REMOTIFY WHITE PAPER · 2026

Enabling Freedom:

The State of Remote Work in the Philippines

A study by Remotify

Remotify

Supported by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) through the Startup Grant Fund (SGF). Survey distribution partner: Filipina Homebased Moms (FHMoms) community.

N = 1,642 RESPONDENTS

FIELDWORK MARCH TO APRIL 2026

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Enabling Freedom: The State of Remote Work in the Philippines

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SUPPORTED BY	**Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)** Startup Grant Fund (SGF)
SURVEY DISTRIBUTION PARTNER	**Filipina Homebased Moms (FHMoms)** the largest and most active support and learning network for Filipino home-based professionals, freelancers, and aspiring entrepreneurs
FIELDWORK	**March to April 2026** n=1,642 purposively selected respondents, plus eight (8) one-on-one in-depth interviews
RESEARCH LIMITATIONS	Results are based on the unweighted responses of n=1,642 purposively selected respondents. As the study employed a purposive sampling design, no statistical weighting was applied. Findings reflect the characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of the achieved sample and should be interpreted within the context of the study rather than as nationally representative estimates of all Filipino remote workers.
DATA PRIVACY	Participation was voluntary, and all responses were collected, treated confidentially and analyzed in aggregated or anonymized form, in accordance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173).

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1,642

respondents surveyed

7 in 10

do not receive any employment benefits outside of their salary

77%

would like to have a local employment record

78%

are open to being employed by foreign companies through a local outsourcing services partner

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01

Executive Summary

1 Remote work continues to gain momentum–becoming a preferred employment model for many Filipinos.

Over the past five years, remote work has seen strong growth among Filipinos, with many catering to foreign employers and independent clients mainly from the United States (67%). This shift is primarily motivated by the flexibility to work from anywhere (88%), reduced commute time and transportation costs (88%), professional growth (70%), and higher earning potential (70%).

2 Beyond better financial gains, remote work is transforming quality of life.

Since transitioning to remote work, Filipino remote workers report positive impacts on their well-being including more time with family and loved ones (85%), greater flexibility in managing their work schedules (68%), and reduced stress associated with traditional work environments (66%).

3 Remote work delivers greater freedom–but often without the safety net of traditional employment.

However, 7 in 10 Filipino remote workers do not receive any employment benefits outside of their salary. This is on top of lack of consistent and predictable income (52%)— more evident among independent freelancers — and uncertain career growth or progression (43%).

4 The lack of formal employment compounds these challenges, undermining long-term financial security and limiting opportunities for economic mobility.

Lack of formal employment records results in roughly 40% experiencing difficulties in proving their income when applying for credit cards (36%), housing loans or mortgages (34%), and government benefits such as paid maternity leave and calamity loans (30%). Regardless, 9 in 10 expressed preference and intent to keep working remotely.

5 Strong demand for employment formalization highlights a market opportunity for outsourcing solutions that bridge flexibility and security.

Filipino remote workers show strong interest in formalizing their employment. Around 77% would like to have a local employment record despite working remotely, while 78% are open to being employed by foreign companies through a local outsourcing services partner.

6 Because of the insecurity of remote work, remote workers recognize that continuous upskilling is essential to staying competitive, yet many claim to lack the confidence and capabilities needed to thrive in an evolving, AI-driven workforce.

Eight in 10 remote workers claimed to have taken measures to upskill by attending webinars, workshops, or industry events (63%), enrolling in online courses and training programs (59%), and doing self-directed learning (58%). Despite these efforts, confidence in future work readiness remains moderate, with 58% of Filipino remote workers reporting they are only somewhat prepared. The most commonly cited areas for further development are AI and automation (83%), digital literacy (59%), data literacy and analytics (52%).

PART ONE

About the Research

Research methodology · Profile of respondents · Survey design and administration · Research limitations

Research Methodology

This research report integrates insights from in-depth qualitative interviews, a quantitative survey and digital sources to develop a holistic understanding of remote work in the Philippines. The qualitative interviews explored the lived experiences of misclassified remote workers, highlighting their motivations, positive experiences, and pain points. Building on these insights, the quantitative survey measured the prevalence of these attitudes and behaviors, revealing broader trends and social patterns that characterize the country's remote workforce.

The study began with a purposive survey administered to members of the FHMoms community to establish the prevalence of key attitudes, behaviors, and experiences among Filipino remote workers. This quantitative phase provided a broad understanding of the remote work landscape and identified patterns that warranted deeper exploration through the second phase of the research study comprising eight (8) one-on-one in-depth interviews with misclassified remote workers who were randomly selected from survey respondents who expressed willingness to participate. The interview sample was designed to reflect diverse perspectives, with equal representation across gender, age groups, and regions. These conversations provided rich context behind the survey findings, uncovering the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges that shape the realities of remote work in the Philippines.

PHASE ONE — QUANTITATIVE

1,642

purposively selected respondents, surveyed online through the FHMoms community, March to April 2026

PHASE TWO — QUALITATIVE

8

one-on-one in-depth interviews with misclassified remote workers, with equal representation across gender, age groups, and regions

Profile of Respondents

Among survey respondents, 6 in 10 identified as remote employees working for foreign companies, while the remaining worked independently as freelancers serving international clients. Among those employed by foreign companies, 38% held full-time positions, while 21% were employed on a part-time basis.

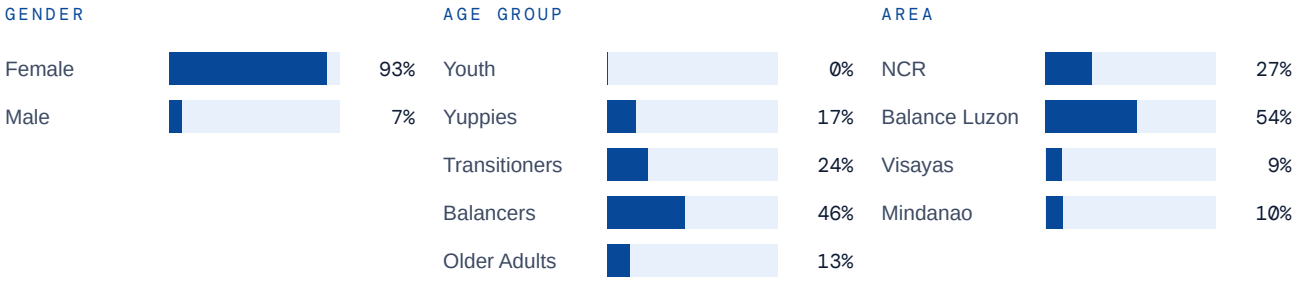
FIG 01 **Incidence of Remote Employees and Independent Freelancers**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Which of the following statements best describes your current employment status? Please select one.

The respondents are predominantly composed of women. Most are in their prime working years, aged 36 to 45, and are concentrated in Balance Luzon.

FIG 02 **Distribution by Gender, Age, and Region**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642)

Survey Design and Administration

Supported by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) through the Startup Grant Fund (SGF), this study was designed to deepen understanding of the opportunities and challenges shaping remote work in the Philippines while generating actionable insights that can inform policy and foster a more resilient and future-ready remote work ecosystem for Filipinos.

The quantitative survey was administered online through the Filipina Homebased Moms (FHMoms) community, the largest and most active support and learning network for Filipino home-based professionals, freelancers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Data collection was conducted from March to April 2026. Participation was voluntary, and all responses were collected, treated confidentially and analyzed in aggregated or anonymized form, in accordance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173).

Research Limitations

Results are based on the unweighted responses of n=1,642 purposively selected respondents. As the study employed a purposive sampling design, no statistical weighting was applied. Findings reflect the characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of the achieved sample and should be interpreted within the context of the study rather than as nationally representative estimates of all Filipino remote workers.

PART TWO

Survey Findings

Remote Work in the Philippines: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

What was once considered a distant vision for the future of work rapidly became the new reality almost overnight. Remote work accelerated at unprecedented speed and has emerged to be a defining feature of the global employment landscape, connecting talent and opportunities beyond geographical boundaries.

The way people work has undergone a profound transformation — from fixed, location-dependent employment to flexible, digitally enabled, and increasingly borderless work arrangements. This progression reflects the cumulative impact of industrialization, globalization, and advances in digital technology. The table below outlines the evolution of these work arrangements.

TABLE 01 **The Evolution of Work Arrangements**

ERA	PRIMARY SETTING	STANDARD WORK ARRANGEMENT	KEY DRIVING FORCES
Pre-Industrial	Farms and cottage homes	Sunrise to sunset, highly seasonal task-oriented labor	Agricultural cycles
Industrial Revolution	Factories and plants	Rigid 10-16 hour shifts, 6 days a week, physical attendance	Steam engine, manufacturing machinery
Mid-20th Century	Corporate offices	Structured 9-to-5, 40-hour workweeks, lifetime employment	Post-war economic boom, labor unions
Late 20th Century	Early digital offices	Cubicles, localized computing, emergence of early telecommuting	Mainframe computers, early internet
Early 21st Century	Distributed offices	Open plans, hot-desking, early freelance/gig economy platforms	Laptops, smartphones, cloud computing
2020s and beyond	Hybrid environments	Hybrid, remote, asynchronous schedules, and 4-day workweeks	Global pandemic, AI automation, collaboration software

Recent societal shifts and rapid technological advancements have fundamentally reshaped perceptions of work. The growing popularity of freelancing, gig work, and other non-traditional career paths reflects an increasing preference for flexibility, autonomy, and work-life integration over the rigidity of conventional 9-to-5 employment. Remote work is one of the most prominent manifestations of flexible working arrangements, reflecting a broader shift toward employment models that provide employees with greater autonomy over when, where, and how work is performed while maintaining accountability for their roles and responsibilities. In response to these evolving workforce expectations, organizations have increasingly embraced this arrangement, recognizing their potential to improve productivity, employee well-being, talent attraction, and organizational resilience.

Although these flexible work arrangements have existed for decades, their adoption remained gradual until recent years. Despite digital technology steadily evolving over the last decade and laying the groundwork for a borderless workplace, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that served as the defining catalyst, accelerating these arrangements from optional workplace policies to mainstream business practice. In doing so, it solidified major structural changes in the work environment, fundamentally reshaping how organizations access talent, build teams, and create value. At

present, flexible working arrangements can be classified into five categories: (1) flexitime and time-saving account arrangements, (2) workload flexibility (e.g., part-time work, job sharing, contingent work), (3) flexibility of place (e.g., work-from-home, teleworking, and virtual work), (4) alternative work schedules (e.g., staggered working hours and compressed workweeks), and (5) other time-based flexibility mechanisms.

To date, an estimated 330 million people worldwide are now engaged in remote or hybrid work arrangements, demonstrating the growing integration of flexible work models across sectors and geographic regions. About 73 million digital jobs can be done remotely and these are projected to grow 25% by 2030.

330 million

people worldwide are now engaged in remote or hybrid work arrangements

73 million

digital jobs can be done remotely

25%

projected to grow by 2030

In Asia, traditional urban centers and emerging destinations alike have evolved into thriving remote work hubs and digital nomad hotspots. Their appeal is driven by a combination of affordable living costs, reliable digital infrastructure, vibrant coworking ecosystems, favorable visa policies, and strong quality of life. Increasingly, governments across the region are introducing digital nomad and long-stay visa programs to attract globally mobile professionals, recognizing remote workers as a source of economic activity and innovation.

REMOTE WORK HUBS ACROSS ASIA

Bali, Indonesia:	Long regarded as one of the world's premier digital nomad destinations, Bali continues to attract remote professionals with its established coworking ecosystem in Canggu and Ubud, international community, tropical lifestyle, and improving digital infrastructure. Indonesia has further strengthened its appeal through the E33G Remote Worker Visa, allowing eligible foreign remote workers to reside in the country for up to one year, with the possibility of renewal.
Chiang Mai, Thailand:	Often considered one of the pioneers of the digital nomad movement, Chiang Mai remains a preferred base because of its affordability, dependable internet connectivity, mature coworking ecosystem, and high quality of life. Thailand has also expanded pathways for remote professionals through long-stay and digital nomad-oriented visa programs, reinforcing its position as one of Asia's leading remote work destinations.
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.	Kuala Lumpur has emerged as an increasingly attractive destination for remote professionals seeking modern infrastructure, multicultural living, strong English proficiency, and comparatively affordable living costs. Malaysia's DE Rantau Nomad Pass and continued investments in digital infrastructure have positioned the country as a competitive destination for globally mobile talent.
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.	Supported by a rapidly growing technology sector, affordable cost of living, and expanding coworking ecosystem, Ho Chi Minh City has become one of Southeast Asia's fastest-rising destinations for remote workers, particularly those in technology, startups, and digital services.

Singapore. Although significantly more expensive than its regional counterparts, Singapore remains an attractive base for executives, entrepreneurs, and highly skilled professionals because of its world-class infrastructure, exceptional global connectivity, robust legal and regulatory environment, and mature innovation ecosystem. For multinational companies, Singapore also serves as a strategic regional headquarters from which distributed teams across Asia-Pacific can be managed.

The emergence of these remote work hubs reflects a broader global shift toward borderless employment, and the Philippines makes for the perfect, thriving remote work hub. A key demographic characteristic of the Philippine working population is its relatively young age profile, with a median age of 26 years—lower than that of the global average (~30 years old) and its Southeast Asian neighbors. This demographic profile creates a large and increasingly digitally oriented labor pool, making the country structurally well positioned to participate in remote and digitally mediated work.

TABLE 02 **Median Age in Southeast Asia**

	2024	2025
Global Average	31.6	31.9
Philippines[1]	**26.8**	**27.2**
Indonesia	31.1	31.4
Malaysia	31.5	31.9
Vietnam	33.9	34.4
Singapore[2]	36.8	37.4
Thailand	41.1	41.5

Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024 revision (medium variant); Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024 Census of Population; Singapore Population in Brief 2025; Foxmont Philippine Venture Capital Report (2024, 2025)
[1] Official 2024 Census of Population (PSA): median age of the household population was 27.7 years in 2024, up from 25.3 in 2020 and 24.3 in 2015. Census and UN estimates are different statistical series.
[2] UN estimate covers the total population, including non-residents. Singapore's official resident population median age was 42.8 years in June 2024 and 43.2 years in June 2025 (Population in Brief 2025).

In addition, the same report found that Gen Z accounted for 19.9% of the country's workforce in 2023, nearly doubling from 10% in 2022. This generation, alongside Millenials, are particularly active in technology, media, gaming, and outsourcing–sectors in which work is increasingly mediated by digital technologies rather than physical location.

Furthermore, the country maintains its position as a global leader in digital and social media engagement. In 2026, the Philippines stood at an 83.8% internet penetration rate, counting 97.5 million active internet users, and nearly 91 million social media users, with Filipinos spending an average of nearly 9 hours online daily—the highest rate globally. Digital financial services see monthly use by 88.5% of the population, while 50% report shopping online weekly.

83.8%
internet penetration rate

97.5 million
active internet users

91 million
social media users

9 hours
online daily—the highest rate globally

This, together with the demographic structure, therefore creates a favorable labor-market condition for remote work, while technological infrastructure, skills, employer practices, and worker preferences determine the extent to which that potential is realized.

Over the last two decades, the Philippines has also been quietly reshaping the foundations of its economy. Each year, the country has inched forward, increasing the amount of value created per worker by 3-4%. Its productivity levels have roughly doubled since the early 1990s, although there remains significant headroom to deliver sharp, investment-led acceleration. Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM) services sit at the center of this opportunity. The industry is considered a large, fast-growing sector that still operates well below their productivity potential. Foxmont suggests that if this industry moves up the value chain through technology adoption, workflow redesign, and higher value services, the impact on output per worker would be substantial.

Clearly, the future of remote work will not be defined solely by where people choose to work, but also by where organizations choose to source talent. In this regard, the Philippines possesses a distinct competitive advantage—an English-proficient, digitally capable, and service oriented workforce supported by decades of experience in global outsourcing and business process management.

Rather than exporting labor physically, the country now increasingly exports talent digitally. A software engineer in Davao can now work for a technology company in California. A recruiter in Iloilo can support hiring operations for a startup in London. A finance professional in Bacolod can manage accounts for a company headquartered in Sydney. Economic value crosses borders while workers remain rooted within their local communities. This transformation did not emerge in isolation. Rather, it represents the latest chapter in the Philippines' decades-long evolution as a global services economy.

For more than thirty years, the Philippines has established itself as one of the world's leading destinations for IT-BPM services, What began as a modest data-entry and back-office industry in the early 1990s has evolved into a sophisticated ecosystem spanning customer experience management, finance and accounting, healthcare information management, legal services, software development, engineering, creative services, and increasingly knowledge-intensive digital work. According to the OECD, the country's entry into offshore outsourcing began in the 1980s through low-skill data processing before expanding into IT and software services during the 1990s. Liberalization of the telecommunications sector and the establishment of economic zones through the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) were pivotal reforms that enabled the industry's rapid growth.

Over the succeeding three decades, the IT-BPM industry became one of the Philippines' most significant economic success stories. As of November 2025, the sector generated US$33.8 billion in export revenue and employed approximately 1.64 million Filipinos, making it one of the country's largest export industries and a major source of high-quality formal employment. Beyond its direct economic contribution, the industry has diversified from traditional contact center operations into higher-value functions including global capability centers (GCCs), software development, healthcare information management, engineering, and data analytics. This year, the IT-BPM industry targets a 6% revenue growth, scaling toward 1.95 million digital workforce roles.

US$33.8 billion
in export revenue

1.64 million
Filipinos employed

6%
revenue growth target

1.95 million
digital workforce roles

This evolution reflects the industry’s deliberate movement up the value chain in response to changing global demand. Yet the significance of the IT-BPM industry extends beyond employment and export earnings. Its greatest contribution may be the institutional foundation it created for today’s remote work economy.

For more than three decades, multinational corporations have invested in developing Filipino professionals who are accustomed to serving international markets, collaborating across timezones, communicating in English, complying with global quality standards, and operating within multinational corporate environments. This sustained exposure has produced a workforce that possesses not only technical expertise but also the cross-cultural competencies, digital fluency, and professional practices required for distributed work. In effect, the BPO industry functioned as a large-scale training ground for globally employable talent long before “remote work” became a mainstream employment model. An analysis of the Philippine productivity, skill intensity and employment across service sectors reveal that the largest, high-volume segments remain concentrated in contact centers, routine business processes, and healthcare transcriptions. Revenue per employee has improved over the past decade with a ~2.2% CAGR to reach roughly US$21,000 per worker, demonstrating that productivity can move even within more traditional BPO models.

Meanwhile, IT and Software emerges to be a higher-value service, combining higher skill requirements with faster productivity growth. This segment has delivered a strong revenue growth with ~8.4% CAGR over the past decade, while also improving revenue per employee.

As organizations around the world rapidly adopted remote and hybrid work arrangements, firms became increasingly comfortable managing distributed teams across national borders. Advances in cloud computing, collaboration platforms, cybersecurity, and digital workflow management demonstrated that many knowledge-intensive functions could be performed effectively without physical co-location. Consequently, global companies began moving beyond outsourcing entire business functions toward hiring individual professionals directly into globally distributed teams.

For the Philippines, this represented more than a technological shift—it marked the emergence of a new model of global employment. Rather than working exclusively within vendor-managed outsourcing arrangements, Filipino professionals increasingly found opportunities to work directly for overseas companies while remaining based in their local communities. The country's longstanding strengths—English proficiency, service orientation, professional adaptability, and a mature digital services workforce—became equally valuable in this new model of borderless employment.

Importantly, this transition should not be interpreted as the decline of the IT-BPM industry. Instead, it reflects the continued evolution of the country's comparative advantage. The same capabilities that enabled the Philippines to become a global outsourcing leader now position it to compete in a broader international market for distributed talent. As noted by the OECD, the Philippine IT-BPM sector has progressively diversified into higher-value services, while industry leaders continue to emphasize upskilling and digital capability as essential to maintaining competitiveness in an AI-enabled economy. Likewise, the IMF argues that although the Philippines' service sector—and particularly the BPO industry—is highly exposed to artificial intelligence, many occupations are more likely to be transformed than displaced, reinforcing the need to move toward higher-value, AI-complementary work rather than away from global service exports altogether.

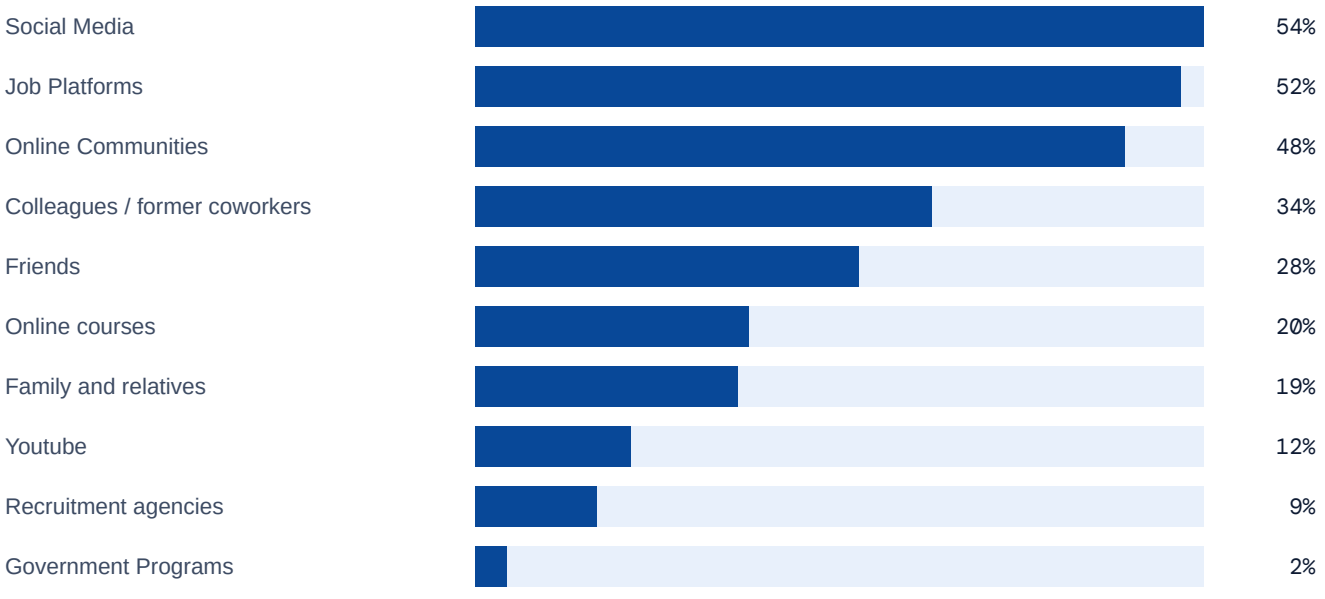
Viewed through this lens, the rise of remote work is best understood not as a departure from the Philippines' outsourcing success, but as its logical progression. The country's decades of investment in globally competitive talent have created the conditions for a new phase of international labor integration—one in which Filipino professionals are no longer simply outsourced workers supporting foreign enterprises, but integral members of globally distributed organizations. This evolution fundamentally changes not only where work is performed, but also how global companies source, employ, and manage talent across borders.

Indeed, the country has cemented itself as an emerging global leader in remote work, with ~2.3 million Filipinos actively engaged in remote work or freelancing as of 2025. In fact, the BPO industry has served as a major talent pipeline for the remote workforce.

> *"I started my career as a customer service representative at a BPO company, where I worked for five years. Every week, I commuted to Makati (one of the business districts in the Philippines) five days a week. Around 2017, long before the pandemic, a friend of mine had already transitioned to remote work. She encouraged me to explore the opportunity, often telling me about the flexibility and how much better she was earning. Eventually, she referred me to one of her former clients, and I got hired. My initial role was a chat support, I got employed full-time and now manage my own team. I've never looked back since."*
>
> LISA, 42, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, BALANCE LUZON

The growth of remote work has been fueled not only by word-of-mouth referrals but also by the widespread reach of social media, job platforms, and online communities, which have democratized access to remote job opportunities and information.

FIG 03 **Source of Awareness about Remote Work**

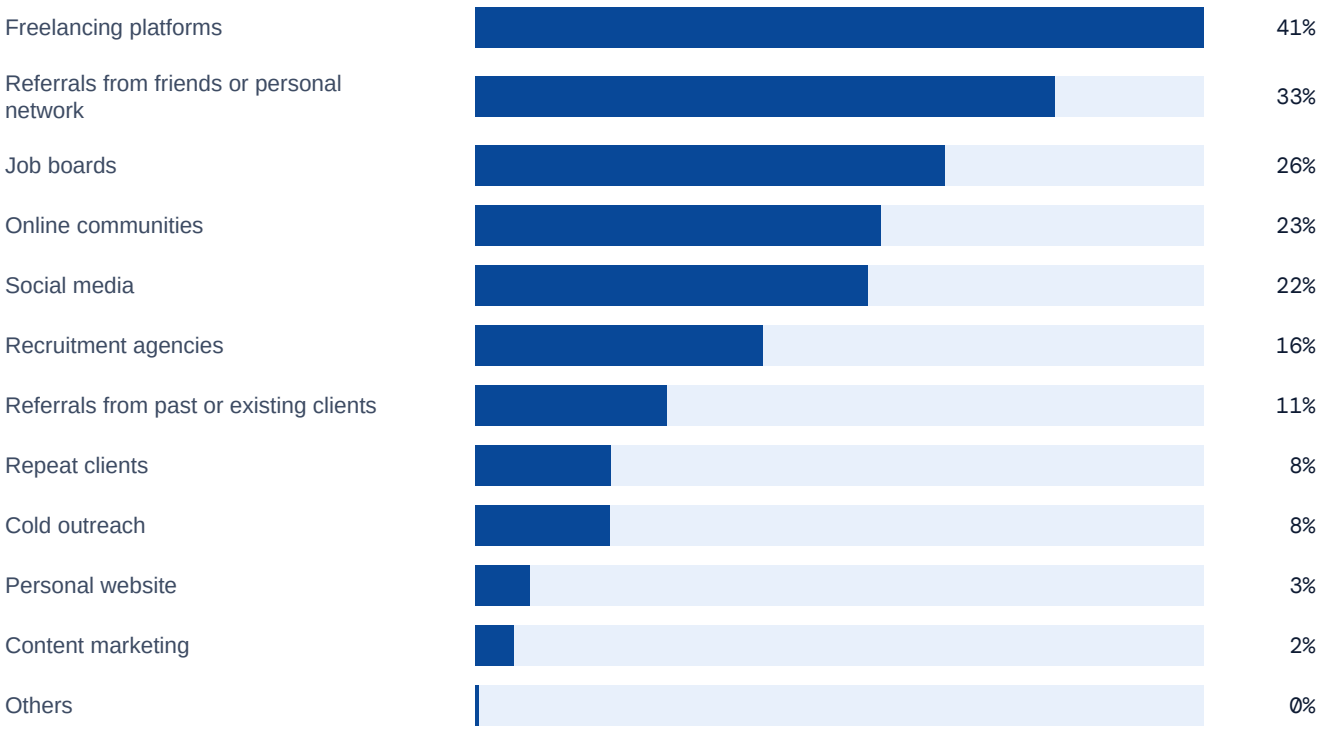


Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Through which channels did you first learn about remote work? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

As Filipino professionals increasingly engage directly with foreign employers, startups, agencies, and entrepreneurs, their access to remote work is largely driven by individual initiative rather than formal recruitment channels. Forty-one percent of remote workers discover opportunities through freelancing platforms such as Upwork and onlinejobs.ph. Meanwhile, 33% are through referrals from family, friends, or personal network. Others also search at job boards

(26%), online communities (23%), and social media (22%), highlighting the growing importance of digital platforms and professional networks in connecting with remote employers. About 16% enter the workforce through recruitment agencies.

FIG 04 **Channels Used to Find Remote Opportunities**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How do you typically find or acquire clients / remote work opportunities? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

Social media propels remote work by acting as a digital bridge that connects global talent and powers the modern creator economy. Despite opening unprecedented access to global opportunities, social media has also become one of the most informal and fragmented channels for sourcing remote work. Facebook groups, LinkedIn posts, Reddit communities, and other online platforms have significantly lowered the barriers to connecting employers with talent across borders but this accessibility has come at the expense of transparency, consistency, and worker protection.

Unlike traditional recruitment channels, social media platforms generally provide limited mechanisms for verifying employers or the legitimacy of job postings. As a result, remote workers are increasingly exposed to fraudulent recruitment schemes, fake employers, and deceptive job advertisements that exploit the demand for overseas work.

> *"I don't believe the remote work market in the Philippines is saturated—I still consistently get shortlisted when I apply for roles. However, I acknowledge that many fellow VAs face significant challenges with illegitimate clients and fake job postings online."*
>
> LISA, 42, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, BALANCE LUZON

Even when opportunities are legitimate, candidates often have little visibility into employment terms, compensation structures, contractual obligations, or the legal status of the hiring entity. This information asymmetry creates uncertainty for workers and increases the likelihood of disputes over compensation, workload, or employment expectations.

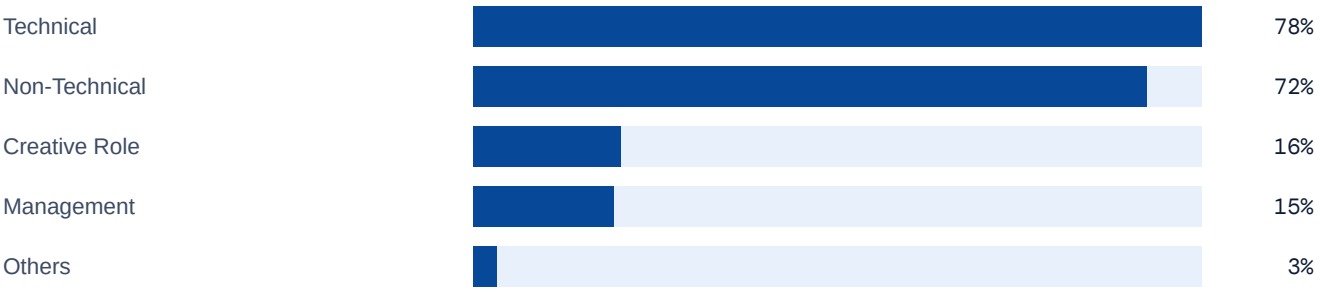
The informal nature of social media recruitment also contributes to the persistence of non-standard employment arrangements. Many remote professionals engaged through these channels work as independent contractors without formal employment contracts or local employment records.

> *"No, I don't have a contract with my client. It's just verbal arrangement. I don't think they will ghost me though. Fortunately they are still paying me right as agreed, but you'll never know these days."*
>
> TERE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, BALANCE LUZON

At the same time, the growing popularity of remote work has intensified competition within digital labor markets. Social media has effectively created a global talent marketplace where thousands of candidates can compete for a single opportunity regardless of geographic location. While this has expanded access to international employment, it has also increased pressure on workers to differentiate themselves, with many competing primarily on price rather than specialized skills or value creation. The result is an increasingly fragmented labor market characterized by inconsistent employment standards, income volatility, and limited long-term career progression.

The increasing competitiveness of the global remote labor market also raises an important question: what kinds of work are Filipino remote professionals actually performing within this evolving ecosystem? While access to remote opportunities is increasingly enabled by digital platforms and professional networks, the nature of the work itself provides a clearer picture of where Filipino talent is positioned in the global workforce. The findings show that remote workers perform a diverse mix of technical and non-technical roles, reflecting the breadth of skills that employers source from the Philippines.

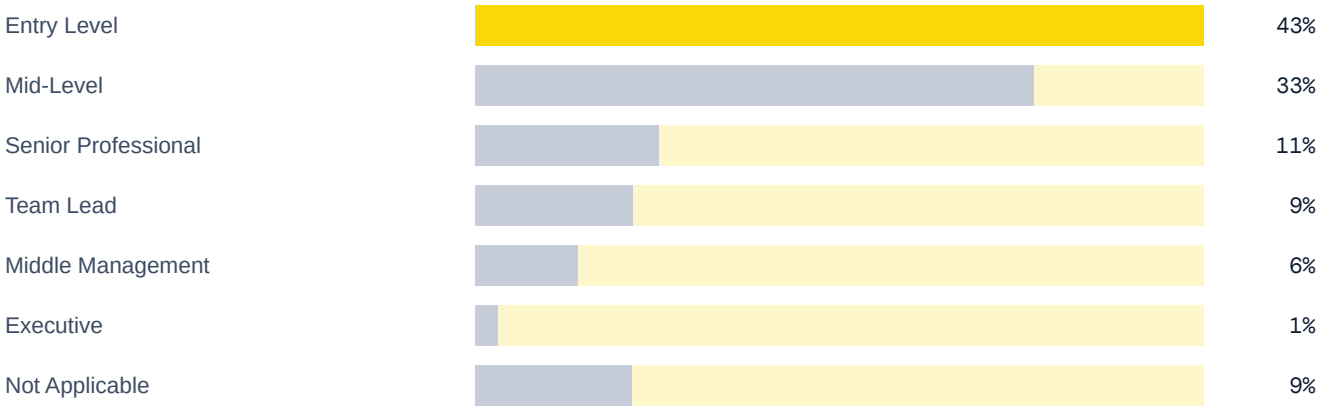
FIG 05 **Description of Current Role**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How would you describe your current role/s? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

However, despite this diversity, most workers remain in entry-level positions. Typical examples include administrative assistants, chat support representatives, virtual assistants, customer service associates, and data entry specialists.

FIG 06 **Description of Current Role by Seniority Level**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How would you classify your current role by seniority level? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

While this reinforces the country's reputation for service excellence, it also highlights the need to create pathways for Filipino professionals to move into more specialized and higher-value functions.

Conversely, for many independent freelancers, managing multiple clients is a deliberate strategy rather than a necessity. About three in ten independent freelancers work with multiple clients, reflecting a growing preference for diversified income streams. By serving several clients simultaneously, freelancers are able to maximize their earning potential while reducing the financial risks associated with depending on a single employer or project. This reflects a balanced approach to freelancing—prioritizing the stability of a consistent income source while leveraging the flexibility of remote work to take on additional projects.

> *"I currently work with three clients. One is a former client whose company eventually dissolved, but he still reaches out from time to time whenever he has tasks for me. Another is a client based in Singapore, where I spend about two to three hours a day. My main client is in the US, and that's where I spend six to eight hours daily. Having multiple clients definitely increases my income, but it's also exhausting."*
>
> TERE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, BALANCE LUZON

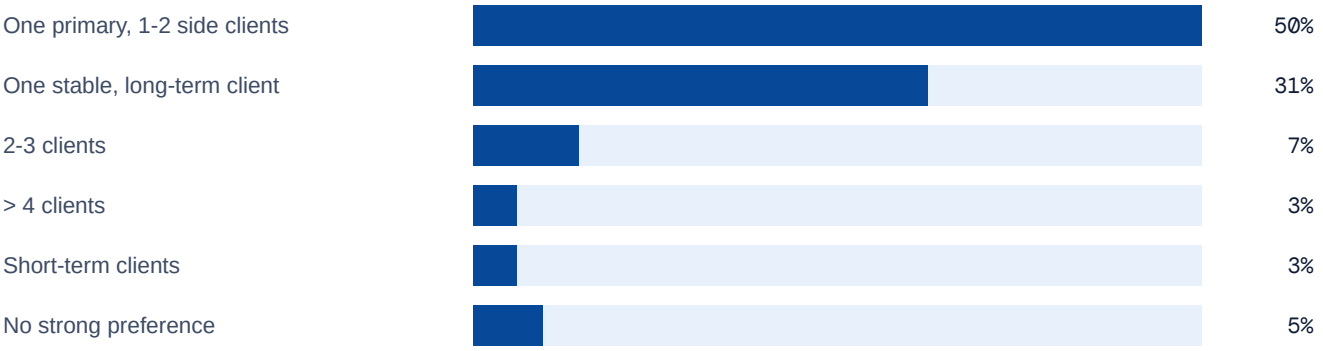
FIG 07 **Number of Current Clients**



Base: Among Independent Freelancers (n=670) Q. How many active clients do you currently have?

At the same time, the preference for one primary client underscores that flexibility does not come at the expense of stability. Rather than continuously juggling numerous short-term engagements, many freelancers intentionally anchor their careers around a long-term client while supplementing their income with one or two side projects.

FIG 08 **Client Management Preference**



Base: Among Independent Freelancers (n=670) Q. Which of the following describes your preference in terms of managing clients.

This could be attributed to how maintaining multiple clients is a strategic response to the realities of the digital economy. For many Filipino remote workers, diversifying income sources reduces dependence on a single client, mitigates the financial risks associated with project-based work, and creates opportunities to maximize earnings by capitalizing on differences in global demand and compensation. At the same time, it enables workers to broaden their professional experience, expand their networks, and develop expertise across industries and markets.

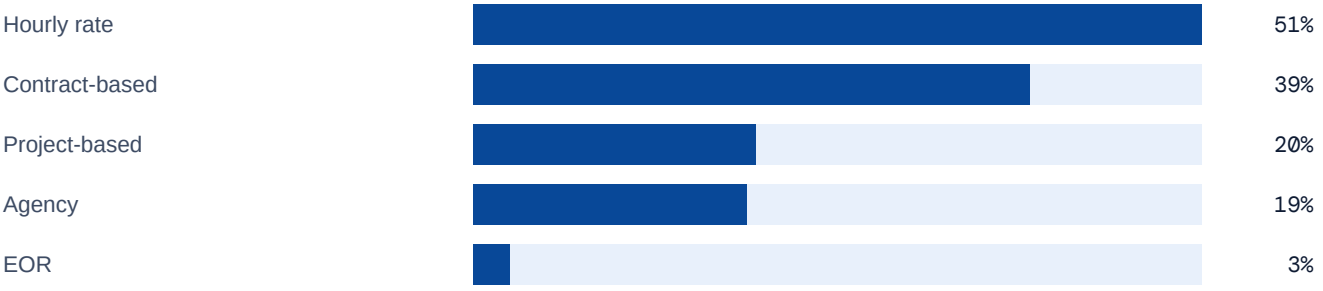
However, the flexibility afforded by multi-client work is accompanied by greater administrative and financial complexity. Remote professionals are often responsible for managing multiple contracts, invoicing and payment schedules, tax obligations, and compliance requirements across different jurisdictions. Consequently, while portfolio careers offer greater autonomy, they also place a greater burden on workers to manage the risks and responsibilities traditionally assumed by employers.

As this trend continues, there is a growing need for employment frameworks that preserve the flexibility of independent work while extending the legal protections, benefits, and administrative support associated with formal employment. Such mechanisms will be critical in ensuring that the continued growth of the remote workforce

translates into sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities for Filipino talent.

The prevalence of multi-client work among Filipino freelancers is closely tied to the nature of their employment arrangements. Survey findings reveal that the majority operate under non-permanent engagements—most commonly on an hourly basis (51%), followed by contract-based (39%) and project-based arrangements (20%). These flexible yet temporary work structures naturally encourage freelancers to maintain multiple clients as a means of securing stable and diversified income streams.

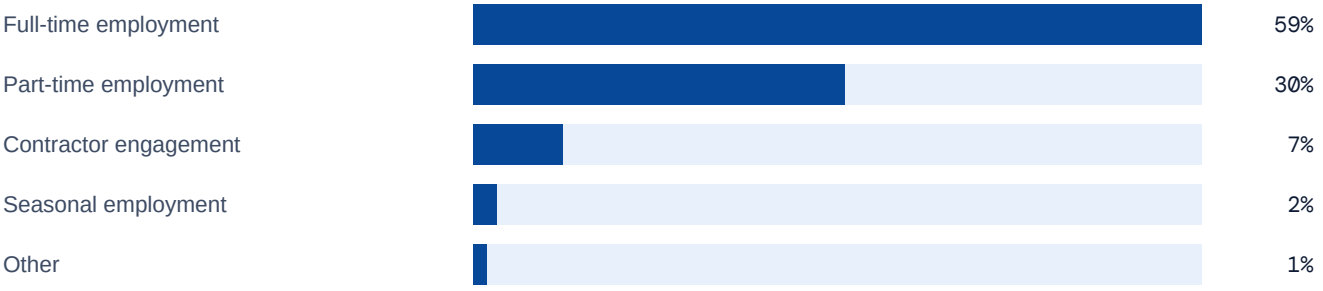
FIG 09 **Freelancing Arrangement**



Base: Among Independent Freelancers (n=670) Q. What is your employment arrangement with your current client/s?

While freelancers tend to diversify their income by working with multiple clients under non-permanent arrangements, remote employees exhibit markedly different employment preferences. Among remote employees, full-time employment remains the preferred arrangement, with 59% working full-time compared with three in ten who are employed on a part-time basis.

FIG 10 **Remote Employment Arrangement**



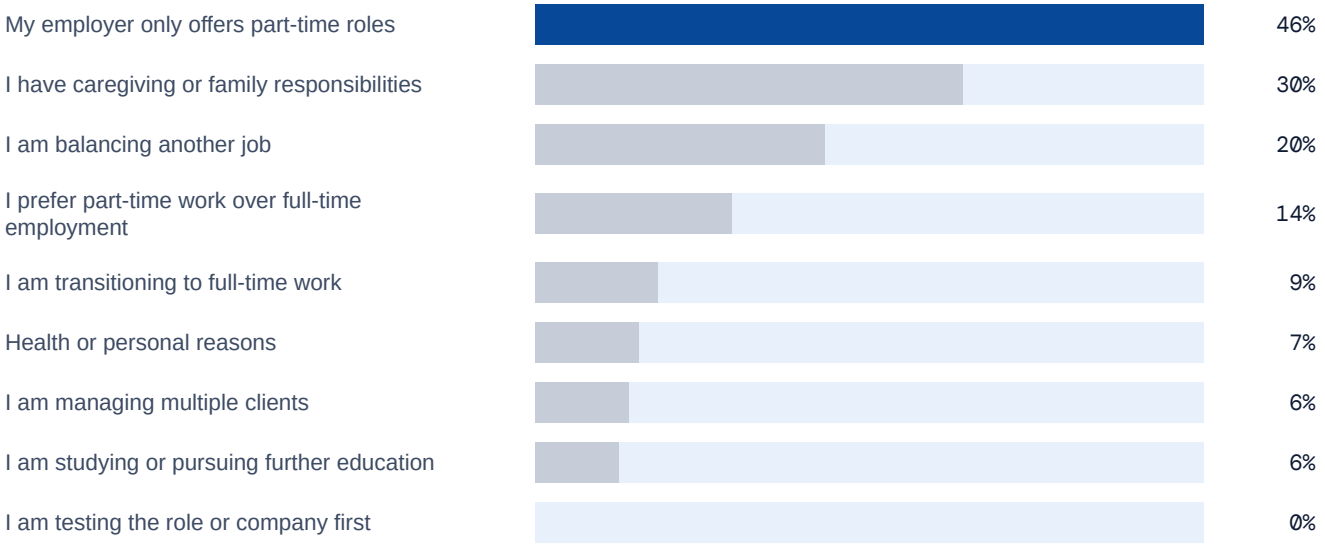
Base: Among Remote Employees (n=972) Q. What is your employment arrangement with your current employer?

Some remote employees have been fortunate enough to find employers that invest in long-term talent. Several interviewees shared how they began in part-time roles before being transitioned into full-time positions as trust and business needs grew. Lisa considers herself one of the fortunate few. After initially joining a UK-based startup on a part-time basis, she was eventually offered a full-time role with a highly competitive compensation package—including a six-figure salary in Philippine pesos, performance bonuses, paid time off, parental leave, work stipends, and company equity. Her experience demonstrates the potential of remote work when employers view Filipino talent as long-term partners rather than short-term contractors.

> *“Whenever my friends ask about my job, I find myself holding back because I genuinely feel that I was lucky with my employer. From what I see in online communities, not everyone is fortunate enough to find a stable remote job. Many are forced to juggle multiple clients just to earn a steady income. I really just got lucky.”*
>
> LISA, 42, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, BALANCE LUZON

Stories like Lisa's remain the exception rather than the norm. Qualitative interviews reveal that part-time employment is often not a matter of personal choice but a reflection of the opportunities available in the market, as many employers recruit exclusively for part-time remote roles. This is reinforced by the survey findings: nearly half (46%) of part-time remote workers reported that they accepted such arrangements because they were the only opportunities offered by employers.

FIG 11 **Reasons for Part-Time Employment Arrangement**



Base: Among Part-Time Remote Employees (n=294) Q. What are the main reasons for your part-time employment arrangement? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

Employers increasingly rely on part-time, project-based, and contract engagements to access specialized talent while maintaining operational flexibility, scaling their workforce in response to fluctuating business needs, and managing labor costs. As a result, many remote professionals enter part-time roles not because they seek fewer hours, but because such arrangements often serve as the primary gateway to international employment opportunities.

For workers, this creates a paradox. While part-time remote work offers flexibility and an entry point into the global labor market, it may also limit income predictability, career progression, and access to employment benefits traditionally associated with full-time work.

> *“I'm currently looking for a new client because my contract with my previous employer has ended. It was a six-month project that paid $10 an hour and required 20 hours of work each week. From my experience, those are the kinds of opportunities most commonly available on job boards—short-term and part-time. You take them because you need the income, and once the contract ends, you start looking for the next opportunity all over again.”*

EVA, 53, PART-TIME REMOTE EMPLOYEE, NCR

This suggests that employment arrangements in the remote work ecosystem are shaped less by worker preferences than by employer hiring practices. The experiences shared by interview participants suggest that this phenomenon is particularly relevant in cross-border remote work. International employers frequently hire Filipino talent for specific functions or time-bound business needs, resulting in a labor market where opportunities are abundant but often fragmented. In this environment, career sustainability depends not only on workers' skills and adaptability but also on the availability of employment models that can provide greater continuity, income stability, and social protection despite the inherently flexible nature of remote work. While remote work offers unparalleled flexibility, many workers continue to aspire to full-time positions that provide greater financial security, career continuity, and access to employee benefits—highlighting an opportunity for employers to strengthen talent retention by offering more stable, long-term remote employment.

> *“If given the opportunity, I’d love to work a full-time remote job, but my options feel pretty limited right now. Since I’m not sure where to look, I end up taking task-based gigs—like data entry, translation, and AI training tasks. They usually only last about two hours each and run out fast because so many people are competing for them.”*

RB, 37, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, NCR

Despite these constraints, remote work continues to offer a compelling economic proposition for many Filipinos. The income profile of Filipino remote workers suggests that remote work has become an important pathway to higher earnings compared with traditional domestic employment. More than half of respondents (52%) report earning at least ₱40,000 per month, while nearly one in three (31%) earn ₱70,000 or more—well above the average monthly wage of formal-sector workers in the Philippines. Although only a relatively small share report six-figure monthly incomes, the findings indicate that remote work substantially expands earning opportunities for many Filipinos by providing access to employers and clients beyond the local labor market.

FIG 12 **Estimated Monthly Income from Remote Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How much do you currently earn from your CURRENT role per month? Please provide an estimate in Philippine Pesos. Select one range. Note: May not sum up to 100% as some choices less than 1% are not shown.

These findings align with international evidence showing that remote work enables workers in emerging economies to participate in global labor markets where compensation is often decoupled from local wage structures. The International Labour Organization notes that digital labor platforms and remote work create opportunities for workers to access clients and employment beyond their domestic markets, often resulting in higher earnings than comparable local jobs, although income varies considerably depending on skills, experience, occupation, and bargaining power.

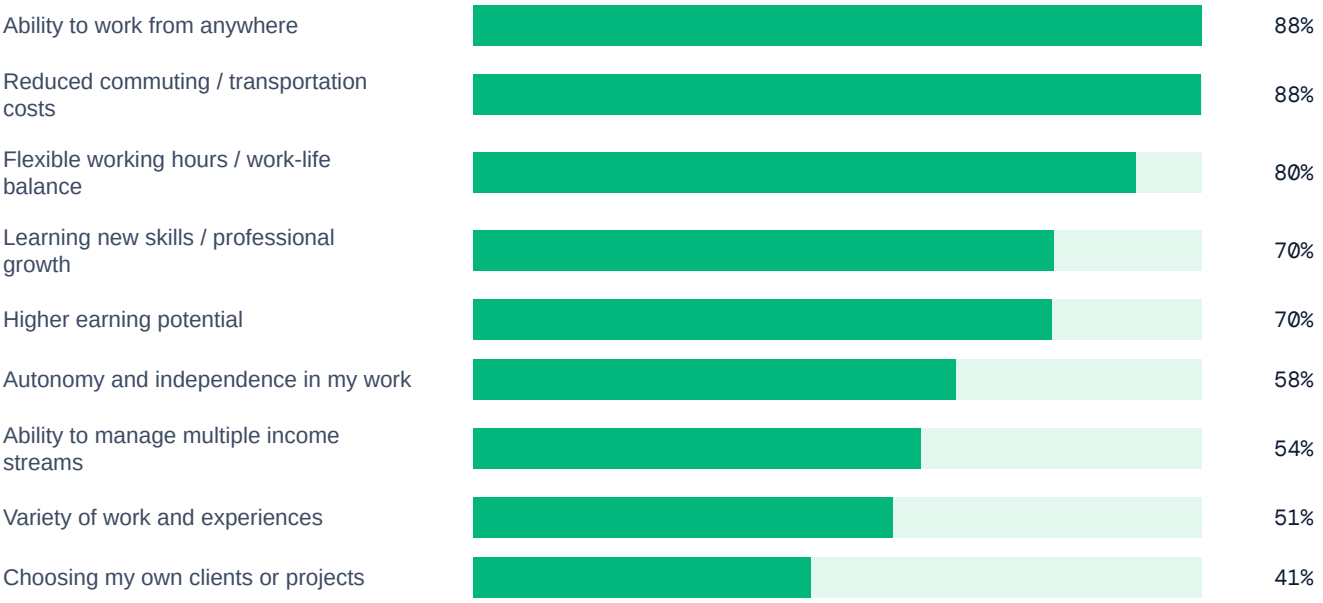
At the same time, Philippine labor statistics illustrate the magnitude of this wage premium: the Philippine Statistics Authority reports that the average monthly wage of full-time formal-sector workers was ₱21,544 in 2024, while regional minimum wages generally correspond to approximately ₱10,000–₱18,000 per month. Viewed against this backdrop, the earnings reported by many Filipino remote workers demonstrate how cross-border remote employment can serve as a meaningful avenue for upward economic mobility, even if only a minority attain the highest income brackets.

Global surveys consistently show that workers place a high value on the autonomy to choose where they work, with many even willing to trade a portion of their salary for greater flexibility. According to the 2025 Global Survey on Working Arrangements by Stanford University, employees with longer commutes and greater caregiving responsibilities express an even stronger preference for remote work, citing the time and financial savings from reduced travel alongside the ability to better balance professional and personal commitments.

These findings are consistent with a 2023 Gallup study, which likewise underscores the importance of remote work flexibility. The study found that three in ten hybrid workers would be extremely likely to leave their organization if denied at least some level of remote work flexibility. Among fully remote workers, this figure rises to six in ten, highlighting the growing expectation that workplace flexibility is a fundamental component of employee satisfaction and retention.

These findings are mirrored among Filipino remote workers, who similarly cite the ability to work from anywhere (88%), reduced commuting and transportation expenses (88%), and flexible working hours as the primary advantages of remote work (80%).

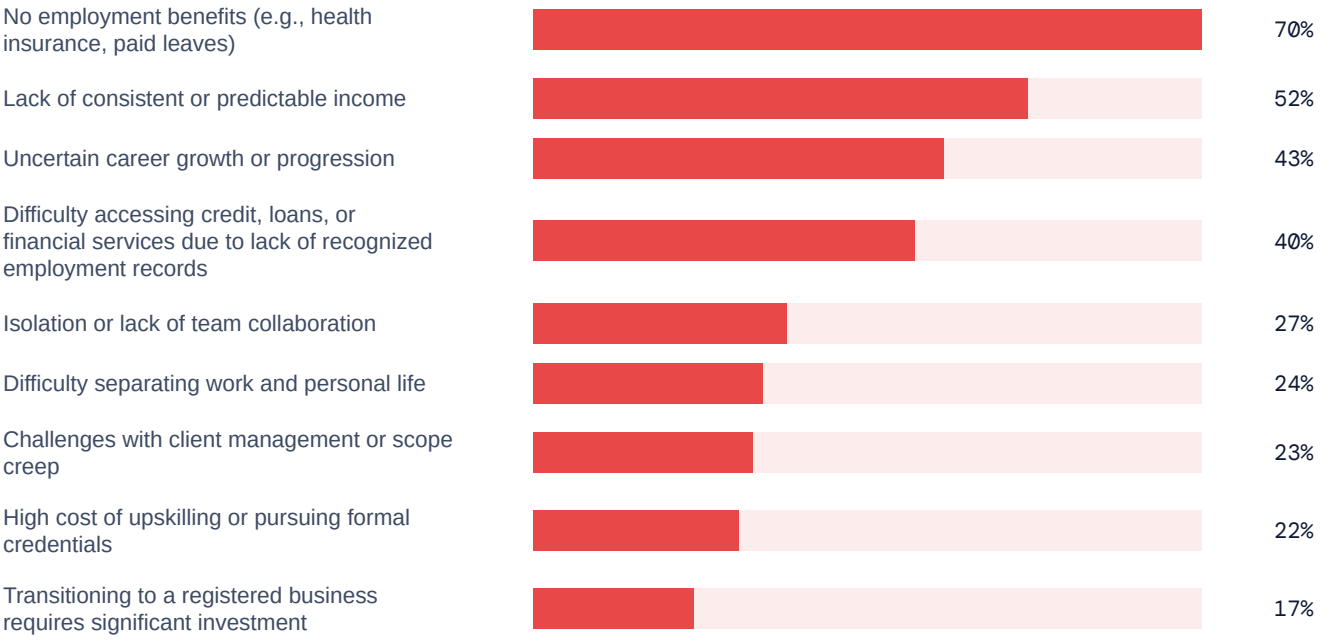
FIG 13 **Likes about Remote Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. What do you LIKE about working remotely? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

While remote work creates unprecedented opportunities, it also exposes structural weaknesses that cannot be ignored. For remote workers, remote engagements often provide flexibility but not necessarily protection.

FIG 14 **Dislikes about Remote Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. What do you DISLIKE about working remotely? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The findings above suggest that the appeal of remote work is tempered by a persistent gap between the flexibility it offers and the employment security that many workers continue to value. While remote work has expanded access to global opportunities and higher-paying jobs, it has not necessarily translated into the institutional protections traditionally associated with formal employment. Seven in ten respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the absence of employment benefits such as Social Security System (SSS) contributions, PhilHealth coverage, Pag-IBIG Fund membership, paid leave, severance pay, security of tenure, 13th month pay, paid maternity leave and other employer-sponsored protections. This finding underscores that for many Filipino remote workers, flexibility is not viewed as a substitute for social protection but rather as a complement to it.

This concern reflects a broader trend observed in the global rise of non-standard forms of employment. The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes that workers engaged in temporary, part-time, freelance, and platform-based work are significantly less likely to receive employer-sponsored social protection than those in standard employment relationships. Because many cross-border remote workers are engaged as independent contractors rather than employees, responsibility for statutory contributions, tax compliance, health insurance, and retirement planning often shifts entirely to the individual. While this arrangement provides greater autonomy, it also exposes workers to higher levels of financial and social risk, particularly during periods of illness, economic downturns, or unexpected interruptions in client engagements.

Income security emerges as another critical concern. More than half (58%) of respondents identified the lack of consistent and predictable income as one of the most significant challenges of remote work, particularly among freelancers. This finding reflects the inherently variable nature of project-based and client-driven work, where earnings fluctuate depending on contract availability, workload, exchange rate movements, and client retention. Research by the ILO has similarly found that workers in non-standard employment arrangements experience greater income volatility than those in permanent employment, making long-term financial planning more difficult despite the potential for higher earnings. As a result, many remote professionals adopt portfolio careers, maintaining multiple clients simultaneously to diversify income streams and reduce dependence on any single source of work. While this strategy can improve financial resilience, it also increases administrative burdens and contributes to longer working hours and the constant need to secure future contracts.

Concerns regarding career progression further illustrate the structural differences between traditional and remote employment. Unlike conventional organizations, where promotion pathways, structured learning programs, and performance management systems are often embedded within the employment relationship, remote work—particularly freelance and contract-based engagements—is frequently organized around the completion of discrete projects rather than long-term organizational development. Consequently, opportunities for advancement are often less formalized and depend heavily on an individual's ability to acquire new skills, build professional networks, and transition to increasingly specialized or higher-value work.

The survey findings appear to reflect this reality. A substantial proportion of Filipino remote workers occupy entry-level, administrative, or part-time positions, where clearly defined career ladders are less common. Although remote work provides valuable international experience and opportunities to develop in-demand digital skills, career progression is often horizontal rather than vertical. Workers advance by moving between clients, industries, or specializations instead of progressing through a single organization's internal hierarchy. This creates opportunities for rapid skills acquisition but also places greater responsibility on individuals to manage their own professional development and career trajectories.

Taken together, these findings highlight an important paradox within the remote work ecosystem. Remote employment has successfully expanded access to global labor markets and significantly improved earning opportunities for many Filipinos, yet it has also transferred many of the responsibilities traditionally borne by employers—including social protection, income security, and career development—to individual workers. Addressing this gap will be essential to ensuring that the continued growth of cross-border remote work translates into sustainable, high-quality employment.

Yet these limitations have not weakened workers' confidence in remote work as a viable long-term career path. Intention to remain in remote work is overwhelmingly strong, with 8 in 10 respondents indicating that they plan to continue working remotely for the foreseeable future.

FIG 15 **Intent to Keep Working Remotely**



Definitely yes – I prefer remote work and plan to continue	81%
Probably yes – I am open to remote work opportunities	13%
Not sure – It depends on circumstances or opportunities	5%
Probably not – I prefer traditional office work	0%
Definitely not – I do not want to work remotely in the future	0%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Do you envision yourself freelancing or working remotely in the next five years?

> *"I can't imagine myself working in the office anymore. I like having autonomy over my schedule."*
>
> RB, 37, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, NCR

Remote work delivers a wide range of benefits that create meaningful value for both employers and employees, making it an increasingly effective and sustainable model for the modern workplace. A study by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office examining the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational performance found that remote work was associated with approximately US$132 million in additional fee revenue, a 4.4% reduction in hiring costs, and an estimated US$38.2 million in savings on office-related expenses.

The benefits reported by Filipino remote workers extend beyond convenience, reflecting broader improvements in quality of life, work autonomy, and overall well-being. The findings indicate that the most valued outcomes of remote work are not purely financial but personal in nature. More than eight in ten respondents (85%) identified spending more time with family and loved ones as the greatest benefit of working remotely, followed by greater flexibility in managing their work schedules (68%) and reduced stress associated with traditional work environments (66%). Collectively, these findings suggest that remote work is enabling workers to redefine success beyond income alone, placing greater value on time, autonomy, and personal well-being.

FIG 16 **Benefits of Remote Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How has remote working benefited you? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The prominence of family time as the leading benefit is particularly significant within the Philippine context, where family plays a central role in social and economic life. Long daily commutes, extended working hours, and employment opportunities concentrated in major urban centers have historically required many Filipinos to sacrifice time with their families. By eliminating or substantially reducing commuting time, remote work enables workers to redirect these hours toward caregiving responsibilities, household management, and personal relationships. This finding aligns with international evidence showing that the removal of commuting is one of the most consistently reported advantages of remote work, contributing to higher life satisfaction and improved work-life balance. Rather than simply allowing employees to work from home, remote work effectively returns discretionary time to workers—a resource that many perceive to be as valuable as financial compensation.

Equally important is the flexibility afforded by remote work. Nearly seven in ten respondents cited greater control over their work schedules as a key benefit, underscoring the growing importance of autonomy in modern employment. Contemporary research consistently identifies autonomy as a fundamental driver of employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements allow individuals to organize their work around periods of peak productivity while better accommodating family responsibilities, education, health appointments, and other personal commitments. For Filipino remote workers, many of whom collaborate with clients across multiple time zones, schedule flexibility also provides an opportunity to better manage unconventional working hours without sacrificing other aspects of daily life.

The reduction in workplace-related stress reported by two-thirds of respondents further illustrates the transformative impact of remote work on employee well-being. Traditional work arrangements often expose employees to stressors unrelated to their core responsibilities, including lengthy commutes, traffic congestion, rigid attendance policies, workplace interruptions, and office politics. Remote work reduces many of these external pressures by allowing employees greater control over their work environment and daily routines. Studies have found that such autonomy can contribute to lower perceived stress and improved psychological well-being, particularly when accompanied by supportive organizational practices and reasonable workload expectations.

For many Filipino workers, remote work represents an opportunity to achieve a more sustainable integration between professional and personal life—one characterized by greater flexibility, stronger family relationships, and improved well-being. These non-monetary benefits help explain why remote work continues to attract and retain talent despite

persistent concerns regarding employment benefits, income stability, and career progression. They also reinforce the notion that the future of work should not be framed as a choice between flexibility and security, but rather as an opportunity to design employment models that successfully combine both.

86%

of female remote workers, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities

The transformative impact of remote work is particularly evident among women, for whom the benefits extend beyond convenience to greater economic participation and career continuity. For many female remote workers (86%), particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, remote work has become more than an alternative employment arrangement; it has enabled them to remain active in the workforce without having to choose between career advancement and caregiving. This balance was echoed throughout the interviews, where mothers described remote work as a life-changing opportunity that gave them greater control over their time. Freed from long daily commutes and rigid office schedules, they were able to spend more meaningful time with their children while continuing to build rewarding careers.



“The main thing I like about working remotely is how it allows me to balance child care and work. I get to see my son grow up. I get to be there when he needs to, unlike if I was working in an office.”

STEPHANIE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, NCR

Stephanie's experience reflects a broader challenge that has long shaped women's participation in the labor force. Across the Philippines, women continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic and care work, including childcare, eldercare, and household responsibilities. Although female educational attainment and workforce participation have steadily improved over the past decades, caregiving responsibilities remain one of the most significant barriers preventing women from entering, remaining in, or advancing within the labor market. The expectation that women assume primary caregiving roles often limits their access to full-time employment, leadership opportunities, and occupations requiring fixed schedules or long commutes.

Remote work has begun to challenge these longstanding constraints by redefining where and how work can be performed. Rather than requiring women to choose between family responsibilities and professional aspirations, flexible work arrangements enable them to integrate both roles more effectively. For many mothers interviewed in this study, the greatest value of remote work was not simply working from home, but the ability to remain economically active during life stages that might otherwise require them to leave the workforce altogether. This flexibility helps preserve career continuity, allowing women to retain professional experience, maintain their skills, and continue building long-term earning potential even while fulfilling caregiving responsibilities.

From a broader labor market perspective, this has important implications for gender equality. International evidence consistently shows that flexible work arrangements can reduce one of the structural barriers to female labor force participation by lowering the time and mobility constraints associated with traditional employment. In the Philippine context—where daily commutes can consume several hours and childcare responsibilities often fall disproportionately on women—the ability to eliminate travel time and exercise greater control over work schedules can significantly expand access to employment opportunities that were previously difficult or impossible to pursue.

At the same time, these findings should not be interpreted as suggesting that remote work alone resolves gender disparities. While remote work increases flexibility, it does not automatically redistribute unpaid care responsibilities within households. Research has shown that women working remotely often continue to perform the majority of domestic labor alongside their paid employment, creating the risk of a "double burden" in which professional work and caregiving occur simultaneously. As a result, the full potential of remote work to advance gender equality depends not only on flexible employment arrangements but also on supportive organizational policies, equitable household dynamics, and public investments in childcare and social protection.

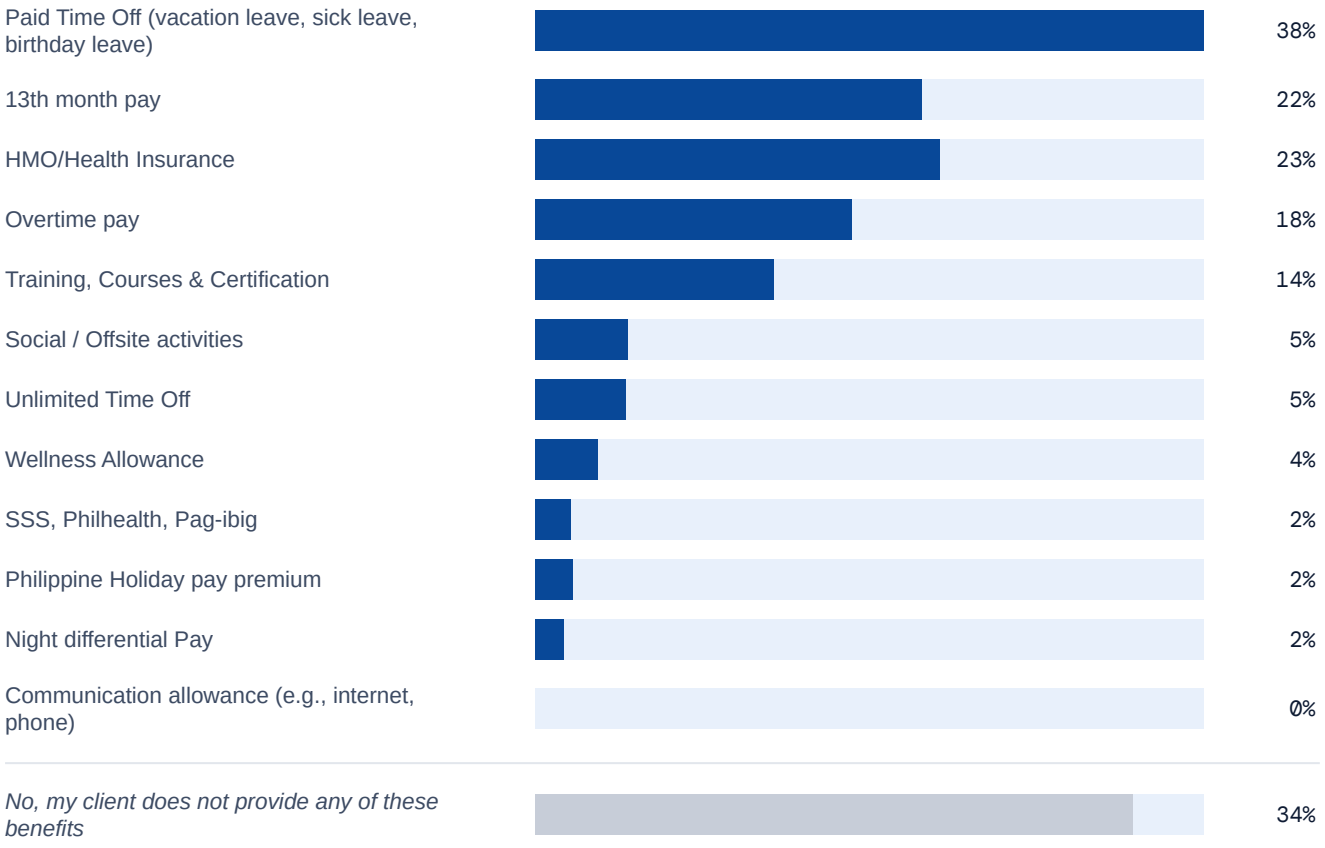
Nevertheless, the findings suggest that remote work represents a meaningful step toward a more inclusive labor market. By reducing geographical and temporal barriers to employment, it enables more women to participate in the global economy without abandoning caregiving responsibilities. In doing so, remote work has the potential to expand women's economic opportunities, strengthen household financial resilience, and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. For the Philippines—where women constitute a highly educated and globally competitive talent pool—this represents not only a social benefit but also a strategic economic opportunity. Ensuring that women can sustain meaningful careers throughout different stages of life allows businesses to retain valuable talent while strengthening the country's position as a leading source of skilled remote professionals.

Yet the long-term sustainability of these gains depends on addressing the structural vulnerabilities that continue to characterize much of the remote work ecosystem. While remote work has expanded opportunities for greater workforce participation, higher earnings, and improved work-life integration, much of the Philippine remote work sector continues to operate within the informal economy. Consequently, many workers remain excluded from the employment protections and financial security traditionally associated with formal employment.

Three in 10 remote workers report receiving no employment benefits beyond their salary from their current clients or employers. In the absence of modernized and inclusive social protection systems, the very flexibility that makes remote work attractive may also leave workers more vulnerable to financial insecurity and economic shocks.

> *“That’s really the downside of remote work. Yes, you can earn good money, but you don’t have the security that comes with a stable, traditional job. It’s only now that I’m looking into making voluntary contributions to my SSS and Pag-IBIG. I’m also considering getting health insurance. Right now, if something happens to me, I have nothing to fall back on—I would have to pay for everything out of pocket.”*
>
> TERE, 40, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, NCR

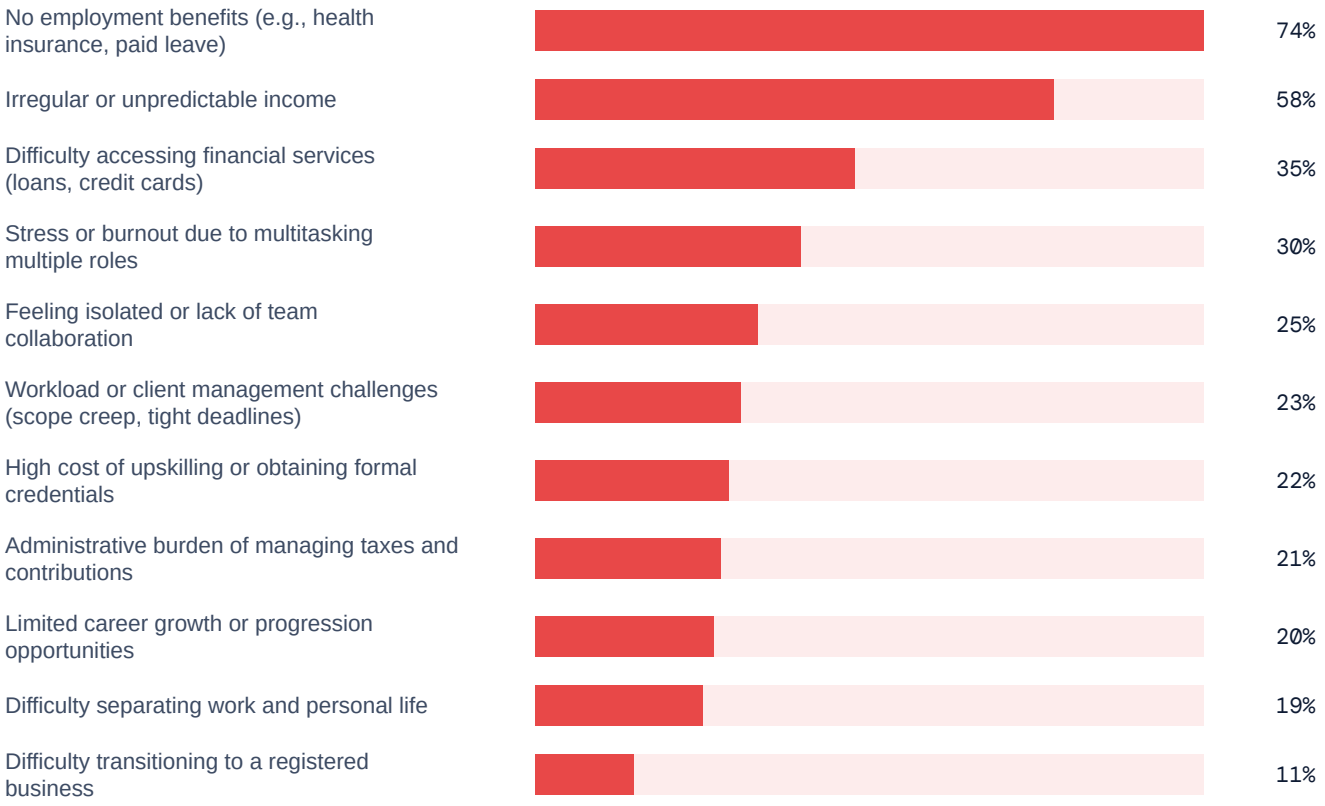
FIG 17 **Current Employment Benefits Received**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Which of the following benefits does your current employer offer? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

More importantly, the issue appears to extend beyond workers who receive no benefits at all. For the majority of remote workers (74%), the absence or lack of adequate employment benefits is identified as the most challenging aspect of working remotely. This suggests that the concern is not simply about whether benefits exist, but whether remote workers have access to the same level of security, support, and long-term protections that employees in more traditional work arrangements may receive. Benefits traditionally associated with formal employment—including employer-sponsored health insurance, paid leave, 13th month pay, severance pay, Social Security System (SSS) contributions, PhilHealth coverage, Pag-IBIG Fund contributions, and retirement benefits—remain inaccessible to many remote professionals, particularly those engaged as independent contractors or freelancers. Rather than reflecting dissatisfaction with remote work itself, this finding points to a gap in how cross-border employment is currently structured. Global employers can readily hire talent across jurisdictions, yet mechanisms for extending locally compliant employment benefits have not evolved at the same pace.

FIG 18 **Challenges Encountered from Working Remotely**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. What challenges or downsides have you experienced from freelancing and/or working remotely? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

This finding mirrors a broader global trend. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has consistently observed that workers engaged in non-standard employment—including temporary, part-time, freelance, and platform-based work—are substantially less likely than standard employees to receive employer-sponsored social protection. Consequently, workers assume responsibilities traditionally borne by employers, including healthcare coverage, retirement savings, statutory contributions, and income protection. While such arrangements provide greater contractual flexibility, they also shift much of the financial risk from organizations to individuals, increasing workers' vulnerability to illness, economic shocks, and employment interruptions.

Income stability represents the second most significant challenge. More than half of respondents (58%) cited irregular or unpredictable income as a major concern, highlighting one of the defining characteristics of project-based and client-driven work. Although remote work often provides access to higher-paying international opportunities, earnings frequently fluctuate according to contract duration, project availability, exchange rate movements, and client retention. Unlike salaried employees receiving fixed monthly compensation, many freelancers must continually replace completed projects and secure future engagements to maintain stable earnings.

This volatility has implications beyond monthly cash flow. Research from both the ILO and the OECD suggests that income predictability is a critical determinant of financial resilience, enabling households to budget, save, invest, and withstand unexpected economic shocks. Consequently, many remote workers deliberately maintain multiple clients simultaneously—not solely to maximize income, but to diversify financial risk and reduce dependence on any single source of work. While this strategy enhances resilience, it also creates additional complexity in managing contracts, workloads, and client relationships.

The consequences of informality extend beyond employment itself and into the broader financial system. More than one-third of respondents (35%) reported difficulty accessing financial services such as loans and credit facilities because they lack formal employment records or verifiable proof of income. This finding illustrates an often-overlooked consequence of cross-border remote work: although workers may earn competitive incomes, many remain effectively invisible within traditional financial systems. Banks and lending institutions continue to rely heavily on conventional employment documentation—including certificates of employment, employer-issued payslips, and regular payroll records—to assess creditworthiness. Workers engaged through informal contractor arrangements frequently cannot produce these documents despite maintaining stable earnings over extended periods.

The inability to establish formal financial credibility has important long-term implications. Restricted access to mortgages, housing loans, vehicle financing, credit cards, and other financial products limits workers' ability to accumulate assets and build long-term financial security. In effect, remote workers may experience higher incomes without enjoying the broader economic opportunities that formal employment typically enables. This disconnect highlights how labor market informality can create downstream exclusion from financial inclusion, even among highly skilled professionals.

The findings also reveal the operational demands associated with sustaining a portfolio career. Three in ten respondents (30%) reported experiencing stress or burnout as a result of simultaneously managing multiple roles or clients. Unlike traditional employees whose workload is coordinated within a single organization, many remote professionals independently balance competing deadlines, communication across multiple time zones, varying organizational cultures, and overlapping client expectations. The flexibility to maintain multiple income streams therefore comes with increased cognitive and administrative demands that can contribute to longer working hours and heightened psychological strain.

> *“I'm starting to feel burned out. Even though most of my teammates are Filipinos, we all work remotely from different provinces, so it's not like we can easily get together or unwind after work. You really have to make a conscious effort to disconnect from work and find your own ways to decompress.”*
>
> TINE, 47, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, VISAYAS

Closely related to this is the challenge of maintaining meaningful professional relationships in distributed work environments. One in four respondents (25%) reported feelings of isolation or a lack of team collaboration. While remote work has significantly expanded access to international employment, it can also reduce opportunities for spontaneous interaction, mentorship, informal learning, and social connection that naturally occur in physical workplaces. Research has shown that these interactions play an important role in employee engagement, knowledge sharing, innovation, and career development. For workers engaged primarily through short-term contracts or independent client relationships, opportunities to develop organizational belonging and professional networks may be even more limited.

> *“One of the biggest adjustments I had to make was learning to speak up at work. In the Philippines, many of us are taught to keep our concerns to ourselves because we're afraid of being reprimanded or seen as complaining. My Australian boss challenged that mindset. He noticed that I was taking on too much work and told me it was okay to voice my concerns. He explained that if I didn't communicate when I was overwhelmed, he wouldn't know how to manage our workload better.”*
>
> JAI, 28, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, BALANCE LUZON

Viewed collectively, these findings point to a common underlying issue. The challenges reported by Filipino remote workers do not arise from remote work as a mode of work itself, but from the absence of formal employment infrastructure surrounding it. Remote work has successfully globalized access to talent and employment opportunities, yet many of the institutions that support sustainable employment—including payroll administration, statutory benefits, employment documentation, social protection, and regulatory compliance—remain largely designed around traditional domestic employment relationships.

This gap represents one of the defining challenges of the next phase of remote work. As cross-border hiring becomes increasingly mainstream, the question is no longer whether organizations can hire talent anywhere in the world, but how they can do so while preserving the protections, stability, and institutional support historically associated with formal employment. Addressing this challenge will require employment models capable of bridging the divide between the flexibility of global remote work and the security of local employment—a role that Employer of Record (EOR) services are uniquely positioned to fulfill.

Preparing Filipino Talent for a Borderless Workforce

The globalization of remote work has reinforced the Philippines' position as one of the world's leading sources of skilled, English-proficient talent. Yet, as cross-border hiring becomes increasingly seamless, the traditional outsourcing and business process outsourcing (BPO) model finds itself at a pivotal crossroads. The competitive landscape that once fueled decades of industry growth is being reshaped by a convergence of technological, economic, and workforce transformations.

Artificial intelligence and automation are rapidly redefining the nature of outsourced work, particularly for routine, rules-based tasks that have historically underpinned the BPO industry. At the same time, digital collaboration technologies and global hiring platforms have enabled international companies to recruit talent directly across borders, reducing their reliance on conventional outsourcing intermediaries. Coupled with growing client expectations for specialized expertise, integrated workforce solutions, and greater operational agility, these developments are challenging the traditional value proposition of labor arbitrage alone.

Traditionally defined as the practice of relocating work to jurisdictions with lower labor costs, labor arbitrage has enabled multinational corporations to reduce operating expenses while maintaining or even improving service quality. This principle underpinned the rapid growth of the global outsourcing industry over the past three decades and positioned countries such as the Philippines as a critical player in global service delivery.

Today, however, labor arbitrage is frequently portrayed as an outdated business model. The rise of artificial intelligence has led some observers to argue that automation will erode the economic rationale for offshoring altogether. If AI can perform routine cognitive work at a fraction of the cost of human labor, why would organizations continue hiring talent overseas?

While compelling, this argument rests on a narrow understanding of both labor arbitrage and technological change. It assumes that companies outsource work solely because labor is cheaper elsewhere and that AI is a direct substitute for human workers. In reality, global talent strategies have always been driven by a broader objective: maximizing value. Labor cost is only one component of a firm's total employment equation, alongside productivity, quality, scalability, availability of skills, regulatory complexity, and business continuity.

Artificial intelligence changes how work is performed, but it does not eliminate the economic logic that encourages firms to access talent wherever it can create the greatest value. If anything, AI increases the productivity of skilled workers regardless of where they are located, making access to high-quality global talent even more attractive. The question is no longer whether companies should offshore work, but rather where they can build the most capable, cost-effective, and resilient workforce in an increasingly digital economy.

Historically, multinational corporations pursued outsourcing primarily to reduce labor costs. Wage differentials between developed and emerging economies allowed firms to lower operating expenses while maintaining service quality. However, globalization, digital transformation, and remote work have fundamentally expanded this logic. Today's organizations are no longer simply exporting jobs; they are constructing globally distributed teams that optimize for multiple dimensions of value. Simply put, in the AI era, competitive advantage belongs not to the country with the cheapest workforce, but to the country capable of delivering the highest value per dollar invested.

This shift has given rise to what many management scholars describe as global talent arbitrage —the strategic deployment of skilled professionals across borders to maximize organizational performance. Rather than asking, "Where is labor cheapest?", firms increasingly ask, "Where can we find the best combination of capability, productivity, scalability, and cost?"

Artificial intelligence reinforces this trend. Generative AI reduces the time required to complete many routine tasks, but the productivity gains accrue to workers irrespective of geography. A software engineer in Manila equipped with AI coding tools becomes more productive, just as an engineer in San Francisco does. However, because wage differentials remain substantial, the relative economic advantage of employing global talent often persists.

However, these trends do not signal the decline of outsourcing, but rather its next phase of evolution. While automation may replace repetitive processes, it has simultaneously increased demand for higher-value capabilities requiring creativity, critical thinking, relationship management, and deep domain expertise. Likewise, although organizations now have more avenues to hire internationally, navigating labor laws, payroll administration, tax compliance, and employment regulations across multiple jurisdictions has become increasingly complex. As cross-border employment expands, the challenge is no longer simply accessing global talent—it is employing that talent compliantly, efficiently, and sustainably.

Against this backdrop, the Philippines possesses a strategic advantage that extends beyond its long-established reputation as a global outsourcing destination. Decades of experience serving international clients have produced a mature ecosystem of skilled professionals, HR expertise, operational infrastructure, and compliance capabilities. These assets position the country not only to remain competitive in the evolving global services market, but also to become an important employment and market-entry platform for the global economy.

This transition creates an opportunity to expand the current outsourcing model from the provision of outsourced business functions toward the provision of global employment infrastructure. These simplified outsourcing solutions are designed for international organizations, particularly small-medium businesses who are looking at expanding but are incapable yet of establishing its own Philippine legal entity, to engage workers in the Philippines through a locally compliant employment and business structure. It assumes responsibility for employment administration, payroll, statutory contributions, benefits, and other applicable employment requirements, allowing the client organization to focus on managing its workforce and business activities.

This model is particularly significant in the context of the expanding gig and remote-work economy. As presented in the previous survey results, digital platforms have fundamentally changed how Filipino professionals participate in the international labor market. However, the same flexibility that makes the gig economy attractive has also created a structural gap between access to global work and access to formal employment protections. This is where simplified outsourcing solutions can play a transformative role. Rather than forcing a choice between the flexibility of gig work and the protections of formal employment, it can provide an institutional bridge between the two. It allows international organizations to access the flexibility and geographic reach of the global talent economy while placing workers within a locally administered and legally compliant employment framework. In this sense, simplified outsourcing solutions can contribute to the formalization of the gig economy. Formalization does not necessarily mean eliminating flexible or remote work. Instead, it means bringing flexible forms of work into structures that provide greater clarity around employment relationships, compensation, statutory contributions, benefits, and employer responsibilities.

In the same vein, these simplified outsourcing solutions can also serve a broader strategic function as a market-entry mechanism. For international companies considering expansion into the Philippines, establishing a local subsidiary or branch at the earliest stage can involve significant legal, administrative, financial, and operational commitments. Such

solutions can provide a lower-friction pathway for companies seeking to evaluate the Philippine market, hire an initial employee or small team, establish commercial relationships, or develop local capabilities before making a longer-term commitment to establishing their own legal presence.

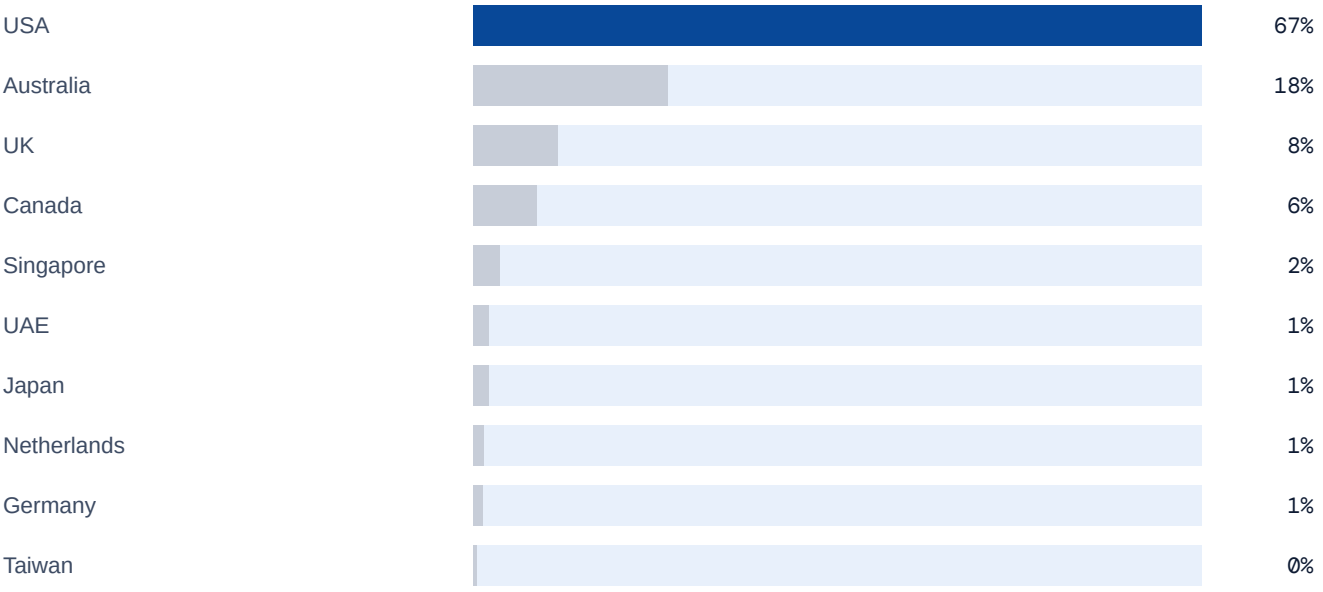
This does not mean that it should be viewed as a substitute for incorporation where a company's activities ultimately require a Philippine entity. Rather, it can function as an intermediate stage in the international expansion process. A company may begin by hiring a small number of Filipino professionals through these simplified outsourcing solutions, assess the viability of its Philippine operations, and subsequently transition to its own local entity once the scale and commercial rationale justify doing so. In this sense, it reduces the initial friction associated with entering the Philippine market while preserving a pathway toward deeper investment and local establishment.

The strategic opportunity for the Philippines is therefore broader than simply attracting more outsourced jobs. The country can position itself as a gateway through which global companies access Philippine talent, establish distributed teams, and progressively enter the Philippine market. This would allow the country to capture value at multiple stages of the global business lifecycle: from outsourced service delivery, to direct international employment, to market exploration, and ultimately to local investment and entity establishment. It services can provide a bridge between the flexibility demanded by international businesses and workers and the protections, statutory obligations, and regulatory requirements of formal employment.

The strategic question, therefore, is not whether the Philippines should move beyond outsourcing, but how it can evolve outsourcing into a broader global workforce and market-entry infrastructure. By embracing these simplified outsourcing solutions, the Philippines can remain a major destination for international companies while creating new pathways for Filipino professionals to participate in the global economy and for foreign enterprises to establish a presence in the country with lower initial barriers to entry.

As a matter of fact, these developments are already unfolding in the Philippine labor market. An increasing number of Filipino professionals are now participating directly in the global economy as members of distributed teams employed by overseas organizations and clients. The global nature of remote work has enabled Filipino professionals to access employment opportunities far beyond the domestic labor market. Survey findings show that the majority of remote workers are employed by organizations and individual clients based in the United States, reflecting the Philippines' growing role as a trusted source of remote talent.

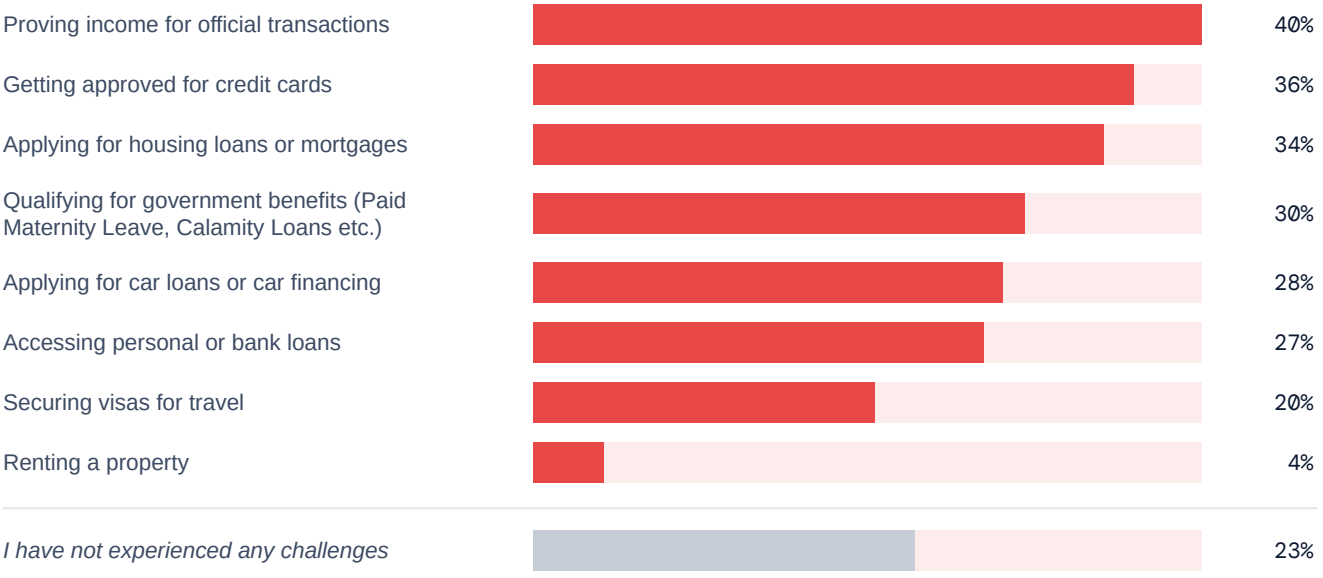
FIG 19 **Countries Where Employers and Clients Are Based**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Which country is your employer / client based in? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The consequences of remaining outside the formal employment record creates barriers to full participation in the formal economy. Four in ten (40%) reported difficulty proving their income for official transactions, while more than one-third encountered challenges obtaining credit cards (36%) and applying for housing loans or mortgages (34%). Others experienced difficulties qualifying for government benefits (30%), securing car financing (28%), accessing personal or bank loans (27%), and obtaining visas for international travel (20%). These findings demonstrate that formal employment documentation plays a vital role in strengthening financial inclusion, ensuring access to social protection, and creating pathways toward greater economic participation.

FIG 20 **Challenges Encountered from Lack of Employment Record**



Base: n=610 Q. Which of the following have been challenging due to the lack of local employment records (e.g., payslips, ITR, government contributions)? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

> *“At the moment my family and I are renting this house in Mandaluyong, but I am currently looking at taking a house loan via Pag-Ibig. I am not sure how to go about it because they require a formal proof of income which I don’t have. I remember when we bought a car they required the same things, so the car is under our relative's name.”*

TERE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, BALANCE LUZON

> *“Just recently my credit card application got rejected because they won’t accept my bank statement as my proof of income.”*

EVA, 52, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, VISAYAS

While remote work has unlocked access to global employment opportunities and higher earning potential, many Filipino remote workers continue to operate outside systems designed for traditional employment. As a result, they often lack the formal employment records, statutory contributions, and verifiable proof of income that banks, government agencies, insurers, and other institutions rely on to assess eligibility for financial products and public services. International organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have similarly noted that the rapid growth of digital and non-standard forms of work has outpaced labor and social protection systems, creating gaps in financial inclusion and worker protection. As remote work becomes an increasingly permanent feature of the labor market, bridging the divide between flexible global employment and locally recognized employment frameworks will be essential to ensuring that workers can fully participate in the formal economy.

The demand for greater formalization is evident in the attitudes of Filipino remote workers themselves. More than three-quarters (77%) expressed interest in having a locally recognized employment record, including nearly half (49%) who said they were very interested.

> *“Sometimes I hesitate to tell people what I do because they'll respond, 'Ay, VA ka lang?' Having a legitimate employment record that formally recognizes and validates our work would not only provide practical benefits but also give our profession the credibility and respect it deserves.”*

STEPHANIE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, NCR

FIG 21 **Interest in Having Formal Employment Record**



TOP-2 BOX
77.28%

Very interested	49%
Somewhat interested	28%
Can't say	15%
Not interested	4%
Not interested at all	3%

BOTTOM-3 BOX
22.72%

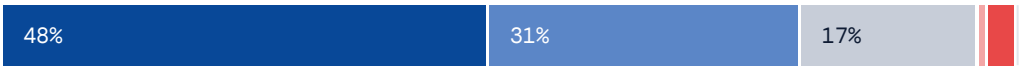
Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How interested are you in having formal employment record?

This suggests that while workers value the flexibility and autonomy afforded by remote work, many also recognize the practical benefits of maintaining formal employment documentation that can support access to financial services, government benefits, and other opportunities requiring proof of employment and income.

The simplified outsourcing solutions present one potential solution to this challenge by combining the flexibility of global remote work with the protections and legitimacy of formal local employment. Through this, remote workers can receive locally compliant employment contracts, statutory benefits, tax withholding, and verifiable proof of employment and income, while continuing to work for overseas employers.

The appeal of this model is reflected in the study findings, with 79% of respondents expressing interest in being employed through an Employer of Record, including 48% who were very interested.

FIG 22 **Interest in Being Locally Supported by a local Outsourcing Partner**



TOP-2 BOX
78.74%

Very interested	48%
Somewhat interested	31%
Can't say	17%
Not interested	1%
Not interested at all	3%

BOTTOM-2 BOX
21.26%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How interested are you in being locally supported by a local Outsourcing Partner?

> *“I genuinely think it's something that could make a big difference for remote workers like us. I often come across posts in online VA communities from people who have been ghosted by their clients or suddenly lost their jobs without any notice or protection. In situations like those, there's very little they can do. If we were employed through that, I feel we'd have greater security and stability. It would give us peace of mind knowing that there are systems in place to protect us, while still allowing us to work with international clients.”*
>
> STEPHANIE, 40, INDEPENDENT FREELANCER, NCR

The strong level of interest suggests that many Filipino remote workers are not seeking to replace the flexibility of remote work with traditional employment; rather, they are looking for solutions that preserve global opportunities while providing the security, recognition, and protections associated with formal employment.

The findings presented throughout this section point to a common challenge: the infrastructure supporting cross-border employment has not evolved as rapidly as the technologies that enable it. While remote work has made it easier than ever for organizations to access talent across borders, employing that talent in a manner that is legally compliant, operationally consistent, and beneficial for both employers and workers remains considerably more complex.

These specific arrangements have emerged as one of the most practical responses to this challenge. Rather than simply facilitating international hiring, a simplified outsourcing solution serves as the legal support within the worker's country while partnering with the overseas organizations in managing the employee's day-to-day work. This model enables international companies to hire talent in jurisdictions where they do not have a legal entity, while ensuring compliance with local labor legislation, payroll requirements, statutory contributions, tax obligations, and employment regulations.

For remote workers, the implications extend beyond administrative convenience. Through this, professionals can receive locally compliant employment contracts, employer-administered statutory contributions, payroll processed under local regulations, and verifiable employment records that support access to financial products such as housing loans, mortgages, and credit facilities. In doing so, the model addresses many of the structural challenges identified in this study—including the absence of employment benefits, income documentation, and formal employment records—without requiring workers to forgo the flexibility of serving international employers.

As global employment becomes increasingly sophisticated, leading providers are moving beyond payroll administration and legal compliance to become strategic workforce partners that help organizations build sustainable distributed teams. In addition to serving as the legal employer, these providers work with clients to ensure that employment practices are appropriately localized, operationally consistent, and aligned with the labor regulations of the country in which employees are based.

CASE STUDY: REMOTIFY



Source: Remotify

Remotify has taken one of the most structurally credible approaches to a successful cross-border employment, going beyond conventional outsourcing practices to deliver value that extends beyond payroll and statutory benefits compliance alone. As a company that offers HR outsourcing services, Remotify operates within the country's formal business and regulatory environment, providing an additional layer of local presence and institutional credibility to its cross-border employment model. This local footing enables the company to support foreign clients not only in meeting employment obligations, but also in navigating the practical realities of managing a workforce within the Philippine context.

Navigating Philippine labor regulations and cultural nuances can be complex. Remotify acts as an end-to-end market-entry and HR partner, helping international businesses adapt their global people practices—from compliant role definitions and performance metrics to local onboarding, payroll, and benefits. For employers, for instance, cross-border management is simplified into one consolidated monthly invoice, while employees receive standard bi-monthly local pay. Remotify also takes care of statutory compliance, benefits and ongoing HR support.

Beyond facilitating compliant employment, the company positions itself as a local outsourcing partner, supporting organizations throughout the entire employee lifecycle. This includes helping clients establish locally appropriate employment documentation, advising on role expectations and performance frameworks, supporting employee relations and disciplinary processes in accordance with Philippine labor regulations, and providing guidance throughout onboarding, KPI alignment, performance management, employee engagement, training and development, and offboarding.

The approach is simple and promising: go beyond payroll and contracts to make cross-border employment work better for both employers and employees. In effect, Remotify functions as a true extension of the HR department, helping international companies navigate the people side of operating in the Philippines, and bridging the gap between global strategy and local execution, making international hiring simple, compliant, and sustainable.

As organizations transition from outsourcing business processes to building globally distributed teams, the value proposition increasingly lies not only in enabling cross-border hiring but in creating employment relationships that are compliant, well-governed, and capable of supporting long-term workforce growth.

At present, the challenge facing global employers is no longer simply how to hire internationally, but how to build high-performing, compliant, and sustainable international teams. Employment contracts, payroll administration, statutory compliance, performance management, employee relations, and workforce governance are interconnected components of the employment relationship. Addressing these functions holistically enables organizations to create a more consistent experience for both employers and employees while strengthening compliance and reducing risk.

The Future of Work: Are Filipino Remote Workers Ready?

The future of work is being shaped by two defining forces: the continued rise of remote work and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI). Together, these shifts are fundamentally changing how work is performed, how organizations hire talent, and the skills professionals need to remain competitive. Geographic boundaries are becoming less relevant as companies increasingly recruit from a global talent pool, while AI is automating routine tasks, augmenting human capabilities, and transforming the nature of work across industries.

The implications of these transformations extend well beyond the adoption of new technologies. They represent a fundamental reconfiguration of the global labor market, where competitive advantage is increasingly determined not by geographic proximity or labor cost alone, but by an individual's ability to continuously adapt, collaborate, and create value alongside intelligent technologies. As AI becomes embedded into everyday workflows, organizations are redesigning jobs, redefining roles, and rethinking how work is organized. Rather than replacing entire occupations, AI is automating specific tasks, allowing workers to shift their focus toward higher-value activities that require human judgment, creativity, interpersonal skills, and strategic decision making.

For Filipino remote workers, these changes present both significant opportunities and new challenges. Succeeding in the next phase of remote work will require more than technical expertise and reliable internet access. It will demand continuous learning, AI literacy, adaptability, and the ability to evolve alongside emerging technologies and changing client expectations. In an increasingly competitive global labor market, upskilling and reskilling are no longer optional—they have become essential for maintaining relevance, expanding career opportunities, and capturing greater value from the digital economy. By continuously developing new and in-demand skills, remote workers can strengthen their competitiveness, command higher-value roles, and build more resilient and future-ready careers.

Consequently, Filipino professionals are no longer competing solely with peers in the domestic labor market, but with skilled workers from around the world. In this increasingly borderless economy, competitiveness depends not only on technical proficiency but also on the ability to demonstrate adaptability, digital fluency, continuous learning, and effective collaboration across cultures, time zones, and virtual environments.

Filipino remote workers recognize this imperative. Nine in ten respondents consider upskilling important in their profession, reflecting a strong awareness that continuous learning is key to remaining competitive and adapting to the evolving demands of remote work.

> *"Upskilling is really important to me. It's how you stay competitive in a field that's becoming increasingly saturated. You have to find your niche and continuously improve your expertise. Learning specialized tools that aren't yet widely known—but are in demand by employers—such as GoHighLevel, SEO platforms, and other emerging technologies, can really set you apart."*
>
> TINE, 47, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, VISAYAS

FIG 23 **Perceived Importance of Upskilling in the Context of Remote Work**



Extremely important – I consider continuous learning essential for success	74%
Very important – I regularly seek opportunities to upskill	16%
Moderately important – I upskill when needed or when convenient	8%
Slightly important – I occasionally upskill, but it's not a priority	2%
Not important – Upskilling does not significantly affect my work	1%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How important is upskilling in your line of work?

This mindset is already translating into action. Eighty-four percent of Filipino remote workers reported having taken measures to upskill.

> *"You have to [upskill], otherwise you will get left behind."*
>
> LISA, 42, REMOTE EMPLOYEE, BALANCE LUZON

FIG 24 **Uptake of Upskilling Initiatives**

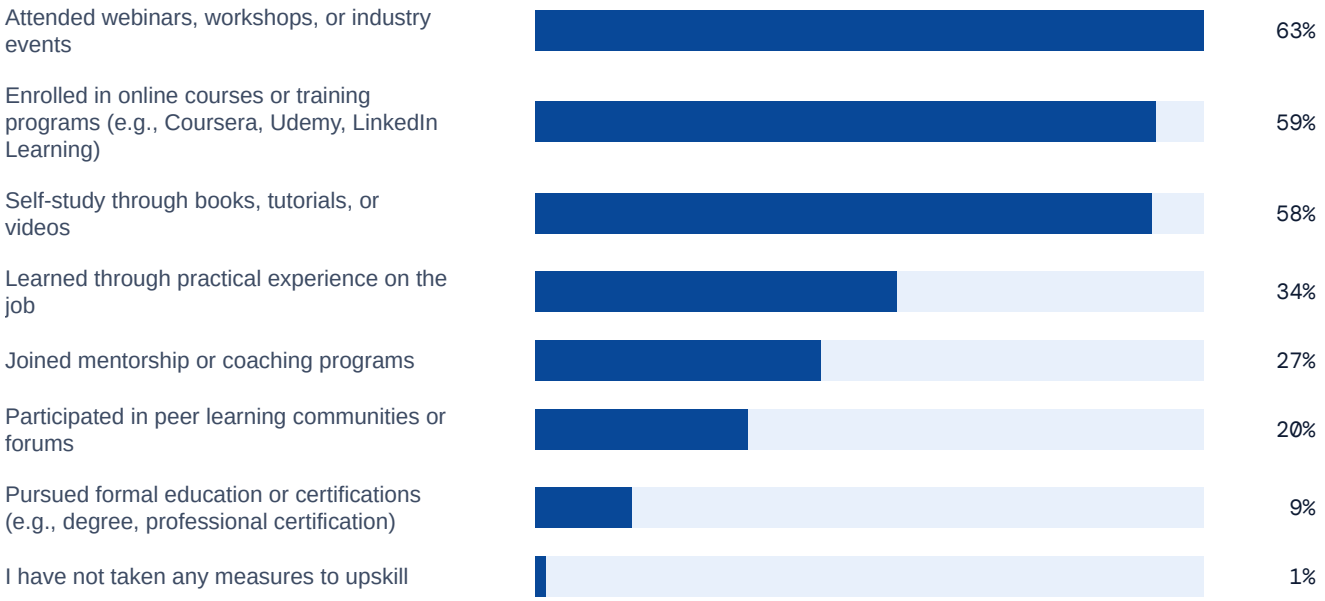


Yes	84%
No	16%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Have you taken any measures to upskill or develop new skills?

Among the various forms of professional development, attending webinars, workshops, and industry events emerged as the most common upskilling activity, with 63% of Filipino remote workers reporting participation. This followed by enrolling in online courses (59%), and self-directed learning through reading books and watching tutorials and other online videos (58%). These choices suggest a strong preference for accessible, practical, and industry-relevant learning opportunities that enable workers to continuously update their knowledge, keep pace with emerging trends, and strengthen their competitiveness in the global remote workforce.

FIG 25 **Upskilling Initiatives Taken**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. What measures have you taken to upskill or develop new skills? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

Despite recognizing the importance of continuous learning, many Filipino remote workers face practical barriers to upskilling. Among those who have not taken any measures to develop new skills, the leading constraints were lack of time (64%) and limited financial resources (63%).

FIG 26 **Barriers to Upskilling**



Base: Among those who have not taken measures to upskill (n=260) Q. Why are you not taking any measures to upskill or develop new skills? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

This is further reflected in their investment behavior, with more than half (55%) indicating that they primarily rely on free courses and learning opportunities.

FIG 27 **Willingness to Spend for Professional Development**

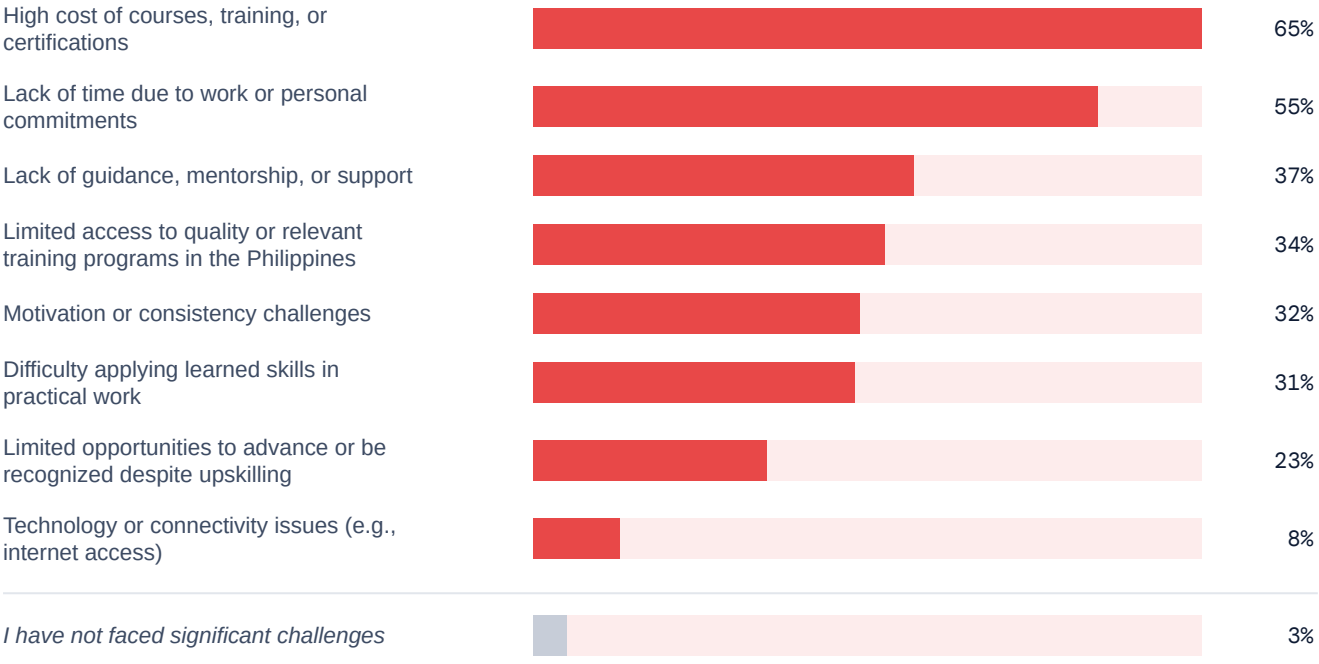


I only take free courses or learning opportunities	55%
Less than ₱5,000 per year (about ₱400/month)	36%
₱5,000–₱20,000 per year (about ₱400–₱1,600/month)	8%
More than ₱20,000 per year (about ₱1,600+/month)	2%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How much are you willing to spend on professional development each year? (Select one)

The barriers to upskilling suggest that the challenge is less about willingness to learn than it is about access to affordable, relevant, and flexible learning opportunities. The high cost of courses, training, and professional certifications emerged as the primary obstacle, cited by 65% of respondents. Beyond financial constraints, many also pointed to the lack of guidance, mentorship, or career support (37%) and limited access to high-quality, industry-relevant training programs in the Philippines (34%). These findings indicate that developing a future-ready remote workforce will require more than encouraging lifelong learning. It will also require strengthening the ecosystem that supports continuous professional development through affordable training, accessible mentorship, and programs that equip workers with in-demand digital and AI-related skills aligned with the evolving needs of the global labor market.

FIG 28 **Challenges Encountered While Upskilling**



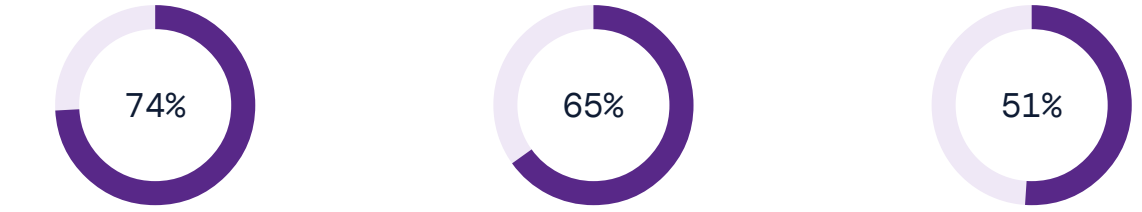
Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. What challenges or barriers have you encountered while upskilling or developing new skills? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The rise of AI should not be viewed simply as a technical disruption but as a catalyst for redefining human work. The World Economic Forum argues that organizations derive the greatest value from AI when it is deployed to augment human capabilities rather than replace them. As repetitive and routine activities become increasingly automated, demand is expected to shift toward work that depends on critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, ethical judgment, and complex problem-solving — capabilities that remain uniquely human and are significantly more difficult to automate.

McKinsey similarly echoes that the long-term competitive advantage of both individuals and organizations will lie in their ability to combine technological capabilities with distinctly human strengths. Rather than diminishing the importance of people, AI increases the value of workers who can exercise sound judgment, navigate ambiguity, build trust, foster collaboration, and translate insights into effective decisions.

The Philippines also ranked among the top in SEA for engagement with AI and is primed for the next wave of AI-powered services. Nine in 10 Filipinos expressed willingness to share data access with AI agents (eg., shopping and viewing history, social connections), while 56% expressed privacy and data security concerns around agentic AI—this is higher versus the average across ASEAN which is 50%. Nevertheless, AI adoption among Filipinos is nascent.

FIG 29 **AI User Behavior among Philipping digital users**



Source: e-Conomy SEA Report (2025) by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company

In terms of AI adoption dynamics, top motivations for using or paying for AI features are as follows:

FIG 30 **Top Motivations for Using or Paying for AI features**



Source: e-Conomy SEA Report (2025) by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company

The growing accessibility of AI also has the potential to democratize professional development. Unlike traditional training programs that often require significant time and financial investment, many AI tools are low-cost—or even free—and provide immediate, on-demand assistance. For remote workers navigating an increasingly competitive global

marketplace, AI is becoming more than just a productivity tool; it is also serving as a practical means of learning, experimentation, and continuous skill development. The findings that follow explore the extent to which Filipino remote workers have embraced AI and how they are integrating it into their day-to-day work.

Filipino remote workers demonstrate a high level of confidence in adapting to technological change, with nine in ten reporting that they are comfortable using new technologies.

FIG 31 **Comfort with Using New Technologies**



Very comfortable – I embrace new technologies proactively	55%
Comfortable – I can adopt when needed	36%
Neutral – I sometimes struggle with new technologies	8%
Slightly uncomfortable – I prefer traditional methods	0%
Not comfortable – I avoid using new technologies	0%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How comfortable are you adopting new technologies (e.g., AI, collaboration tools, automation) in your work?

This confidence in adopting new technologies is already translating into practice. Nearly six in ten (59%) Filipino remote workers reported actively using AI in their work and finding it valuable in enhancing productivity and efficiency, while another three in ten (30%) use AI on an as-needed basis and recognize its benefits for specific tasks. Notably, only 1% said their AI use was primarily driven by company initiatives, suggesting that adoption is largely self-initiated rather than employer-mandated. Meanwhile, just 8% reported not using AI at all.

FIG 32 **Adoption of AI Tools in the Workplace**



I actively use AI and find it very helpful in my work	57%
I use AI when needed and see some benefits	34%
I have to use AI because my company requires it	1%
I do not use AI in my work at all	8%

Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Are you actively using AI in your current work?

While AI adoption is becoming increasingly widespread, access to AI tools remains largely self-supported. Two-thirds (66%) of Filipino remote workers rely exclusively on free AI platforms, making them the primary gateway to AI-powered productivity and learning. Only one in five (21%) receive paid AI subscriptions or licenses from their employers, while an even smaller proportion (13%) personally invest in premium AI tools.

FIG 33 **Access to AI Tools**



I use only free AI tools	66%
My employer provides paid access (e.g., licenses/subscriptions)	21%
I personally pay for AI tools	13%

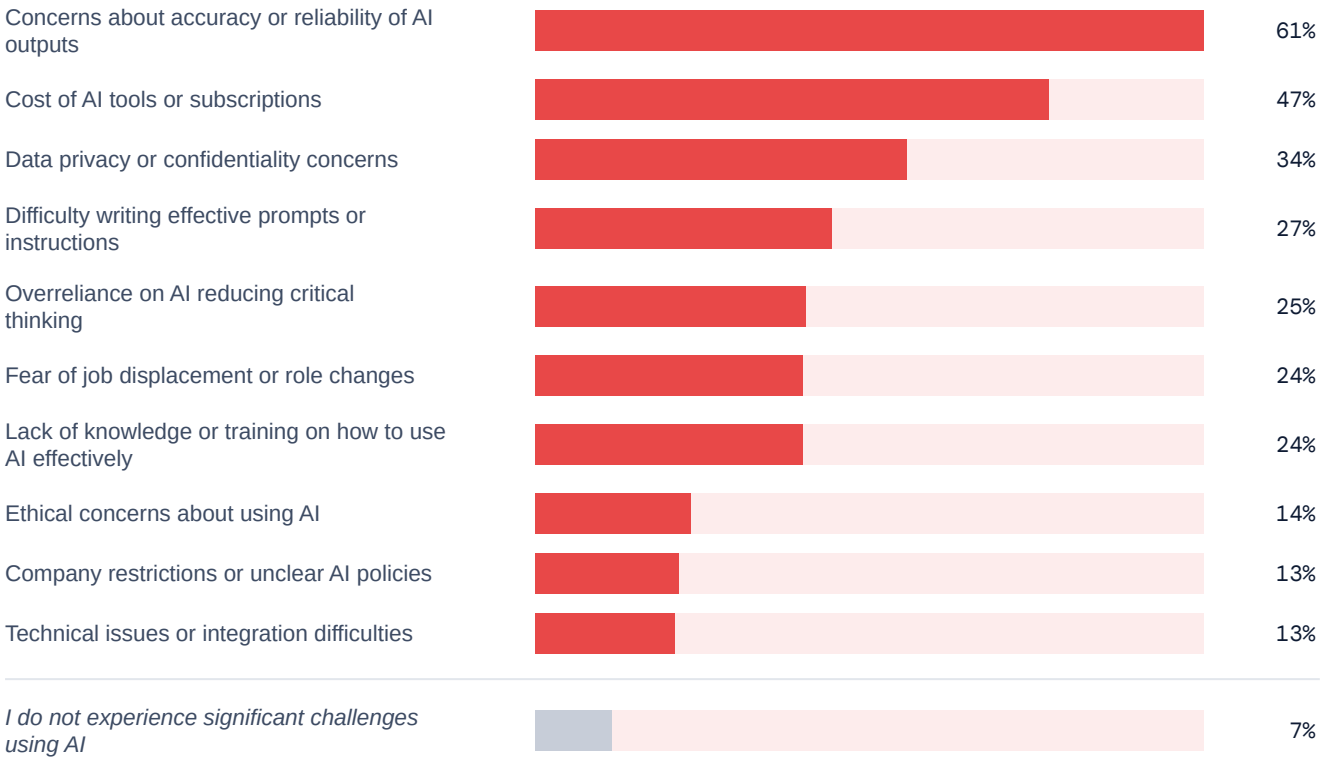
Base: Among those who have adopted AI for work (n=1,504) Q. Which of the following best describes how you access the AI tools you have mentioned?

As AI becomes embedded in the future of work, the conversation must extend beyond adoption to effective and responsible use. While many Filipino remote workers have embraced AI as a productivity tool, they also face a new set of challenges that accompany its growing role in the workplace. Identifying these challenges is critical to understanding what additional skills, guidance, and organizational support are needed to help workers maximize AI's benefits while mitigating its limitations.

Despite the widespread adoption of AI, Filipino remote workers remain mindful of its limitations and associated risks. The most commonly cited challenge is concern over the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated outputs (61%), underscoring that human judgment continues to play a critical role in validating AI-assisted work. Cost also remains a significant barrier, with nearly half (47%) citing AI subscriptions and premium tools as a challenge, while one-third (34%) expressed concerns about data privacy and confidentiality. Beyond technical considerations, workers also identified emerging workforce challenges, including overreliance on AI reducing critical thinking (25%), fear of job displacement or changing roles (24%), and a lack of knowledge or training on how to use AI effectively (24%). Notably, only 7% reported experiencing no significant challenges.

Together, these findings suggest that while Filipino remote workers are readily embracing AI, they are doing so with a healthy degree of caution, recognizing that maximizing its benefits will require not only broader access to AI tools but also stronger AI literacy, responsible use, and clear organizational policies.

FIG 34 **Challenges with AI**



Base: Among those who have adopted AI for work (n=1,504) Q. What challenges do you experience when using AI in your work? Select all that apply. Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The challenges associated with AI also shape how Filipino remote workers view their readiness for the future of work. As technology continues to evolve, staying competitive requires more than simply adopting new tools—it demands the ability to use them effectively, adapt to changing job requirements, and continuously develop new skills. Consequently, preparedness is not a fixed state but an ongoing process of learning and adaptation.

Nearly six in ten (58%) consider themselves somewhat prepared, acknowledging that while they possess foundational skills, there is still room for improvement. Another 27% believe they are very prepared, reflecting confidence in their ability to navigate the evolving world of work. Only 3% reported feeling unprepared, while 12% remained uncertain about their readiness. Overall, the results suggest that Filipino remote workers approach the future of work with cautious optimism—they are confident in their current capabilities but recognize that sustained success will depend on continuous upskilling, adaptability, and keeping pace with emerging technologies such as AI.

FIG 35 **Preparedness for the Future of Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. How prepared do you feel for the future of work in your industry?

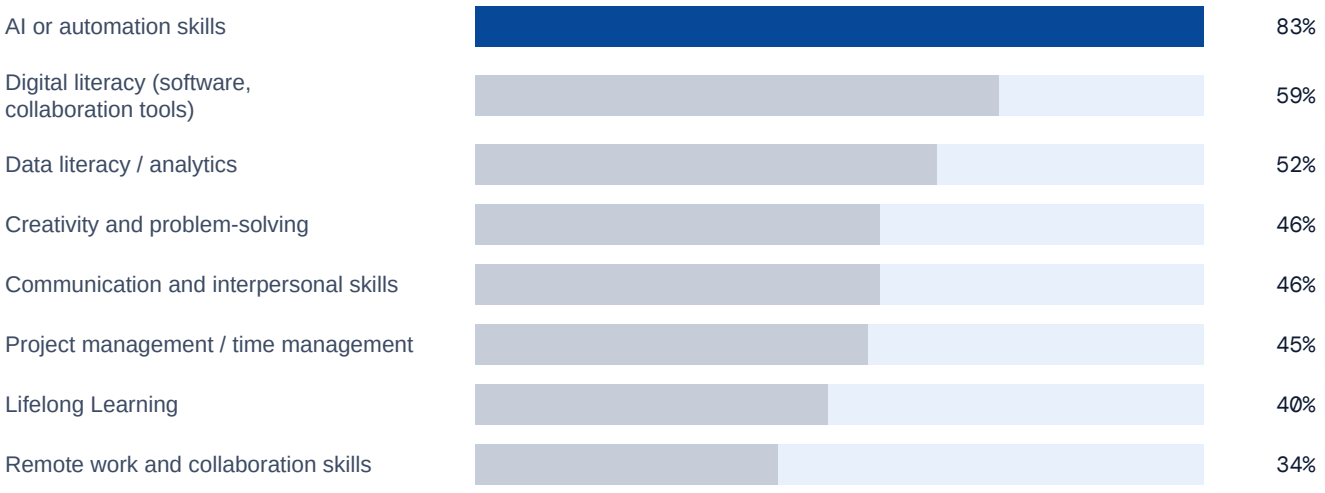
As AI reshapes how work is executed, the future of work therefore demands not only digital readiness, but organizational readiness—the capacity to redesign work, develop talent, and lead through continuous change.

For countries such as the Philippines, these shifts present both significant opportunities and pressing challenges. The country's reputation for adaptability, strong communication skills, and service excellence has established Filipino professionals as highly sought-after participants in the global remote workforce. However, sustaining this competitive advantage will require continual investment in workforce development. As AI becomes integrated into everyday business operations, technical expertise alone will no longer be sufficient. Workers will need to continuously update their digital competencies while strengthening the human capabilities that enable them to work effectively alongside AI.

Against this backdrop, an important question emerges: How prepared are Filipino remote workers to thrive in an increasingly AI-enabled and globally competitive labor market? To better understand this, respondents were asked to identify the skills they believe are most important to develop for the future of work.

AI and automation skills emerged as the most important capability for the future, cited by more than eight in ten (83%) Filipino remote workers. This was followed by digital literacy (59%) and data literacy or analytics (52%), underscoring the growing importance of technical competencies in an increasingly digital economy. However, respondents also placed considerable value on uniquely human capabilities, with creativity and problem-solving (46%), communication and interpersonal skills (46%), and project and time management (45%) ranking among the top priorities. Notably, four in ten (40%) identified lifelong learning itself as a critical skill, reflecting an understanding that adaptability and continuous development are becoming just as important as any single technical competency. Taken together, these findings suggest that Filipino remote workers view future readiness not as mastering AI alone, but as developing a balanced combination of digital expertise and enduring human skills that complement, rather than compete with, emerging technologies.

FIG 36 **Skills Needed for the Future of Work**



Base: Total Interviews (n=1,642) Q. Which skills do you think you need to develop to be ready for future work trends? Note: May not sum up to 100% because the question allows multiple answers

The findings from this study paint a picture of a workforce that is both resilient and optimistic. Filipino remote workers have embraced remote work not merely as an alternative employment arrangement, but as a long-term career path that offers greater flexibility, global opportunities, and improved quality of life. They have demonstrated a strong willingness to continuously learn, adopt emerging technologies, and adapt to the rapidly evolving demands of the global labor market.

Yet this optimism is tempered by the realities of an ecosystem that has yet to fully catch up with the pace of change. Persistent challenges surrounding employment security, access to statutory benefits, tax compliance, financial inclusion, and career development reveal that the future of remote work cannot rely on individual resilience alone. As remote work becomes an increasingly permanent feature of the Philippine economy, the focus must shift from enabling remote work to sustaining it through stronger institutions, more inclusive policies, and support systems that provide workers with both flexibility and security.

Ultimately, the future of Philippine remote work will not be determined solely by how many Filipinos work remotely, but by how effectively the country transforms remote work into a formal, inclusive, and future-ready employment ecosystem. Doing so will ensure that Filipino talent remains globally competitive while allowing workers to enjoy not only the opportunities of borderless employment, but also the stability, protection, and long-term career growth they deserve.

PART THREE

Summary and Recommendation

Lobby for the formalization of remote work. · Accelerate investment in future-ready skills and responsible AI adoption. · Build a globally competitive Philippine remote work ecosystem through stronger public-private collaboration.

Part Three. Summary and Recommendation

Remote work has evolved from a temporary response to a global disruption into a fundamental shift in how work is organized, accessed, and delivered. For the Philippines, this transformation represents a significant opportunity. By connecting Filipino talent to global employers, remote work has expanded access to higher-paying jobs, increased labor force participation, and created new pathways for economic mobility beyond traditional geographic boundaries. The findings of this study demonstrate that Filipino remote workers are highly optimistic about the future of remote work and recognize its ability to improve quality of life through greater flexibility, better work-life balance, and increased earning potential.

Guided by the insights from this survey, the following recommendations outline key priorities for strengthening the Philippine remote work ecosystem and ensuring that its growth remains inclusive, competitive, and future-ready:

1 Lobby for the formalization of remote work.

The rapid growth of cross-border remote work calls for policies that recognize Filipino remote workers as an increasingly significant segment of the country's workforce. Government agencies must champion the formalization of remote work by developing frameworks that extend appropriate employment protections and labor rights to Filipinos working for foreign-based organizations.

Meanwhile, the HR and outsourcing industry can play an important role in bridging the gap between international employment arrangements and local labor standards, particularly for a growing segment of remote workers: Filipinos who work full time and exclusively for a single international company that has no Philippine legal entity. In substance these workers are employees, but because their employer has no local presence, they are typically engaged as independent contractors and fall outside the reach of Philippine labor protections. For this segment, a local outsourcing or employment partner serves as a critical intermediary on both sides of the arrangement. For the remote worker, the partner vets the legitimacy of the international company before engagement begins, and shields the worker from missed or delayed payroll by taking on invoicing, tax filing, and employment administration directly. The worker becomes a formally employed Filipino, with access to statutory benefits, social protection, and the employment-related safeguards that local labor standards provide, regardless of where the international client is based. For international business, the same partner removes the need to establish a Philippine legal entity or physical operations, and carries the HR and people-administration heavy lifting of compliant local employment. This makes it simpler and lower-risk to hire Filipino talent, and to hire more of it, while ensuring that growth in cross-border hiring translates into formal, protected jobs rather than a widening informal sector.

2 Accelerate investment in future-ready skills and responsible AI adoption.

Preparing Filipino remote workers for the future of work requires coordinated investments in lifelong learning. Government, educational institutions, employers, and industry organizations should expand affordable and accessible training in AI, digital literacy, data analytics, cybersecurity, project management, and other high-demand competencies. Equal emphasis should be placed on strengthening human-centered skills—including communication, creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and leadership—that complement AI and will remain essential in an increasingly automated workplace.

3 Build a globally competitive Philippine remote work ecosystem through stronger public-private collaboration.

Sustaining the Philippines' leadership in the global remote economy will require coordinated action among government, employers, digital platforms, integrated outsourcing solutions providers, financial institutions, educational institutions, and remote worker communities. Collaboration should focus on improving digital infrastructure, establishing responsible AI and remote work standards, expanding worker protections, supporting continuous workforce development, and positioning the Philippines as the preferred destination for globally competitive remote talent.

Part Four. Appendices

Appendix A: References

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Appendix B: Question-by-question results

Incidence of Remote Employees and Independent Freelancers

Which of the following statements best describes your current employment status? Please select one.

Base: Total Interviews (Unweighted)	1642	100.00%
NET - Remote Workers	972	59.20%
Full-time	622	37.88%
Part-time	350	21.32%
NET - Freelancers	670	40.80%

Tenure - Independent Freelancers

How long have you been working as an independent freelancer?

Base: Among Independent Freelancers	670	100.00%
< 6 mos	108	16.12%
6-11 mos	46	6.87%
1-2 years	102	15.22%
2-3 years	91	13.58%
3-4 years	59	8.81%
4-5 years	83	12.39%
> 5 years	181	27.01%

Tenure - Remote Employees

How many years of experience do you have working remotely?

Base: Among Remote Employees	972	100.00%
Less than 1 year	160	16.46%
1-2 years	187	19.24%
2-5 years	407	41.87%
5-9 years	152	15.64%
9 years or more	66	6.79%

Source of Awareness about Remote Work

Through which channels did you first learn about remote work? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Social Media	886	53.96%
Job Platforms	858	52.25%
Online Communities	790	48.11%
Colleagues / former coworkers	555	33.80%
Friends	467	28.44%
Online courses	333	20.28%
Family and relatives	319	19.43%
Youtube	189	11.51%
Recruitment agencies	148	9.01%
Government Programs	38	2.31%

Description of Current Role

How would you describe your current role?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Technical	1286	78.32%
Non-Technical	1190	72.47%
Creative Role	261	15.90%
Management	248	15.10%
Others	41	2.50%

Description of Current Role by Seniority Level

How would you classify your current role by seniority level?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Entry Level	704	42.87%
Mid-Level	540	32.89%
Senior Professional	177	10.78%
Team Lead	152	9.26%
Middle Management	99	6.03%
Executive	22	1.34%
Not Applicable	151	9.20%

Channels Used to Find Remote Opportunities

How do you typically find or acquire clients? / Through which channel did you discover your current employer? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Freelancing platforms	675	41.11%
Referrals from friends or personal network	537	32.70%
Job boards	435	26.49%
Online communities	376	22.90%
Social media	364	22.17%
Recruitment agencies	266	16.20%
Referrals from past or existing clients	177	10.78%
Repeat clients	126	7.67%
Cold outreach	125	7.61%
Personal website	50	3.05%
Content marketing	36	2.19%
Others	3	0.18%

Number of Current Clients

How many active clients do you currently have?

Base: Among Independent Freelancers	670	100.00%
1 client	387	57.76%
2 clients	128	19.10%
3 clients	46	6.87%
4 clients	10	1.49%
5 clients	9	1.34%
> 5 clients	12	1.79%
I currently have no active clients	78	11.64%

Client Management Preference

Which of the following describes your preference in terms of managing clients.

Base: Among Independent Freelancers	670	100.00%
One primary, 1-2 side clients	338	50.45%
One stable, long-term client	211	31.49%
2-3 clients	49	7.31%
> 4 clients	20	2.99%
Short-term clients	20	2.99%
No strong preference	32	4.78%

Freelancing Arrangement

What is your employment arrangement with your current client/s?

Base: Among Independent Freelancers	670	100.00%
Hourly rate	343	51.19%
Contract-based	262	39.10%
Project-based	133	19.85%
Agency	129	19.25%
EOR	17	2.54%

Remote Employment Arrangement

What is your employment arrangement with your current employer?

Base: Among Remote Employees	972	100.00%
Full-time employment	577	59.36%
Part-time employment	294	30.25%
Contractor engagement	71	7.30%
Seasonal employment	19	1.95%
Other	11	1.13%

Reasons for Part-Time Employment Arrangement

What are the main reasons for your part-time employment arrangement? Select all that apply.

Base: Among Part-Time Employees	294	100.00%
My employer only offers part-time roles	136	46.26%
I have caregiving or family responsibilities	87	29.59%
I am balancing another job	59	20.07%
I prefer part-time work over full-time employment	40	13.61%
I am transitioning to full-time work	25	8.50%
Health or personal reasons	21	7.14%
I am managing multiple clients	19	6.46%
I am studying or pursuing further education	17	5.78%
I am testing the role or company first	0	0.00%

Estimated Monthly Income from Remote Work

How much do you currently earn from your CURRENT role per month? Please provide an estimate in Philippine Pesos. Select one range.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Less than ₱10,000	157	9.56%
₱10,000 – ₱19,999	214	13.03%
₱20,000 – ₱29,999	246	14.98%
₱30,000 – ₱39,999	225	13.70%
₱40,000 – ₱49,999	198	12.06%
₱50,000 – ₱69,999	249	15.16%
₱70,000 – ₱99,999	164	9.99%
₱100,000 – ₱149,999	82	4.99%
₱150,000 – ₱199,999	19	1.16%
₱200,000 – ₱299,999	8	0.49%
₱300,000 or more	2	0.12%
Prefer not to disclose	78	4.75%

Likes about Remote Work

What do you LIKE about working remotely? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Ability to work from anywhere	1448	88.19%
Reduced commuting / transportation costs	1446	88.06%
Flexible working hours / work-life balance	1317	80.21%
Learning new skills / professional growth	1155	70.34%
Higher earning potential	1150	70.04%
Autonomy and independence in my work	959	58.40%
Ability to manage multiple income streams	890	54.20%
Variety of work and experiences	833	50.73%
Choosing my own clients or projects	671	40.86%

Dislikes about Remote Work

What do you DISLIKE about working remotely? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
No employment benefits (e.g., health insurance, paid leaves)	1152	70.16%
Lack of consistent or predictable income	853	51.95%
Uncertain career growth or progression	707	43.06%
Difficulty accessing credit, loans, or financial services due to lack of recognized employment records	658	40.07%
Isolation or lack of team collaboration	437	26.61%
Difficulty separating work and personal life	395	24.06%
Transitioning to a registered business requires significant investment	277	16.87%
Challenges with client management or scope creep	379	23.08%
High cost of upskilling or pursuing formal credentials	355	21.62%

Intent to Keep Working Remotely

Do you envision yourself freelancing or working remotely in the next five years?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Definitely yes – I prefer remote work and plan to continue	1328	80.88%
Probably yes – I am open to remote work opportunities	221	13.46%
Not sure – It depends on circumstances or opportunities	87	5.30%
Probably not – I prefer traditional office work	3	0.18%
Definitely not – I do not want to work remotely in the future	3	0.18%

Benefits of Remote Work

How has remote working benefited you?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
More time with family or loved ones	1396	85.02%
Greater flexibility in work schedule	1123	68.39%
Reduced stress from traditional work environments	1084	66.02%
Better work-life balance	1069	65.10%
Improved financial stability	912	55.54%
Additional sources of income	896	54.57%
Personal and professional growth / skill development	848	51.64%
Enhanced lifestyle or quality of life	825	50.24%

Current Employment Benefits Received

Which of the following benefits does your current employer offer? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Paid Time Off (vacation leave, sick leave, birthday leave)	621	37.82%
13th month pay	359	21.86%
HMO/Health Insurance	376	22.90%
Overtime pay	294	17.90%
Training, Courses & Certification	222	13.52%
Social / Offsite activities	86	5.24%
Unlimited Time Off	84	5.12%
Wellness Allowance	58	3.53%
SSS, Philhealth, Pag-ibig	33	2.01%
Philippine Holiday pay premium	35	2.13%
Night differential Pay	27	1.64%
Communication allowance (e.g., internet, phone)	0	0.00%
No, my client does not provide any of these benefits	555	33.80%

Challenges Encountered from Working Remotely

What challenges or downsides have you experienced from freelancing and/or working remotely?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
No employment benefits (e.g., health insurance, paid leave)	1219	74.24%
Irregular or unpredictable income	946	57.61%
Difficulty accessing financial services (loans, credit cards)	582	35.44%
Stress or burnout due to multitasking multiple roles	485	29.54%
Workload or client management challenges (scope creep, tight deadlines)	374	22.78%
Feeling isolated or lack of team collaboration	406	24.73%
Difficulty separating work and personal life	305	18.57%
Administrative burden of managing taxes and contributions	338	20.58%
Difficulty transitioning to a registered business	179	10.90%
Limited career growth or progression opportunities	326	19.85%
High cost of upskilling or obtaining formal credentials	353	21.50%

Countries Where Employers and Clients Are Based

Which country is your employer / client based in?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
USA	1094	66.63%
Australia	292	17.78%
UK	127	7.73%
Canada	95	5.79%
Singapore	39	2.38%
UAE	24	1.46%
Japan	23	1.40%
Netherlands	16	0.97%
Germany	15	0.91%
Taiwan	5	0.30%

Challenges Encountered from Lack of Employment Record

Which of the following have been challenging due to the lack of local employment records (e.g., payslips, ITR, government contributions)? Select all that apply.

Base	610	100.00%
Applying for car loans or car financing	172	28.20%
Applying for housing loans or mortgages	209	34.26%
Getting approved for credit cards	220	36.07%
Accessing personal or bank loans	165	27.05%
Securing visas for travel	125	20.49%
Renting a property	26	4.26%
Qualifying for government benefits (Paid Maternity Leave, Calamity Loans etc.)	180	29.51%
Proving income for official transactions	245	40.16%
I have not experienced any challenges	140	22.95%

Interest in Having Formal Employment Documentation

How interested are you in having formal employment documentation?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Very interested	803	48.90%
Somewhat interested	466	28.38%
Can't say	253	15.41%
Not interested	66	4.02%
Not interested at all	54	3.29%
TOP-2 BOX		**77.28%**
BOTTOM-3 BOX		**22.72%**

Interest in Being Locally Supported by an Outsourcing Solutions Partner

How interested are you in being locally supported by an Outsourcing Solutions Partner?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Very interested	767	47.97%
Somewhat interested	492	30.77%
Can't say	279	17.45%
Not interested	15	0.94%
Not interested at all	46	2.88%
TOP-2 BOX		**78.74%**
BOTTOM-2 BOX		**21.26%**

Perceived Importance of Upskilling in the Context of Remote Work

How important is upskilling in your line of work?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Extremely important – I consider continuous learning essential for success	1218	74.18%
Very important – I regularly seek opportunities to upskill	256	15.59%
Moderately important – I upskill when needed or when convenient	130	7.92%
Slightly important – I occasionally upskill, but it's not a priority	26	1.58%
Not important – Upskilling does not significantly affect my work	12	0.73%

Uptake of Upskilling Initiatives

Have you taken any measures to upskill or develop new skills?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Yes	1382	84.17%
No	260	15.83%

Upskilling Initiatives Taken

What measures have you taken to upskill or develop new skills?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Attended webinars, workshops, or industry events	1040	63.34%
Enrolled in online courses or training programs (e.g., Coursera, Udemy, LinkedIn Learning)	965	58.77%
Self-study through books, tutorials, or videos	960	58.47%
Learned through practical experience on the job	562	34.23%
Joined mentorship or coaching programs	445	27.10%
Participated in peer learning communities or forums	331	20.16%
Pursued formal education or certifications (e.g., degree, professional certification)	150	9.14%
I have not taken any measures to upskill	17	1.04%

Reasons for Not Upskilling

Why are you not taking any measures to upskill or develop new skills?

Base: Among those who claimed to have not taken measures to upskill	260	100.00%
I don't have enough time due to work or personal responsibilities.	166	63.85%
I don't have the financial resources to pay for courses or training.	164	63.08%
I'm not sure which skills I should learn.	87	33.46%
I haven't found a training program or course that fits my needs.	56	21.54%
My employer does not provide opportunities or support for upskilling.	41	15.77%
I feel overwhelmed by the number of options available.	39	15.00%
I don't see the immediate need to upskill right now.	38	14.62%
I lack motivation or interest at the moment.	29	11.15%
I'm satisfied with my current skills and role.	25	9.62%
I prefer learning on the job rather than through formal training.	23	8.85%

Willingness to Spend for Professional Development

How much are you willing to spend on professional development each year? (Select one)

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
I only take free courses or learning opportunities	902	54.93%
Less than ₱5,000 per year (about ₱400/month)	583	35.51%
₱5,000–₱20,000 per year (about ₱400–₱1,600/month)	127	7.73%
More than ₱20,000 per year (about ₱1,600+/month)	30	1.83%

Challenges Encountered While Upskilling

What challenges or barriers have you encountered while upskilling or developing new skills?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
High cost of courses, training, or certifications	1062	64.68%
Lack of time due to work or personal commitments	897	54.63%
Lack of guidance, mentorship, or support	605	36.85%
Limited access to quality or relevant training programs in the Philippines	558	33.98%
Motivation or consistency challenges	518	31.55%
Difficulty applying learned skills in practical work	511	31.12%
Limited opportunities to advance or be recognized despite upskilling	371	22.59%
Technology or connectivity issues (e.g., internet access)	137	8.34%
I have not faced significant challenges	54	3.29%

Comfort with Using New Technologies

How comfortable are you adopting new technologies (e.g., AI, collaboration tools, automation) in your work?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Very comfortable – I embrace new technologies proactively	910	55.42%
Comfortable – I can adopt when needed	587	35.75%
Neutral – I sometimes struggle with new technologies	136	8.28%
Slightly uncomfortable – I prefer traditional methods	7	0.43%
Not comfortable – I avoid using new technologies	2	0.12%

Adoption of AI Tools in the Workplace

Are you actively using AI in your current work?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
I actively use AI and find it very helpful in my work	930	56.64%
I use AI when needed and see some benefits	556	33.86%
I have to use AI because my company requires it	18	1.10%
I do not use AI in my work at all	138	8.40%

Access to AI Tools

Which of the following best describes how you access the AI tools you have mentioned?

Base: Total Interviews	1504	100.00%
I use only free AI tools	995	66.16%
My employer provides paid access (e.g., licenses/subscriptions)	309	20.55%
I personally pay for AI tools	200	13.30%

Challenges with using AI

What challenges do you experience when using AI in your work? Select all that apply.

Base: Total Interviews	1504	100.00%
Concerns about accuracy or reliability of AI outputs	920	61.17%
Cost of AI tools or subscriptions	707	47.01%
Data privacy or confidentiality concerns	511	33.98%
Difficulty writing effective prompts or instructions	408	27.13%
Overreliance on AI reducing critical thinking	372	24.73%
Fear of job displacement or role changes	368	24.47%
Lack of knowledge or training on how to use AI effectively	368	24.47%
Ethical concerns about using AI	214	14.23%
Company restrictions or unclear AI policies	197	13.10%
Technical issues or integration difficulties	192	12.77%
I do not experience significant challenges using AI	105	6.98%

Preparedness for the Future of Work

How prepared do you feel for the future of work in your industry?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
Somewhat prepared – I have some skills but need to improve	958	58.34%
Very prepared – I have the skills and knowledge needed	437	26.61%
Neutral – Unsure about my readiness	197	12.00%
Slightly unprepared – I need significant skill development	43	2.62%
Not prepared at all	7	0.43%

Skills Needed for the Future of Work

Which skills do you think you need to develop to be ready for future work trends?

Base: Total Interviews	1642	100.00%
AI or automation skills	1358	82.70%
Digital literacy (software, collaboration tools)	976	59.44%
Data literacy / analytics	861	52.44%
Creativity and problem-solving	754	45.92%
Communication and interpersonal skills	754	45.92%
Project management / time management	731	44.52%
Lifelong Learning	657	40.01%
Remote work and collaboration skills	564	34.35%

Demographics

Base: Total Interviews	1642	
Segmentation		
Freelancers	670	40.80%
Remote Employees	972	59.20%
Gender		
Female	1520	92.57%
Male	122	7.43%
Age Group		
Youth	6	0.37%
Yuppies	276	16.81%
Transitioners	391	23.81%
Balancers	751	45.74%
Older Adults	218	13.28%
Area		
NCR	446	27.16%
Balance Luzon	879	53.53%
Visayas	153	9.32%
Mindanao	164	9.99%
Locale		
Urban	1179	71.80%
Rural	463	28.20%
SEC		
ABC1	787	47.93%
C2	487	29.66%
D	321	19.55%
E	47	2.86%

Appendix C: About Remotify

Remotify is a Filipino-founded, woman-led technology company building the infrastructure for remote work. As an HR Tech and outsourcing platform, we enable companies worldwide to hire, manage, and pay talent in the Philippines without establishing a local legal entity. In doing so, we help organizations build distributed teams while giving Filipino professionals the protections, benefits, and career stability of formal employment without sacrificing the flexibility of remote work.

Our mission is simple: to enable freedom. We believe remote work should create greater economic opportunity, not greater insecurity. By combining technology with deep local expertise in employment, payroll, compliance, and HR, we make cross-border employment secure, compliant, and sustainable for both employers and employees.

Remotify's integrated HR operating system supports the entire remote employment lifecycle, from hiring and background verification to onboarding, payroll, timekeeping, performance management, equipment management, and compliant offboarding. Built on this foundation is an AI-enabled employability and interview platform aligned with the World Economic Forum's Future of Work competencies. The platform assesses workforce readiness, identifies skill gaps, recommends personalized learning pathways, accelerates role-based AI adoption, and matches Filipino remote professionals with international clients, without requiring them to leave home or give up the flexibility and employment protection that remote work should provide.

Beyond technology, Remotify is committed to advancing the broader remote work ecosystem through research, policy dialogue, and workforce development. This study reflects our ongoing commitment to generating evidence-based insights that help governments, employers, and industry leaders build a more inclusive, competitive, and future-ready digital workforce for the Philippines.

To learn more, visit www.remotify.com

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