

**Pro-Poor Growth Story**

# Outsourcing services

## Opportunity in a pandemic

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*At the height of COVID-19, many businesses in Fiji struggled to sustain operations and keep their staff employed. At the same time, the pandemic presented Fiji's outsourcing services sector with an opportunity for growth. Businesses in nearshore markets, such as Australia and New Zealand, began re-evaluating their global outsource providers. Businesses started looking for providers geographically closer to mitigate future risk and build business resilience. This opportunity was a boon for Fijian households that had lost their source of income, especially those dependent on the tourism industry.*

*With MDF support for outsourcing services expanding between 2020 and 2021, there have been many stories of livelihoods regained. MDF Fiji spoke to Courtney Robinson, a former tourism employee who is now carving out a successful career in outsourcing services.*

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Courtney Robinson first found out about BTR (Fiji), an outsourcing services business based in Nadi and Suva, when she noticed their job advertisement for a medical practice administration position.

"This instantly piqued my interest. In particular, the role was for a psychology/psychiatry practice and, having studied psychology at University, it was a perfect fit for me. I knew that it would be challenging – I just had to try," Courtney said, explaining how she came to work for the company.

At the time, Courtney had been unemployed for several months. The 28-year-old had worked for a renowned international resort chain as a Reservation Sales Agent and was part of a dynamic, 15-member team. But when COVID-19 reached Fiji's shores, the tourism industry, which accounts for approximately 40 percent of national employment, suffered immensely.



*My employer tried their utmost best to cater for its employees for as long as they could, but eventually they had to let people go. I was made redundant in February 2020 and instead of looking for work right away, I decided that I would stay home for a few months and take care of my daughter. By September 2020 however, I was placed in a position where I needed to find some form of employment; I needed to work again to look after my little girl.*

**Courtney**

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Courtney started working at BTR (Fiji) one month later. She works fulltime and is the sole breadwinner for her household of six – her retired parents, two brothers, daughter, and herself. The money she earns is more

than enough to cover their general expenses at home so she is also able to save in the process.



*At the beginning of it all, I made the switch because I needed a job but as I progressed and learned more about the company, I became even more determined because I wanted to be part of everything Brad and Tracy Russell [Co-Founders and Directors of BTR Fiji] stood for.*

### Courtney

Her determination and commitment to the role has paid off and in just over one year, Courtney's responsibilities have grown tremendously, to include three different portfolios - Intake Officer, Administration Team Leader and 'As Campaign' Team Leader, where she oversees a team of nine members. To support her career aspirations, she intends to enrol in a Business Management course at the Fiji National University.



Since establishing operations in 2016, BTR (Fiji) has grown and now employs **130** Fijians. In 2021 alone, the company employed **51** new staff, of which **25** staff were employed as a direct result of MDF's work in the outsourcing services sector.



The outsourcing services industry now employs around **4,000** people and has the potential to employ over **100,000** people over the next decade with the right policies, infrastructure development and incentives in place.



*To say that this role has been challenging is an understatement. Having to learn an entirely different culture, medical system and procedures of a company based in another country, has been some of the most difficult things I have ever had to do. I rose to the challenge because I chose to learn as much as I could to benefit myself and my clients.*

**Courtney Robinson,**  
BTR (Fiji) employee