

Expatriate Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

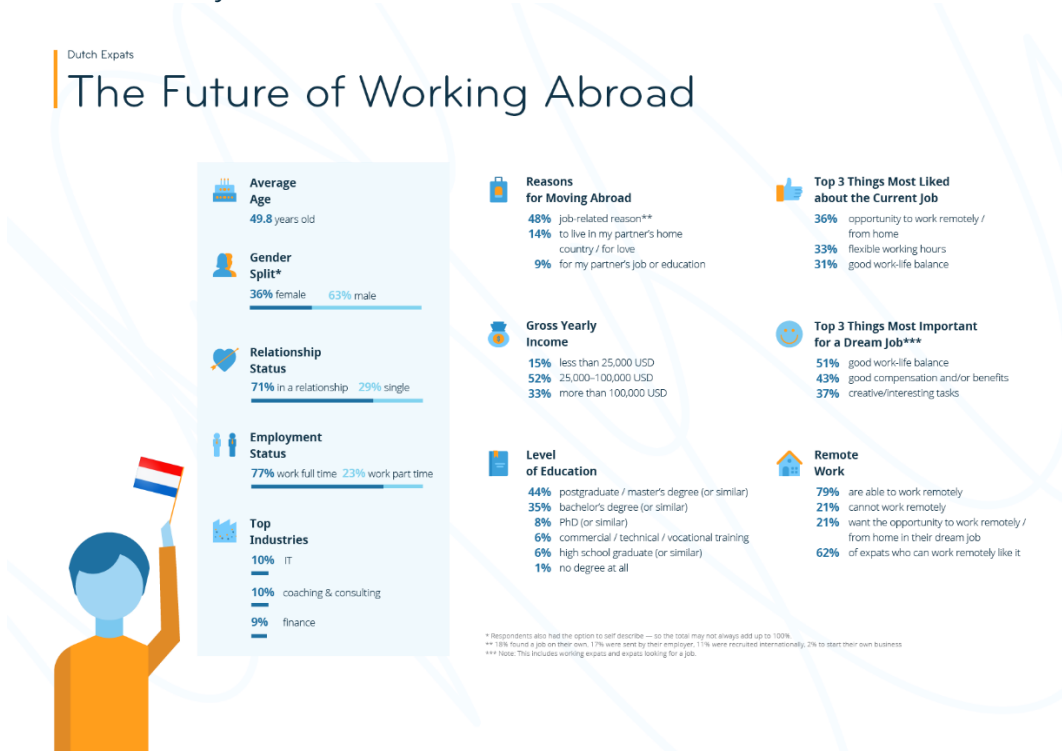
Dutch expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

- Dutch nationals working abroad are older, more likely to be men, and earn more money than the global average of working expats.
- While Dutch expats are very satisfied with their working life abroad, they usually leave a modern business culture behind when relocating.
- A good work-life balance is the most important aspect for Dutch expats imagining their ideal work environment.

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do Dutch nationals move abroad? According to the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, close to half the Dutch respondents working abroad (48%) relocated for their career: 18% of them found a job on their own, 17% were sent by their employer, and 11% were recruited internationally. Just 2% moved abroad to start their own business.

Aside from work-related reasons, an above-average share of Dutch nationals working abroad originally relocated for their partner's job or education (9% vs. 4% globally) or because they wanted to live in their partner's home country / for love (14% vs. 10% globally).

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



Dutch Expats Working Abroad: Older than Average and More Likely to be Men

Dutch expats working abroad are on average 49.8 years old, which is significantly older than the global average (43.1 years). Additionally, a larger-than-average share of them are men (63% vs. 53% globally) and in a committed relationship (71% vs. 61% globally).

When it comes to their level of education, 44% of Dutch expats working abroad have a postgraduate / master's degree, which is just slightly below the global average of 47%. Another 35% have a bachelor's degree (vs. 33% globally), while 8% hold a PhD (vs. 8% globally).

Dutch Expats Often Work in IT or Consulting and Like Being Their Own Boss

The most common fields that Dutch expats work in are IT (10%) and coaching & consulting (10%). While IT is also very popular among working expats worldwide (11%), just 3% of expats globally work in the field of coaching & consulting. On the other hand, Dutch expats are underrepresented in the fields of education (6% vs. 12% globally) and healthcare (3% vs. 6% globally).

More than a quarter of Dutch expats working abroad (26%) are in a senior/specialist position, which is a smaller proportion than the global average (30%). However, 17% are top managers and executives (vs. 13% globally). And while just 2% moved abroad to *start* their own business, more than one in ten Dutch expats (11%) run their own business *now* (vs. 7% globally.) Another 17% are self-employed / freelancers, which is also a considerably higher percentage than the global average (11%).

Dutch Expats Are in It for the Long Run and Earn More Money

About a third of Dutch nationals working abroad (33%) have lived in their current country of residence for more than ten years — nine percentage points more than the global average (24%). And they are planning to stay: close to two in five Dutch expats (37%) see themselves staying there possibly forever, while this is only the case for 30% of working expats globally.

Maybe their above-average incomes play a role in this decision: more than two in five Dutch respondents (43%) have a gross yearly income ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 USD (vs. 33% globally). About one in three (33%) even make 100,000 USD or more per year, which is ten percentage points above the global average (23%). On the other hand, just 25% earn 50,000 USD or less, compared to 44% globally.

This is the case even though Dutch expats are more likely to work part time than expats worldwide: close to one-quarter (23%) work part time (vs. 18% globally), while 77% work full time (vs. 82% globally). However, the average working hours among all Dutch respondents working abroad (full-time and part-time workers combined) are still slightly longer than the global average (40.3 hours vs. 39.9 hours per week globally).

Dutch Expats Leave an Excellent Working Life Behind

More than four in five Dutch expats (81%) are generally satisfied with their job abroad, while globally just 73% of working expats feel this way. They also have slightly above-average levels of satisfaction with their work-life balance (71% vs. 68% globally) and their working hours (72% vs. 70% globally). While they are also happy with their job security (69% vs. 67% globally), just 46% of Dutch expats working abroad rate the local career opportunities positively (vs. 49% globally). And just about three in five (61%) are happy with the state of the local economy in their respective host country (vs. 65% globally).

Looking at the top 5 most common destinations among Dutch nationals working abroad yields quite interesting results: They are Germany, the USA, Switzerland, France, and Portugal. Aside from Germany (6th), all destinations rank behind the Netherlands (13th) in the Working Abroad Index of the *Expat Insider 2021* survey. Switzerland comes 18th, followed by France (21st), the USA (26th), and Portugal (36th).

In fact, it seems like Dutch expats leave quite an excellent working life behind when moving abroad: Expats living *in* the Netherlands are more satisfied with all factors concerning their working life than Dutch nationals working abroad. Close to four in five expats working *in* the Netherlands (79%) are happy with their working hours, and 78% rate their work-life balance positively. Additionally, 57% of expats working in the Netherlands are satisfied with the local career opportunities, 87% rate the state of the local economy positively, and 76% are happy with their job security.

New Work Is Important in the Netherlands — What About Abroad?

What is more, many Dutch expats also leave modern approaches to work behind when moving abroad. In fact, close to half the Dutch expats (48%) find that factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment are *less* important in the business culture of their current country of residence than in the Netherlands. These values are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age. Globally, just 23% say that these factors are *less* important in their current host country than back home.

When it comes to expats comparing the importance of New Work in the local business culture, the Netherlands ranks 5th out of 55 countries. More than three-quarters of expats in the Netherlands (76%) say that New Work is important there. Out of the most common destinations among Dutch expats, only the USA (1st) ranks ahead of the Netherlands (5th) in this regard. Switzerland (23rd), Portugal (28th), Germany (35th), and France (47th) all perform worse. For example, just 45% of expats working in France say that New Work is important in the local business culture.

A Good Work-Life Balance Is More Important than a High Salary

Just how important modern concepts of work are for Dutch expats also becomes clear when they are asked what would be most important to them in their dream job. More than half (51%) mention a good work-life balance, which makes this factor the most frequently cited aspect among Dutch expats. Globally, expats consider a good compensation and/or good benefits the most important factor (54%). For Dutch expats, this is just their second priority (43%).

What is more, there are three aspects that are much more important to Dutch expats working abroad than to the global average: 37% of Dutch expats envision creative/interesting tasks in their ideal work environment, compared to 29% of expats globally. This factor is followed by independence and/or flat hierarchies (17% vs. 11% globally) and the employer's mission/vision (13% vs. 10% globally).

"While money is still an important factor for many people working abroad, Dutch expats show that the trend may be going slowly in another direction," says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. *"It seems they are looking for more than just a generous salary in their dream job: they want flexibility and a good work-life balance, as well as interesting and creative tasks. So, money alone might soon not be enough to win them over."*

What Dutch Expats Wish For — And What They Get

Unfortunately, what Dutch expats wish for is not necessarily what they get. When asked what they like best about their current job, a good work-life balance (31%) is the third-most frequently mentioned factor. All the other aspects mentioned above do not make it into the top 3: creative/interesting tasks (28%), a good compensation and/or good benefits (25%), and independence and/or flat hierarchies at work (21%). The employer’s mission/vision is even the *least* frequently mentioned aspect at 10% — this share is even smaller than the global average of 12%.

So, what are the two aspects that Dutch expats enjoy most about their current job? They particularly appreciate the opportunity to work remotely / from home (36%) and their flexible working hours (33%). In fact, the majority of Dutch expats (79%) has at least the option to work remotely, and 62% out of those who can work remotely actually enjoy doing so. This share is, however, slightly below the global average (65%). Remote work is also not that relevant to Dutch expats in their ideal work environment: just 21% name it as an important aspect of their dream job.

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

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

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

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

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

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

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

About InterNations

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

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

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