understand people's attitudes and behaviours towards helping strangers.

The survey was conducted from March 7th to 22nd and targeted respondents aged 18 and above. We found that the main driving forces behind acts of compassion towards strangers were personal values and a sense of social responsibility. Notably, respondents of all ages demonstrated a stronger inclination to show compassion towards loved ones and family members rather than themselves. Respondents are least likely to show compassion to strangers. This could also mean that more are willing to show compassion when it is convenient to them.

Results show that while 2 out of 3 respondents express a belief in being kind towards strangers, the average reported instances of assisting strangers were only 1 to 2 times in the past year. The top three barriers hindering acts of compassion towards strangers include the fear of being taken advantage of—particularly prevalent among older respondents aged 65 and above, a lack of awareness regarding others needing assistance, mostly impacting those aged 45 to 54, and the lack of time, which affects those aged 18 to 24 the most.

The term "Good Samaritan" refers to individuals who help others selflessly, without expecting anything in return, stemming from the biblical parable in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 10:25-37). This parable has become a symbol of altruism, promoting assistance to those in need regardless of differences.

According to the framework of the five love languages—acts of service, quality time, physical touch, gifts, and words of affirmation—most respondents opted for acts of service, such as performing helpful tasks or chores, as their primary means of embodying the role of a Good Samaritan. This was followed by offering words of affirmation. The fear of being taken advantage of or getting scammed prompts most to demonstrate compassion through less tangible means, such as acts of service and words of affirmation, rather than through costly gifts or quality time.

Although 95% of respondents spanning various age groups perceive themselves as compassionate, their behaviour frequently fails to align with this perception - a notable 42% of these respondents acknowledge only engaging in acts of compassion toward strangers merely 1 to 2 times within the past year. This highlights the need to overcome barriers for engaging in compassionate behaviour in order to promote a culture of kindness in our society.

To conclude, we recommend emphasising the impact of small acts of kindness to motivate individuals to engage in simple acts of compassion in their daily lives to strangers, such as holding the door open, offering a genuine smile, helping someone to carry their grocery bags, or even sharing an umbrella with a stranger during wet weather. Additionally, promoting volunteer opportunities will also allow individuals to directly engage with and support strangers in need, fostering empathy and compassion, thus lowering the perceived barriers faced to engage in compassionate behaviour or acts.

For more information, please contact:

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About REACH Community Services

REACH Community Services was founded in 1998 by Grace Assembly of God Church with the mission to help the Least, the Lost, and the Lonely in the community. As a non-profit social service agency, REACH strives to inspire hope and empower change in people we serve, regardless of age, race, language, or religion. Our outreach spans across ten (10) community touchpoints, delivering diverse programmes and services through four (4) core services: Family, Counselling & Mental Health, Youth and Senior.

Registered as a charitable organisation in 1999, REACH is also a full member of the National Council of Social Service since 2000 and an approved Institution of Public Character. To learn more about our work, please visit <https://www.reach.org.sg/>