

Landmark study shows most Singaporeans comfortable with other races and religions

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A landmark study has found that almost all Singaporeans feel that they get similar treatment when using public services, regardless of race and religion.

But more can still be done to boost social cohesion here.

The News Desk has more from national body OnePeople.sg

Just one in 10 respondents to a survey of over 4,000 Singaporeans reported feeling upset because of racial or religious tension.

And only one in 10 Indian and Malay respondents felt they were treated worse than other races at public places such as hospitals, schools and social service agencies.

These were some of the positive results that emerged from the study by OnePeople.sg and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS).

Answers from the survey were used to compute 10 "harmony indicators", which are scored on a scale of 1 to 10.

For example, the study scored a near-perfect 9.75 for the indicator measuring the "absence of minority discrimination when using public services".

But there are gaps.

There's a perception that minority groups have to work harder to get top jobs and promotions.

And even though eight out of 10 respondents said they were comfortable with having a close friend of another race or religion, less than half of them reported having at least one close friend of another race.

Chairman of OnePeople.sg Zainudin Nordin says this shows that there is still room to improve social cohesion in Singapore.

"Because what we believe is it is a progression from tolerance to trust. And we want that trust to be built in having close friend of different race so that, in terms of national crisis, we are able to count on each other. So that we can really have that faith and trust in our fellow Singaporeans of different races."

The study, the first of its kind in Singapore, took special care to ensure that it offered an accurate reflection of minority concerns.

For example, more than 1,700 Indians and Malays were included in the sample group of some 4,100 Singaporeans.

This ensured that their views would not be crowded out by those of the Chinese majority.

OnePeople.sg plans to engage the public through open forums to share its findings and gather more feedback.