



Digital platform labor in the Philippines: Emerging configurations and policy implications

Cheryll Ruth Soriano, PhD

Professor, Department of Communication, De La Salle University



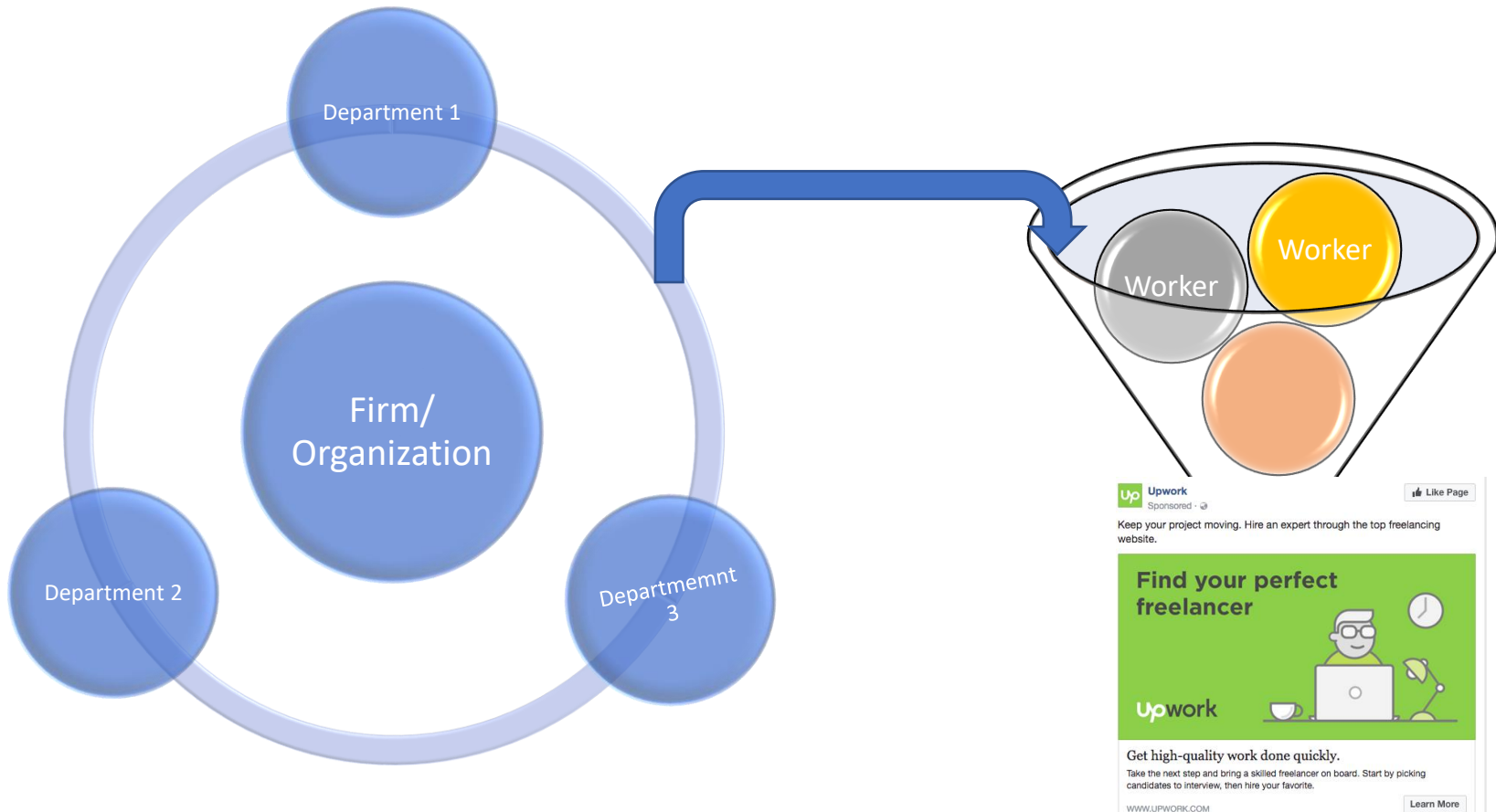
Platform labor in the Philippines



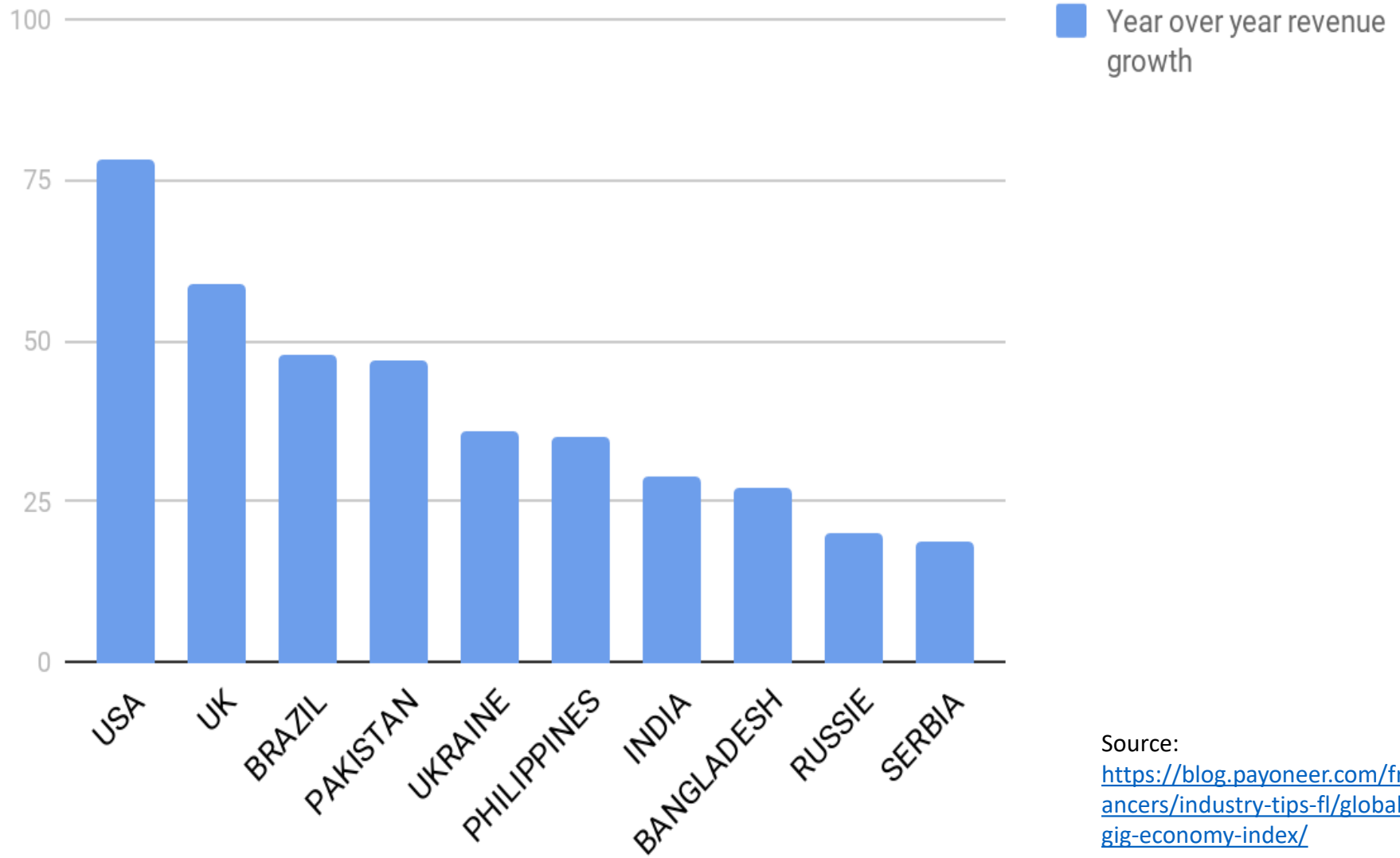
Labor platformization

Firm usually based in more advanced countries

Crowdwork platform (i.e. Upwork, Onlinejobs.ph, Fiverr)



Top 10 Countries



Top 10 Fastest Growing Gig Economies (Payoneer 2019). Accumulated growth as follows: USA (78%), UK (59%), Brazil (48%), Pakistan (47%), Ukraine (36%), Philippines (35%), India (29%), Bangladesh (27%), Russia (20%), and Serbia (19%).

Platform labor, like traditional BPO and migrant labor, is heavily promoted in response to un- and under-employment



As More Work Moves Online, The Threat of 'Digital Sweatshops' Looms

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EMIKO JOZUKA

Apr 12 2017, 7:46am



For some in developing countries, virtual assembly lines of data entry have parallels with brick-and-mortar factories. Image: Shutterstock

Image source: https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/qkjk35/as-more-work-moves-online-the-threat-of-digital-sweatshops-looms



Emerging issues and policy areas

(1) Politics of platform intermediation

Triangular and unequal relationship between employer, platform, employee



Organizes' labor and worker-client communicative arrangements

Client –
worker
transparency

Job and
worker
visibility and
ordering

Job bidding
mechanisms
and
commissions

Pricing and
negotiation

Evaluation
and
mechanisms
for redress

Table 1
Summary of fees charged by selected digital labor platforms

	Joining fee	Bidding fee	Salary cut
Upwork	Free**	Free (in response to client invitations) or 0.15USD for each “Connect” (when submitting proposals to job posts)	5-20%***
Onlinejobs.ph	Free	Free*	None
Freelancer.com	Free	Free (up to 8 bids per month); 1USD (for highlighting a bid) or 0.75% of bid amount	10%
GoLance	Free**	Free*	7.95%

*Onlinejobs.ph and GoLance earn by billing their clients

**Subject to portfolio review and approval

***Upwork charges 20% for the first \$500 billed with the client; 10% for lifetime billings with the client between \$500.01 and \$10,000; and 5% for lifetime billings with the client that exceed \$10,000

Sources: <https://www.onlinejobs.ph/faq>; www.Upwork.com; www.freelancer.com; <https://golance.com/>

Policy Issue # 1:

Realistic
understanding
of planetary
labor markets
and crowdwork

Realistic
understanding of
labor
platformization

Distinction among
“digital workers”

Distinction among
“freelance workers”


(2) Platform literacy and holistic skills development



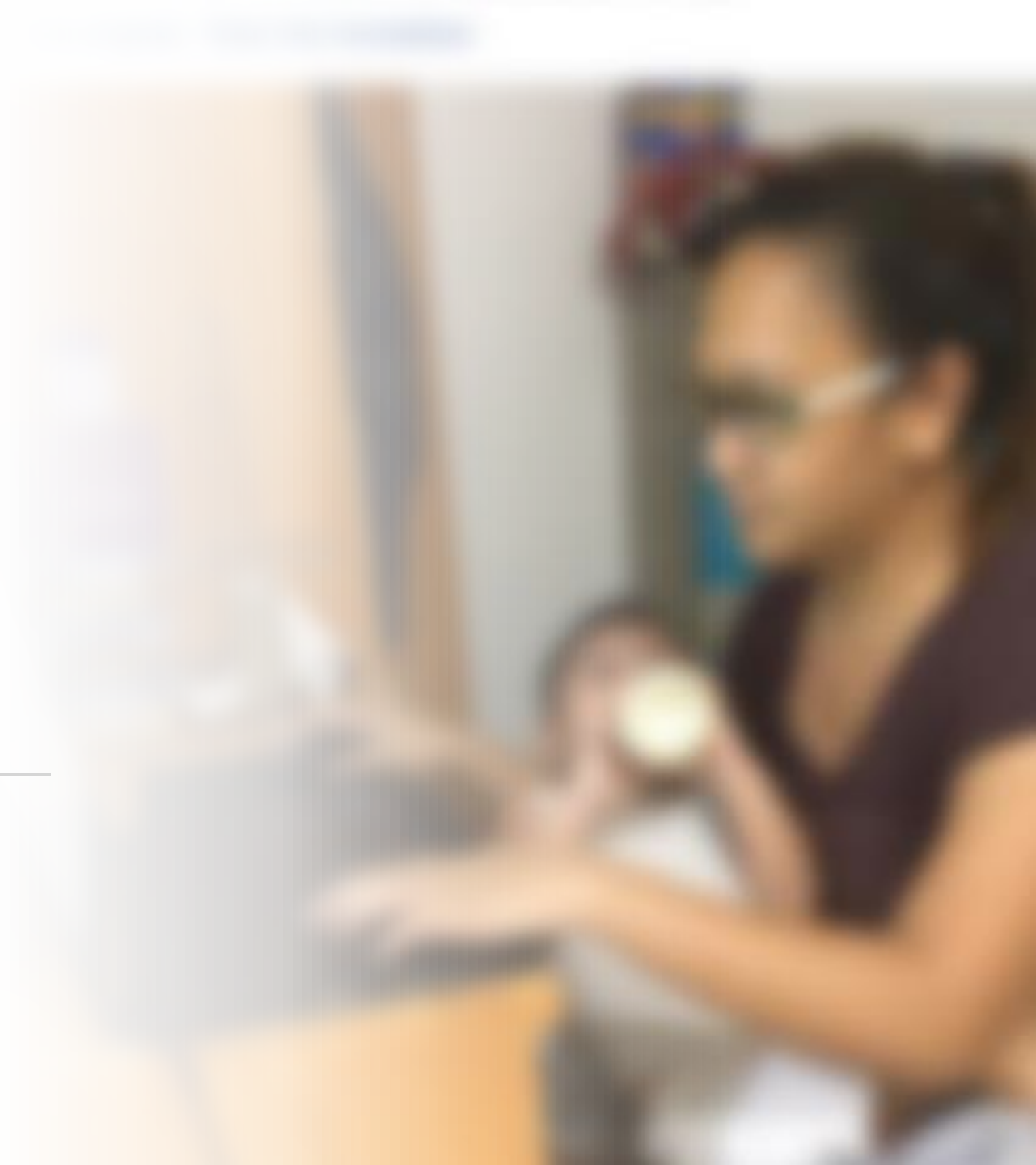
Policy Issue

#2: From basic skills training to platform labor literacy

- From basic skills training to navigating platform labor >> Portfolio development>> Platform and skills diversification >>Rate negotiation
- From basic to advanced/specialized skills development
- Inclusion of financial literacy training



(3) Health, social security and financial literacy



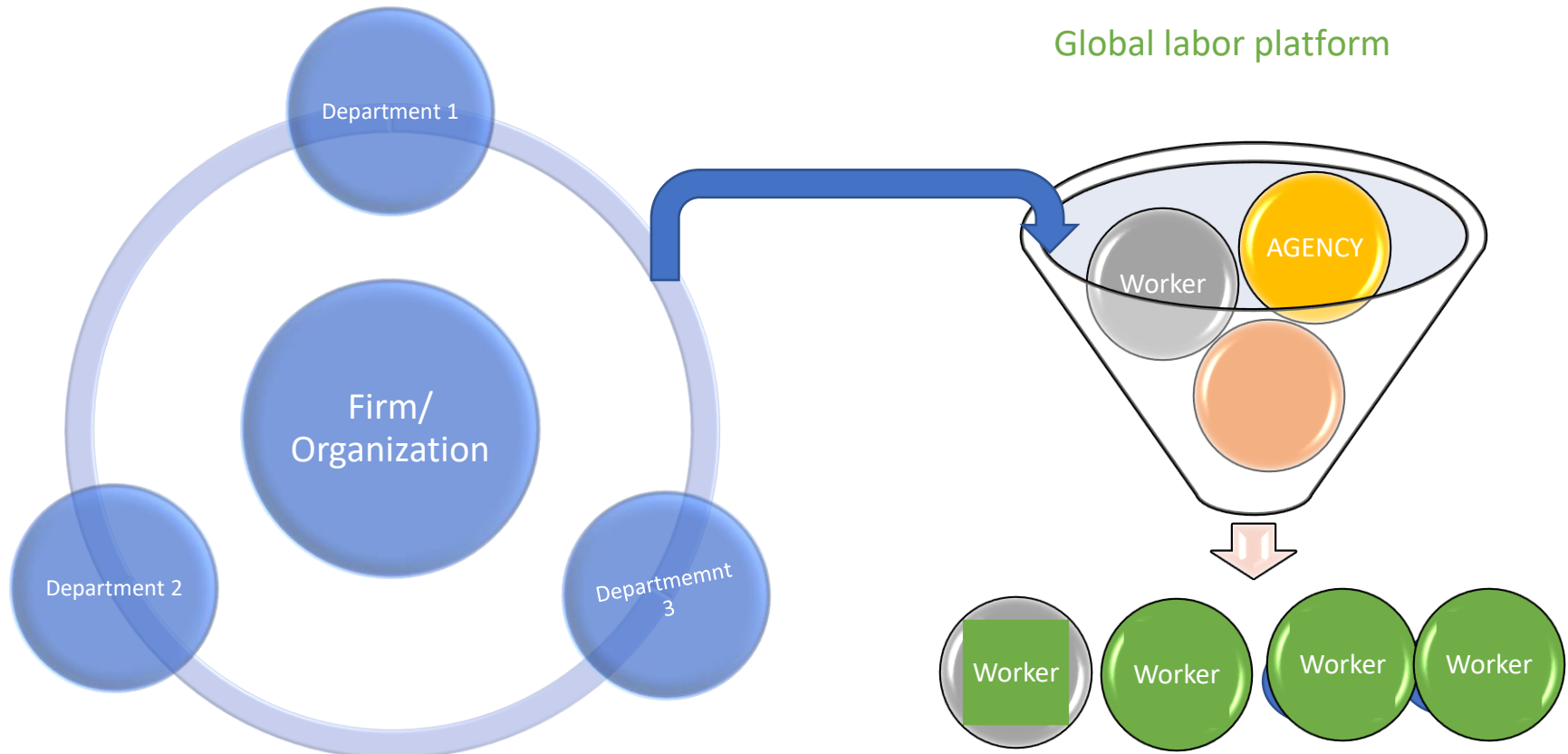
Policy Issue

#3: From promotion to protection

- **Considered in “ICT jobs creation”– but not beneficiaries of labor protection?**
- Identify an agency to oversee the welfare and development of platform workers
- Move from just promotion (ICT jobs creation) to welfare protection
 - Mental and physical health of workers
 - Mechanisms for redress
- Monitoring and accounting for economic contribution of platform workers

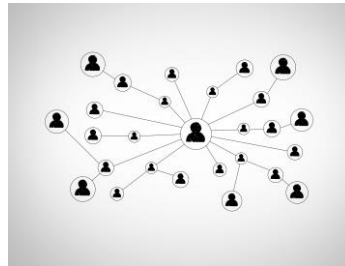
(4) 'Business development' support: Local labor outsourcing through 'worker agencies'

Firm usually based in more developed countries



Re-
outsourcing
agents
become
platforms

CONNECTED
women BETA



Policy issue # 4

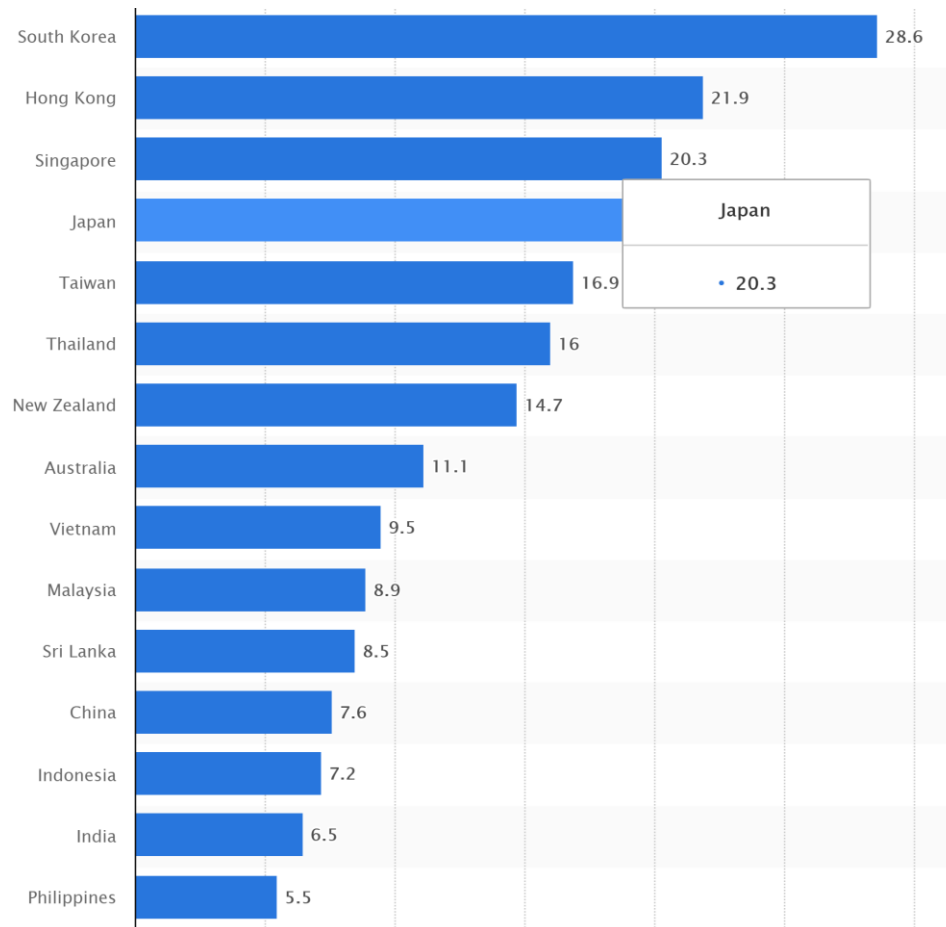


Providing business
development support
for local labor
platforms



Oversee local labor
platforms for fair
work conditions

(5) Infrastructure and materiality of digital labor



Source: Statista, 2017



Image Credit (L-R): @martinausto via Instagram, Acceler8 via Facebook
Jane Galvez October 25, 2016

8 Best Coworking Spaces In Manila For Freelancers

Policy Issue #5:

- Facilitate affordable and reliable internet connectivity
 - Promote and support co-working spaces that can cater to the needs of platform workers
-

Workers coping by themselves

new collective formations emerging (FB groups, cooperatives, local labor platforms) for survival

>>but not necessarily challenging structures of labor platformization nor labor inequality

Thank you! Contact me at
cheryll.soriano@dlsu.edu.ph

Some of our related works:

Soriano, C. & Cabanes, J.V. (2020). **Entrepreneurial solidarities: Filipino platform workers and social media collectives**. *Social Media + Society* (Special Issue on Social Media and Marginality).

Tintiangko, J. & Soriano, C.R. (2020). **Coworking Spaces in the Global South: Local Articulations and Imaginaries**. *Journal of Urban Technology*, 27(1), 67-85.

Soriano, C. & Cabanes, JV. (2019). Between 'world class work' and 'proletarianised labor': Digital labor imaginaries in the Global South, E.Polson, L. Schofield-Clarke, R. Gajjala (Eds). **Routledge Companion to Media and Class**. New York, NY: Routledge.

Soriano, C. & Panaligan, J.C. (2019). 'Skill-makers' in the platform economy: Transacting digital labor. In (Athique, A. & Baulch, E). *Digital Transactions in Asia*. New York, NY: Routledge.

**Pre-/post-prints available from MediArxiv*