**Interview 4**

**Demographic Data**

* Gender: Female
* Age Group: 36-47
* Job Title: Executive Vice President for Statistics and Population Registry
* Department: Statistics and Population Registry
* Experience: 20 years (working in statistics since 2003)
* Academic Qualification:
  1. Bachelor's degree in Statistics
  2. Higher Diploma in Demographic Statistics

**Questions and Answers**

1-The department name is the Statistics and Population Registry?

**It’s Information and Government Authority and it’s divided into 3 sectors the first one is the digital transformation Dr. Zakaria is responsible for. The second sector is operations and governance which Dr. Khalid is responsible for, and this sector is responsible for all IT operations in the government. The third sector is the Statistics and Population Registry. My sector consists of two separate authorities: statistics and civil status, these two authorities merged to be a sector inside the authority. The operations and governance sector combines 4 government agencies because this sector controls GIS data and IT in the whole Kingdom, so we control digitalization, GIS, statistics, and civil status in the whole kingdom this combination is our success secret in e-services or statistics but at the same time it creates a challenge as all these sectors have its own workloads. So, I’m responsible for statistics, the Population Registry, and civil status.**

2-What’s your academic qualification?

**Bachelor's degree in Statistics from Kuwait University and a higher Diploma in Demographic Statistics from the Demographic Institute in Cairo.**

3-In the beginning, what are the challenges related to the performance of Open Government Data?

**I see that the Open data definition is a little bit misleading in the whole world not only in the Kingdom of Bahrain because it is not crystal clear what open data is, the world didn’t specify a unified definition of open data, this is like the definition of big data there is no unified definition for the bigdata, some data could be considered open in some countries and not in other countries. To conclude this point open data definition is a wide definition, it used recently in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Our former website which specialized in displaying statistics was called open data but it wasn’t open data. We don’t know what the standard is for classifying data as open data. So, the challenges are first open data definition is wide and not clear, second, it’s used in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the third challenge is some data is called open data while it is not this is because you provide aggregated data, not raw data. We know the value of data because we are in the data field but the other fields especially**

4- government institutions it is sensitive a little as they feel that they own data is this a problem?

**Yes, it is but we are facing this problem. I communicate with some government institutes and ask them to share the data as it adds value to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Ultimately, it’s the Kingdom of Bahrain Open Portal, not the institution's open portal. Country size and publication standards affect data sharing in terms of Open Government Data. We had communication with all government institutions at the start, some of these institutions thought that sharing data was not the right decision to make but we had Mr. Omar al-Haggy communicate with them more to convince them and provide examples for countries that made success by using Open Government Data taking central banks who share data as an example so this encourages them more to share data, and communication between us is still present, so we are working on spreading the culture of sharing data also show them how to format data in a data set shape to be displayed in the Kingdom of Bahrain Open Portal.**

5-Even if their specialization is not statistics?

**Yes, nowadays everyone who has data and data analysis capabilities could help in reformatting data, IT also professional could help, Omaral-Haggy is an example of neither a Statistician nor an IT professional, and although he specialized in Business administration, he shares data in the new format of datasets.**

6-Which fields have opportunities to benefit from Open Government Data to drive innovation in the Kingdom of Bahrain?

**There are many fields because the concept of Open Data is new and recently added in the new administration. Do you meet Latifa?**

7-Yes, I do and saw how the authority is searching for new trends as innovation in technology increases day by day. What about the other fields?

**The new administration established not only serving Statistics sector but also they serving the government as a whole because it is the same concept in terms of digital transformation, Latifa conducted meetings with all government institutions to discuss what are the fields that need innovation and development, so I should collaborate with her to find ways developing innovation in our work and we will create a unit to work with her to apply innovation and discuss the new technologies that could be applied in our work. The first project between us and Latifa is that I have death and birth archives for the whole Kingdom of Bahrain, in the past, we entered this data into our database by scanning, now using AI we just provide data and AI transforms it to the database Without human intervention.**

8-Does that mean data entry professional is replaced by AI and this saves money?

**I have hundreds of old archives for death and birth in the whole country, and in the statistics sector, we have ideas to discuss with Latifa, for example in the context of statistics in the culture field if we have a castle how many visitors or tourists visiting the site? We cannot know because there are no tickets because it’s an open place, so from mobile signals I can know how many visitors visit the site on a specific day, another example could be there is no application to measure women's fertility we can use the number of children and Women's menstrual cycle to know women’s’ fertility, this kind of data could be beneficial in the healthcare sector, I have goods prices so this data could be transformed as an application to help citizens know which store have less selling price. So, we have a lot of ideas to discuss with Latifa and new applications need to be implemented.**

9-Since the COVID pandemic world released the importance of data, so besides the healthcare sector what other fields could benefit from Open Government Data?

**I provided you with an example of tourism and there are many examples when institutions realize the value of data and when investors and innovators transform data into applications.**

10-What is the role of technological innovation in improving Open Government Data, you mentioned using AI to transform data from archives to databases, is there are any applications in this context?

**I think that in the future chat bots and searching will be trends.**

11- As the authority specializing in data you are like a hub that collects data from around 60 government institutions, how do you measure the performance of this data?

**According to the amount of data we are at a good level we have now more than 400 datasets, if we talk at the details level we need the data to be raw data, not aggregates but you have limitations like size of the country and publishing politics, for example I can’t share cities data only governorate level, so we need to make kind of benchmarking to study what other countries what data its hares and what’s there turned value from sharing this data. The target of benchmarking or case studies is to know if we are sharing the data that returns value to society. We in the Kingdom of Bahrain are efficient in detailing data, and birth data for example we provide the mother's information and the baby’s weight, while other countries only write birth data without these details like the number of babies only. So, all of the mentioned is open data but how much this data is detailed is the point.**

12-What are the future trends in e-government generally?

**I think we should strengthen our collaboration with Latifa this will help us focus on technological innovation, the kingdom of Bahrain is one of the pioneering countries in technological innovation, and we also need more collaboration between the government institutions to deal with big data to share data efficiently with less time, we are lucky in the Kingdom of Bahrain in terms of using e-archives we have archives from 1991 while Gulf countries make e-archives in 2020. We also have an investors system in that system the Ministry of Commerce provides me with financial statements to analyze it. So, we have huge data and we collaborate with all government institutions to increase the value of using data.**

13-What about the future technologies?

**I think increasing the applications of AI to make our work more efficient, in the past we had many obstacles but AI provided us with intelligent solutions to overcome them.**