

CLIMATE
CONVERSATIONS

milieu

Motivating Climate Action

Climate Conversations and Milieu Insight joint study on
Singaporeans' views towards climate change and the
environment

Foreword

The urgency and scale of our environmental problems has never been clearer. Reports of extreme weather, disappearing species, and waste covered oceans and land now seem so common as to be almost background noise. Our life sustaining systems have been thrown out of balance and they are sending us clear signals that one way or another, either by our choosing, or by the laws of physics, change is coming.

The massive scale transformation of our economy to support and regenerate the systems that sustain life on Earth needs to take place at an unprecedented scale and speed. It is going to touch every corner of society and our economy.

Such a transformation will require a cultural shift.

How, then, do we move society to take part in this transformation, and where are we in attitudes and understanding?

With this study, we are pleased to be adding a Singapore perspective to the growing body of knowledge of international science communications on how well people understand our environmental crisis and what moves them to take action.

Some of the results are extremely encouraging: awareness raising is done! The public knows of the most serious consequences and concern is high. The vast majority of people are intrinsically motivated to act, and the only question that remains is how we turn that motivation into the meaningful, large scale action that is needed?

With this research we hope to better equip you to answer this question.

We're excited to share this research with all our peers who are working to inspire action on our little red corner of this miraculous planet.



Chris Jensen
Climate Conversations



Shuyin Yeo
Milieu Insight

Milieu Insight

Milieu Insight, a Singapore-based consumer research firm

In this age when organizations are time-pressured to make strategic and marketing decisions, the status quo for consumer research processes is too complicated and slow. By leveraging technology and applying consumer research best practices, we built an opinion-based insights platform to connect communities to organizations, making understanding our milieu quick, simple and fun!

Climate Conversations

Climate Conversations is a Singapore based non-profit that aims to scale up support for action on climate change.

All of the action needed on climate change has one thing in common: to succeed at the scale and speed necessary, we need widespread public support.

We build that support in the community through a scalable, well tested conversation program that enables the climate concerned to motivate those that are yet to engage.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Climate Conversations volunteers Huan Ting Ang, Tok Xinying, Rajul Priyadarshini, Zon Liew, Melanie Knoeppchen-Mert & Shay Xiao, your dedication to the success of our mission is an inspiration, and we sometimes don't know how you find so much time to give.

Thank you also to Gerald Ang and Shuyin Yeo from Milieu Insight for generously offering to help us gain deeper insights and for your support throughout this process.

Summary

The insights broadly suggest that people:

- Know that climate change is urgent and serious; but are unsure of the causes of climate change and their effects on weather and on our society.
- Feel a strong sense of responsibility to act; but are pessimistic about their fellow citizens level of concern and action.
- Are unsure of the actions they can take, if those actions are meaningful, and if collective action for our environment works; this offers insight into why people are skeptical and even may appear apathetic.
- Are best motivated by highlighting the value of their actions in creating large scale impact
- Are better able to take part in solutions when they feel comfortable discussing the problem, having better understood climate change and its solutions.

Methodology

The survey was jointly conducted for the first time in October 2018 by *Milieu Insight* and *Climate Conversations* with a follow up by *Milieu Insight* in January 2019.

Participation in the survey:

- 3530 members of the public were asked for their opinion through *Milieu Insight's* mobile survey app from 1 Oct 2018 to 26 Oct 2018. The data is weighted to represent the online population of Singapore.
- 3712 members of the public were asked for their opinion through a follow up questionnaire through *Milieu Insight's* mobile survey app from 23 Jan 2019 to 3 Feb 2019 . The data is weighted to represent the online population of Singapore.
- 43 persons who have attended a climate conversation or volunteered with Climate Conversations were surveyed via a Google Form from 4 Oct 2018 to 29 Oct 2018. This data is used to infer the views of climate change advocates.

For findings that do not distinguish between the groups, the results are drawn solely from the *Milieu Insight* survey participants.

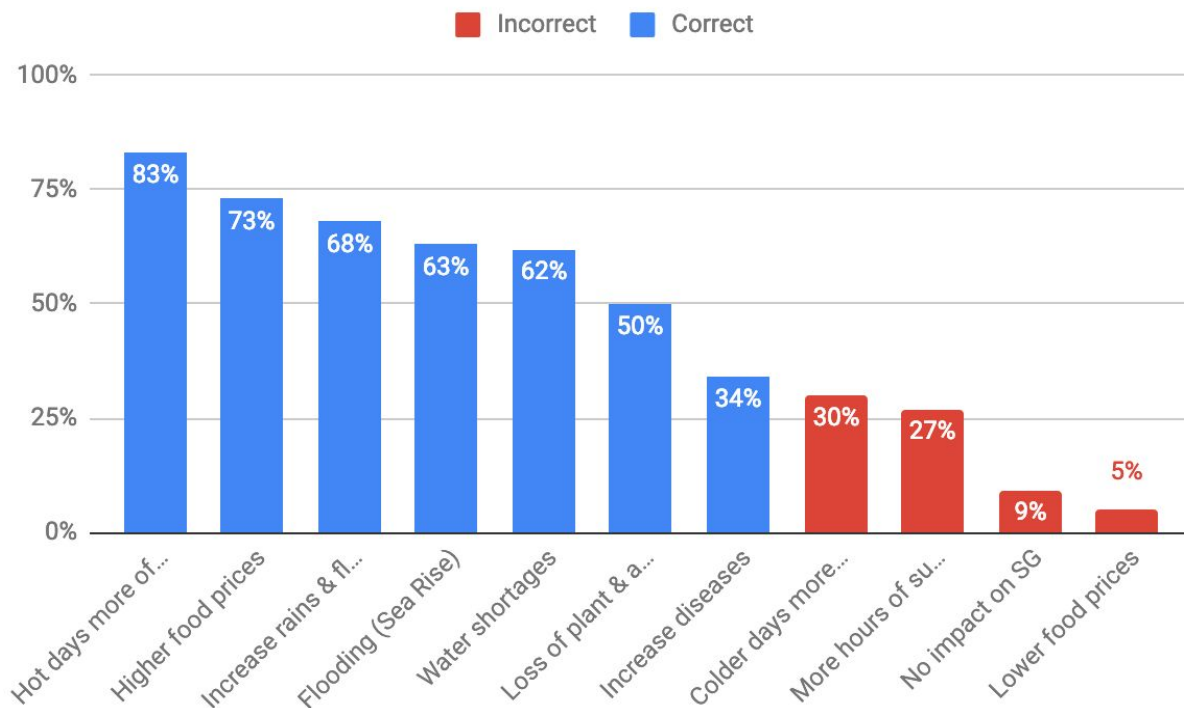
Findings

Inside are the survey findings with respect to four aspects: Singaporeans' knowledge, attitudes, motivations and actions that they are willing to take towards climate change solutions.

Knowledge

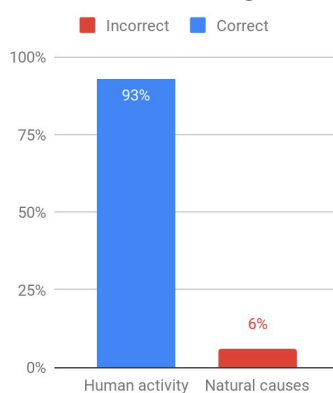
Key impacts are well-known

The top 4 impacts of climate change are well understood. However, approximately 1 in 3 people incorrectly thought that climate change would result in more frequent (and colder) cold days or more hours of sunlight.

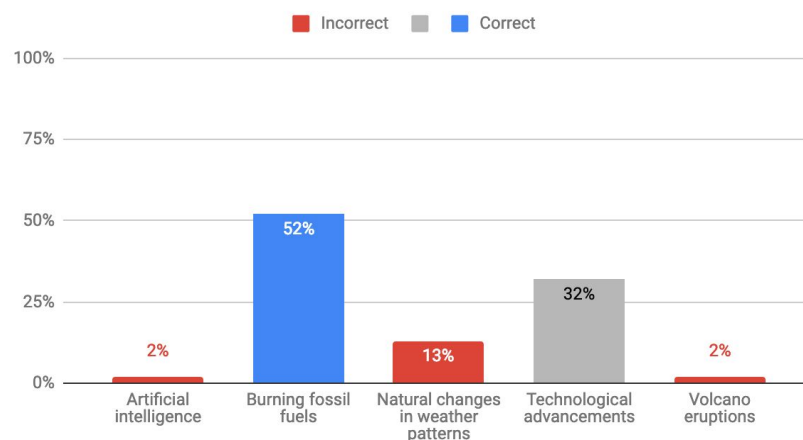


There is still confusion about the causes of climate change

What do you think is the main cause of climate change?



What is the main cause of global warming?



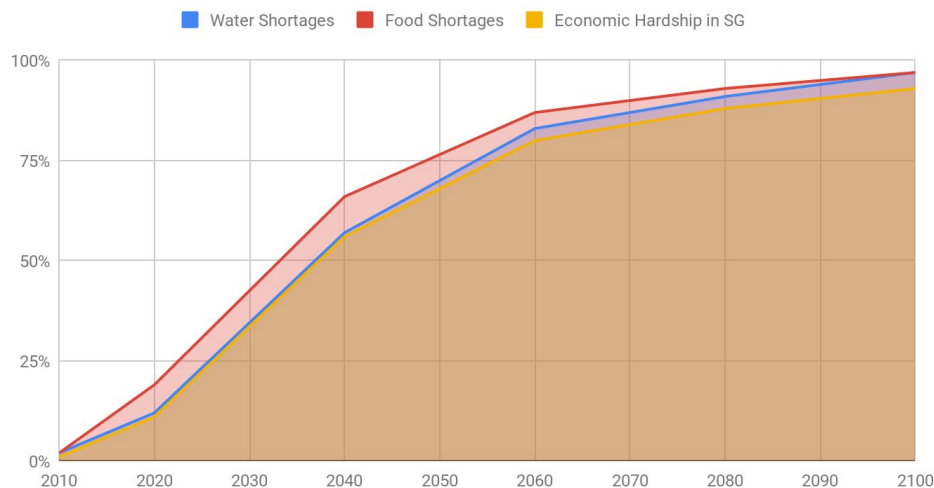
When presented with a clear choice between man-made or natural climate change, 93% of respondents chose the man-made option, but when presented with more options people become less certain of their answer, with natural causes rising from 6% to 13%.

People are aware of the seriousness of climate change.

The vast majority of Singaporeans expect to see climate change impacts on food prices, water shortages and economic hardship within their lifetime.

Half of the people expect those impacts to be within the next 20 years.

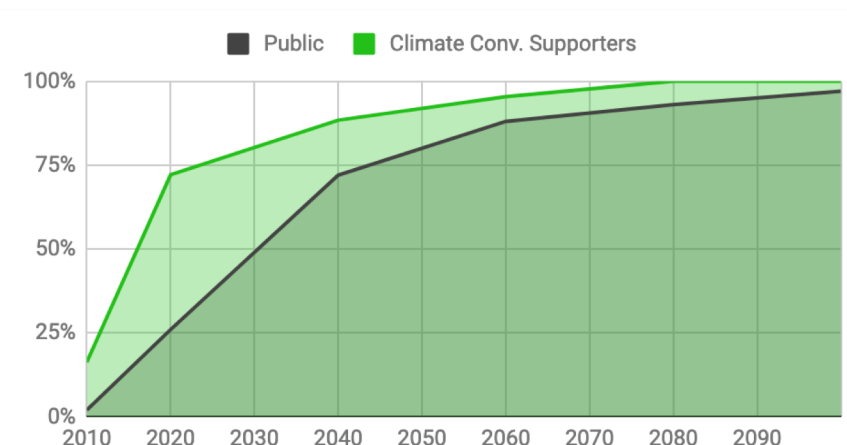
In what year will climate change cause ...



Climate Conversations supporters recognise the impacts now

The majority of those that have attended or volunteered with Climate Conversations recognise that climate change is responsible for causing extreme weather *now*.

By when will climate change worsen extreme weather?

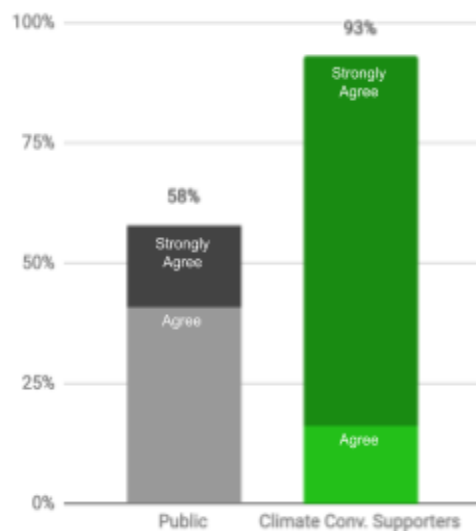


Attitudes

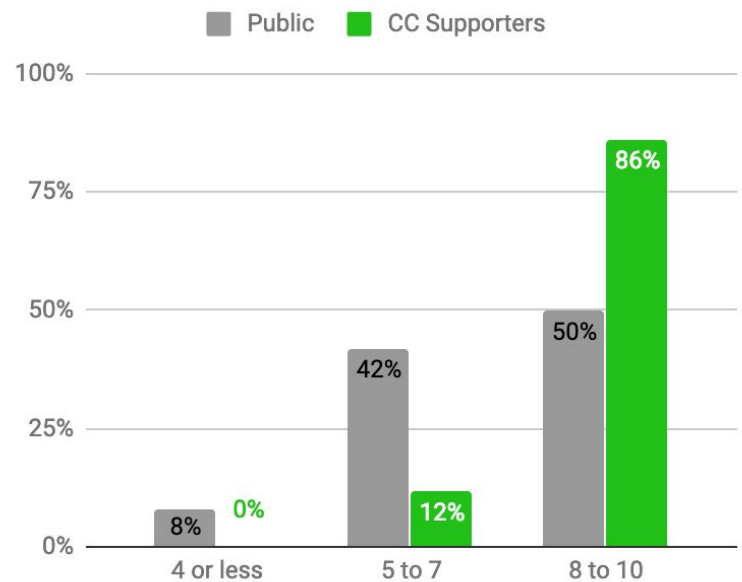
People do care...

50% of the public believe that climate change should be a very high priority for society (scoring its importance 8 or more out of 10), and 58% feel a moral duty to take climate action.

How far do you agree with this statement: "I feel a moral duty to do something about climate change"



How highly do you think we as a society should prioritise Climate Change?

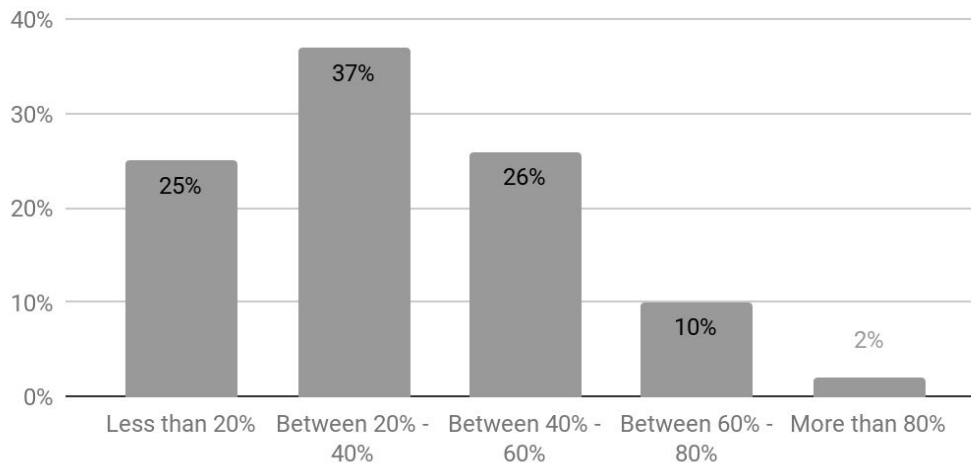


...but are overly skeptical of others

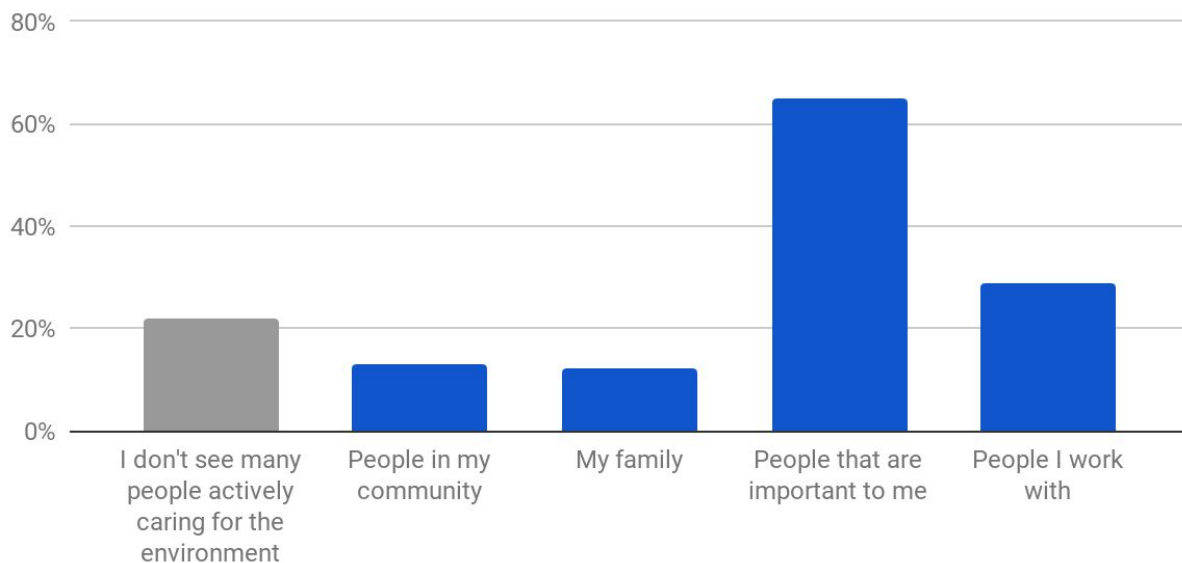
Most Singaporeans are skeptical of how much others care about climate change.

Approximately 62% of respondents feel that less than half of Singaporeans care about climate change, even though at least 2 in 3 see people around them taking actions.

What percentage of the Singaporean population do you think are taking action to care for our environment?



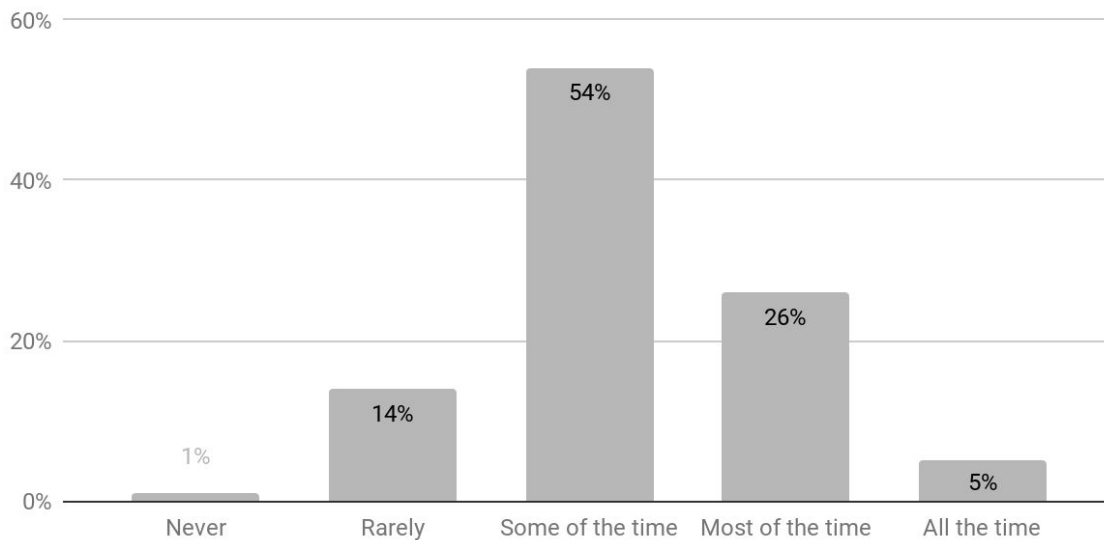
Who around you takes action to care for the environment?



Singaporeans are pragmatically optimistic on collective action

The vast majority of Singaporeans think that working together on environmental problems works sometimes

When people come together to solve environmental problems, how often do you think they make things better?

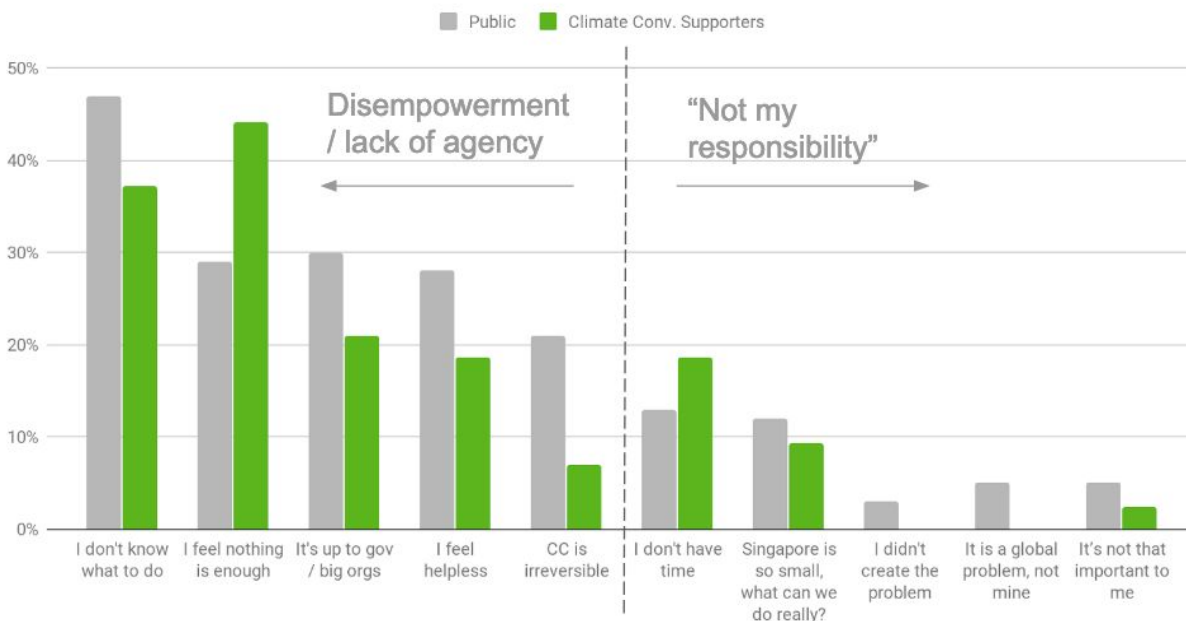


Singaporeans feel responsible but disempowered

Over 50% of the public respondents do not know what to do (when asked for the TOP 3 reasons) and at least 3 in 10 don't think their actions will make a difference.

However, people largely reject suggestions that it is not their responsibility to act or the 'small red dot' excuse.

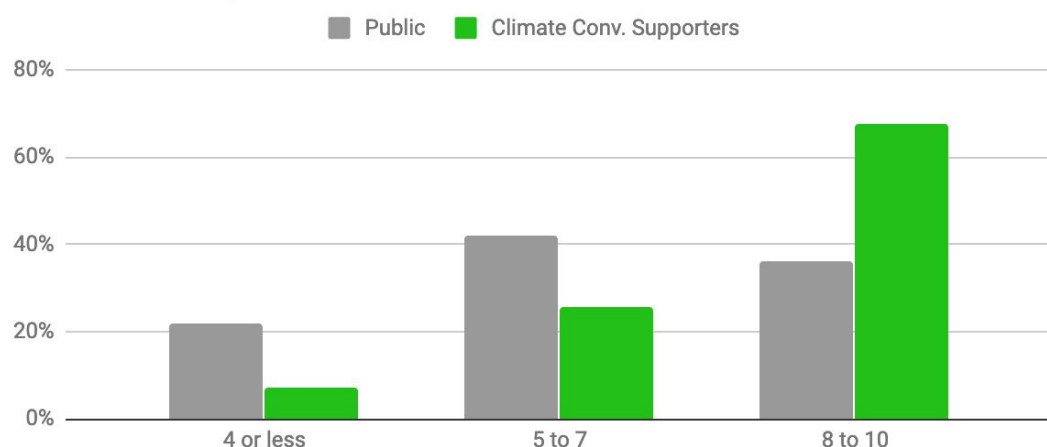
What stops you from actively taking action?



Confidence in understanding leads to empowerment

Climate Conversations supporters feel significantly more hopeful and empowered to enact meaningful change.

I feel like I can take actions that will make a difference on climate change

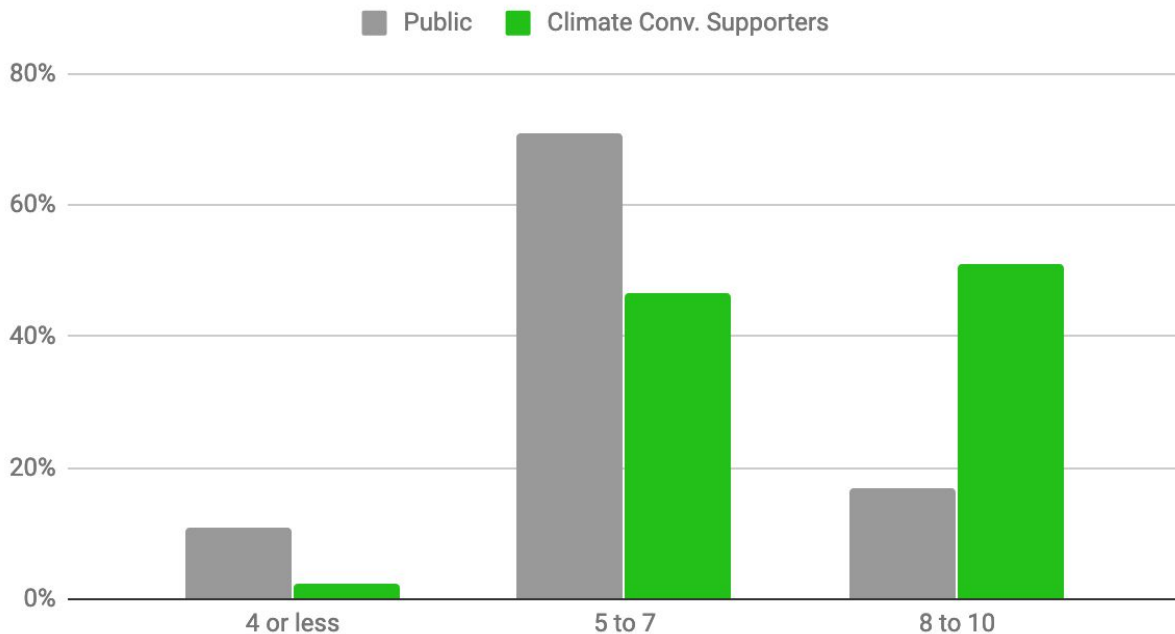


Motivation

Singaporeans are more willing to talk about climate change after having experienced a well structured conversation about it.

Given that talk is an essential part of being able to work together to take action (Roberts¹), this could explain why our supporters feel more hopeful and empowered as they are able to have conversations about action and solutions.

How likely are you to bring up climate change in conversation?



¹ Roberts, Les. Changeology, Scribe Publications: 2013. Chapter 4.

People's top motivations are intrinsic

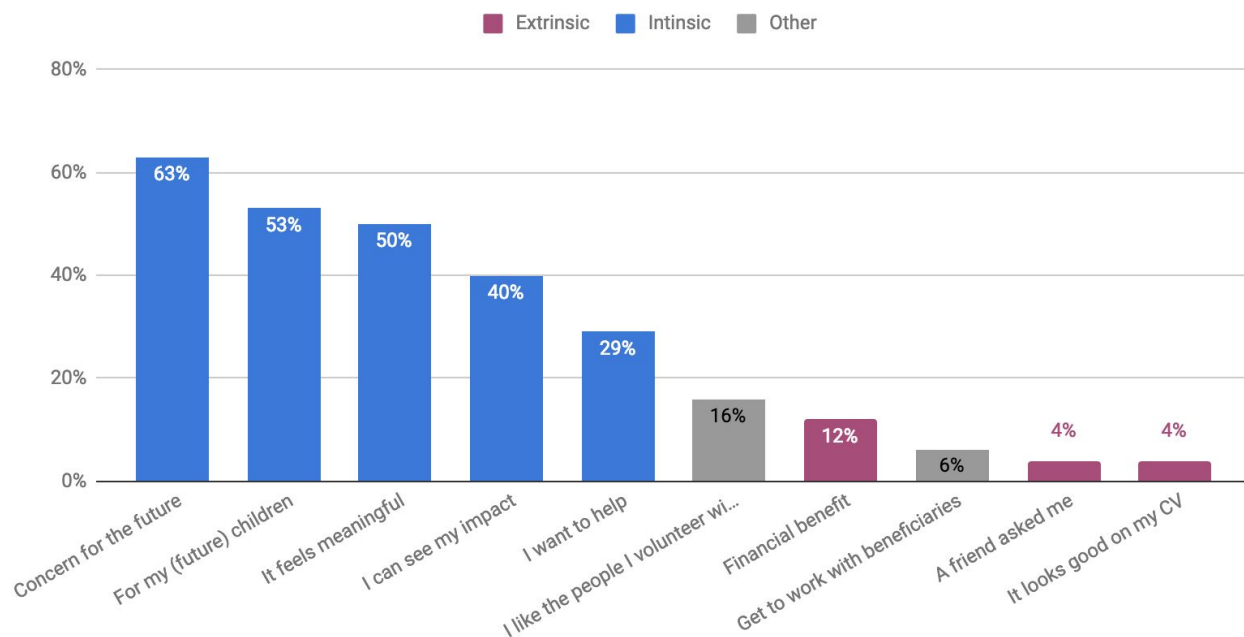
People's motivation largely stems from a concern for others and internal factors:

- I am concerned for the future
- For my (future) children
- It feels meaningful
- I can see how my work makes an impact

Only between 12% and 16% of Singaporeans take action for personal benefit (financial reward or to bolster their CV), which is in line with research findings that incentives are not a reliable motivator (Blackmore et al², Gneezy³).

This relieves environmental organisations of the burden to provide incentives and instead focus on making the impact of people's action visible.

What are the BIGGEST motivating factors for helping the environment or your community?



² Elena Blackmore, Ralph Underhill, Jamie McQuilkin and Rosie Leach, Common Cause for Nature, 2013

³ Uri Gneezy and Aldo Rustichini, A Fine is a Price. Journal of Legal Studies, Vol. 29, No. 1, January 2000.

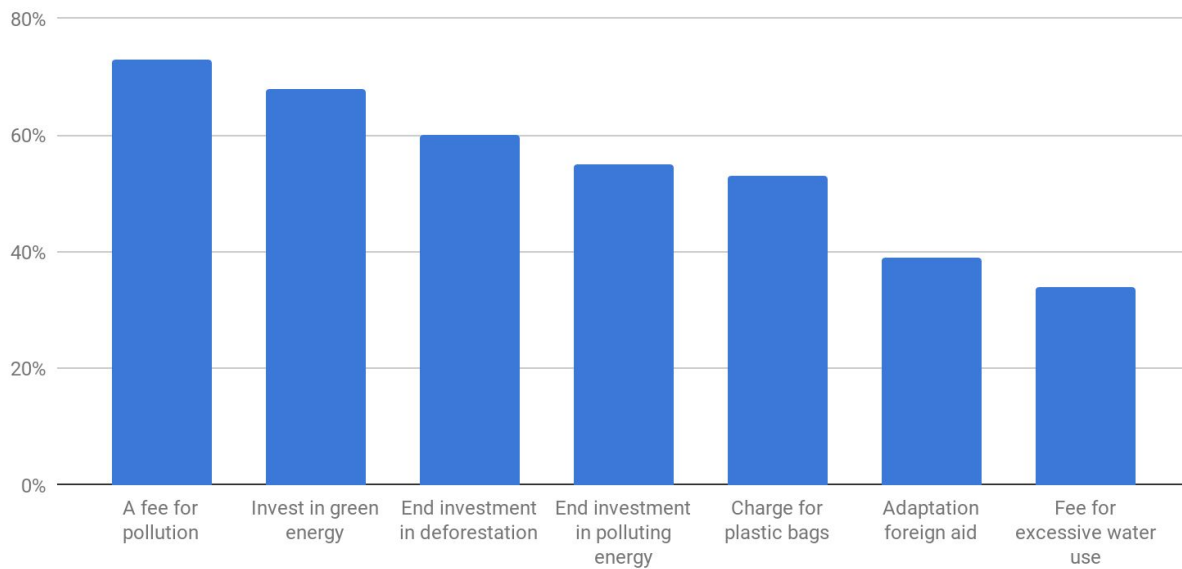
Action

Widespread support for high level climate action

The top 3 climate actions that are supported by respondents:

- Charging companies a fee for pollution
- Increasing investments in green energy
- Stopping investments and funding that cause deforestation

Which of the following actions would you support to address climate change?



Actionable Outcomes

- Speak to intrinsic motivation
- Give options that feel meaningful
- Make impact visible

Speak to intrinsic motivation

We can give people more credit for their intrinsic desire to behave responsibly towards our environment and our future.

People are skeptical of how much 'other people' care, and we can work on highlighting such examples.

Give options that feel meaningful

Though there is still some confusion on details, the level of concern and awareness of the urgency and seriousness of climate change is high.

Therefore the key to moving people to action lies in offering them action that is a credible match for the level of urgency and seriousness they see.

Make impact visible

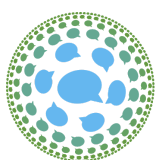
More can be done to make the value and impact of the environmental action that can be taken visible to the public, such as highlighting successful examples of Singaporeans working together for the environment.

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