

Expatriate Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

Filipino expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

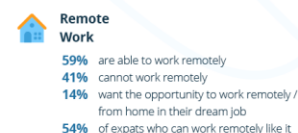
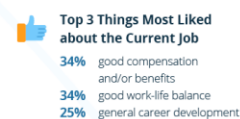
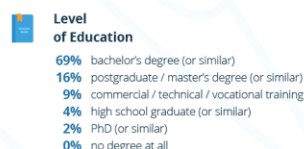
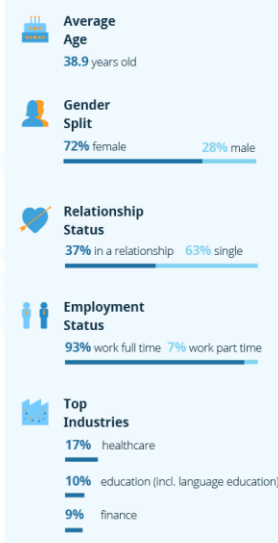
- Filipinos working abroad are quite atypical compared to the average working expat in many ways, including age and gender ratio.
- The most common destinations for Filipinos working abroad are the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.
- Expats from the Philippines appreciate the good compensation, a good work-life balance, and general career development about their current job.

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do Filipinos move abroad? According to the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 61% of Filipinos working abroad name their career as the most important reason for relocating to another country. Globally, just 47% of working expats moved abroad for job-related reasons. Most of these Filipino expats found a job on their own (28%) or were recruited internationally (25%). Just 7% were sent abroad by their employer, and only 1% moved abroad to start their own business. Aside from work-related reasons, an above-average share of Filipinos working abroad (10%) simply moved abroad for financial reasons (vs. 2% globally).

The key focus of this year's *Expatriate Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

Filipino Expats

The Future of Working Abroad



* 28% found a job on their own, 25% were recruited internationally, 7% were sent by their employer, 1% to start their own business
** Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

The Typical Filipino Expat Working Abroad Is Actually Atypical

With an average age of 38.9 years, they are significantly younger than the average working expat (43.1 years old). While globally, the gender ratio among working expats is split more or less evenly (53% male and 46% female), Filipinos have a much higher share of women (72%) than men (28%). Additionally, a higher-than-average share (93%) works full time (vs. 82% globally), and only 7% work part time, less than half the global average of 18%.

Continuing the trend of non-typical survey results, many Filipino expats work in the field of healthcare (17%), almost triple the global average for working expats (6%). This staggering figure is followed by 10% working in education and 9% working in finance, which is, however, fairly close to the global average (12% and 8%, respectively).

Mid-Level Degrees, Middle Management Positions

When it comes to their level of education, the *Expat Insider* survey shows that Filipino expats tend to hold mid-level degrees. In fact, 69% of Filipinos working abroad have a bachelor's degree (or similar), which is more than double the global average of 33%. On the other hand, the share of working Filipino expats with a postgraduate degree / master's degree (16%) is only about one-third of the global average (47%). Similarly, only 2% have a PhD, compared to 8% globally.

This tendency towards mid-level degrees seems to also be reflected in their current employment situation. The biggest share (29%) works in lower or middle management, which is significantly higher than the global average (17%). While 26% have a senior / specialist position (vs. 30% globally), a much lower-than-average share (6%) work as top managers or executives (vs. 13% globally). Lastly, just 3% are self-employed / freelancers, compared to 11% of working expats globally.

Filipinos Often Work in Destinations with a Low Work-Life Balance

Working Filipinos frequently relocate to the Middle East, which is another fact that distinguishes them from the average *Expat Insider* respondent. In fact, their most common destination is the UAE, with 20% living and working there (vs. 4% globally). This destination is followed by Saudi Arabia (8% vs. 2% globally) and Qatar (6% vs. 2% globally).

According to expats living in these countries, none of them perform well in terms of working hours and work-life balance. Expats from the Philippines do not seem to be too bothered, though: around two-thirds are satisfied with their work-life balance (65% vs. 68% globally) and working hours (67% vs. 70% globally). These figures are barely lower than the worldwide average even though Filipino expats also work longer hours than the average expat: the average working hours among all Filipino expats amount to 43.1 hours a week, compared to 39.9 hours globally.

What Filipinos Working Abroad Like about Their Current Job

When Filipino expats are asked what they like best about their current job, the two aspects they mention most frequently are a good compensation and / or good benefits, as well as a good work-life balance (34% each). Overall, more than seven in ten Filipinos working abroad (71%) have a gross yearly income of 50,000 USD or less (vs. 44% globally). Only 11% earn more than 100,000 USD per year (vs. 23% globally). Another 25% cite their general career development as something they particularly appreciate. In fact, 47% are satisfied with the local career opportunities.

Working Remotely Is Uncommon for Filipino Expats

Fewer than three in five Filipinos working abroad (59%) are able to work remotely, which is 19 percentage points below the global average (78%): among them, 17% are able to work remotely but usually prefer *not to* (vs. 16% globally). In fact, just 16% of those who benefit from remote-work policies work remotely for 15 days per month or more (vs. 18% globally) and 23% work fully remote (vs. 39% globally). On the other hand, 43% work remotely for up to five days a month (vs. 25% globally).

Filipino expats do not seem to mind that they cannot work remotely more frequently: out of those who are able to work remotely, just 54% actually like doing so (vs. 65% globally). However, only 7% actively *dislike* it (vs. 14% globally) — 39% are simply neutral when it comes to remote work (vs. 21% globally).

Lastly, about one-quarter (26%) also state that they cannot work remotely due to the nature of their job, compared to 16% globally, who say so. This is most likely related to the fact that healthcare and education are the most common fields of work for Filipinos working abroad.

What Filipino Expats Working Abroad Wish For

When Filipino expats are asked to think about their future dream job, a good compensation and/or benefits (65%), as well as a good work-life balance (60%), are factors that remain highly relevant for them. About one in three (27%) also consider flexible working hours to be quite important when imagining their dream job.

Interestingly, creative/interesting tasks, which constitute the third-most frequently mentioned aspect globally (29%), do not seem to be so relevant to working expats from the Philippines. Just 12% consider this factor important. The opportunity to work remotely is also a factor they do not seem to consider necessary for their dream job: just 14% of Filipinos working abroad find it important, compared to 22% of expats globally.

"Filipino expats look for jobs that offer them a good compensation and a decent work-life balance," says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. "While more modern approaches to today's working life, such as remote work and personal fulfillment through creative tasks, are important to many working expats today, this is not the case for those from the Philippines. This might be related to the relatively low importance of these aspects in their home country."

In fact, 65% of Filipinos working abroad say that factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment are more important in the business culture of their host country than at home in the Philippines. These values are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age. On a global scale, just 49% of expats say the same about their home country as compared to their host country.

According to expats, the Philippines only comes 40th out of 55 countries when they are asked to rate how much of a role the concept of New Work plays in the local business culture. Just 44% of expats in the Philippines say that this concept is important there, compared to 58% of expats globally. The top 3 destinations where Filipino expats live and work all rank considerably better than that: Qatar (18th) and Saudi Arabia (19th) make it into the top 20, and the UAE even ranks 2nd out of 55 destinations worldwide.

Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

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|----|----------------|----|--------------|----|-------------|
| 1 | USA | 20 | Greece | 39 | Brazil |
| 2 | UAE | 21 | Czechia | 40 | Philippines |
| 3 | Finland | 22 | Poland | 41 | Indonesia |
| 4 | Estonia | 23 | Switzerland | 42 | Chile |
| 5 | Netherlands | 24 | Luxembourg | 43 | Romania |
| 6 | Bahrain | 25 | Malta | 44 | Thailand |
| 7 | Australia | 26 | Kenya | 45 | Cyprus |
| 8 | Canada | 27 | Taiwan | 46 | China |
| 9 | New Zealand | 28 | Portugal | 47 | France |
| 10 | Sweden | 29 | Hungary | 48 | Spain |
| 11 | Ireland | 30 | Colombia | 49 | Italy |
| 12 | Norway | 31 | Russia | 50 | Kuwait |
| 13 | Denmark | 32 | South Africa | 51 | India |
| 14 | Singapore | 33 | Mexico | 52 | Turkey |
| 15 | United Kingdom | 34 | Austria | 53 | South Korea |
| 16 | Malaysia | 35 | Germany | 54 | Egypt |
| 17 | Oman | 36 | Vietnam | 55 | Japan |
| 18 | Qatar | 37 | Hong Kong | | |
| 19 | Saudi Arabia | 38 | Belgium | | |

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expat Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expat Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report “The Future of Working Abroad” uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expat Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](#) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page, in our company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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