



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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IYER: This is Deepa Iyer interviewing Mr. Nasouh Marzouqa in Jordan. Could you tell me a bit about your personal history, what brought you to the Department of Civil Status and Passports in 1991 and what specifically did you do before that?

MARZOUQA: *I was born in 1937 in Irbid in Jordan, in the north of Jordan. I studied at the Royal Police Academy. Then I moved step-by-step. I became an officer, an investigation officer at the criminal part. Then I became the Director for the investigative part all over the kingdom. In the public security department, I became the Director of Coordination, Planning and Training. Then I became the Director of the Academy where I studied, the Royal Police Academy. I served there for four years.*

*It is true that I was the Director but I learned a lot through this period and I met some of the best professors who taught administration, psychology and sociology and I learned a lot from them.*

IYER: Can I just ask what years were you at the Royal Police Academy?

MARZOUQA: *In 1975. I was the Director of the Police Department in Irbid, also the Director of the Police Department in the capital, Amman. I served three terms, the first time it was for two years. The entire period would make up six years for the three terms. I was an assistant of the General Director for the Judicial Police. In 1985, I was an assistant for the General Director of the Public Security Department for the judicial police. I was appointed as the Director of the Department of Civil Status and Passports in 1991 and I served until February 14<sup>th</sup> 1996.*

*In 1989 when I was working at the Public Security Department I resigned because they appointed someone who was less experienced and I resigned as a way to protest against this because I felt that I was not appreciated.*

IYER: Do you mind if I ask in 1991 when you were appointed director of the department of Civil Status and Passports, you had a long and illustrious career in policing and I was wondering what prompted this sudden change in focus in your career.

MARZOUQA: *It was not necessarily a sudden change because when I was a police officer I used to attend several courses for administration and I feel pleasure when I am working in this sector in general. I feel pleasure when I feel I have achieved something. I achieved a lot when I was working in the Public Security Department.*

*When I resigned from the Public Security Department and until his appointment at the department there was a two-year break and I used to work as a farmer. I have a farm and I worked in it as an ordinary farmer.*

IYER: Do you mind if I ask when you were appointed, in 1991 you were appointed by the Council of Ministers and I was wonder if you could speak a little bit about why do you think you were put into this position? Was there a broad recognition of your previous work?

MARZOUQA: *Those officials knew me very well and they knew that I was capable of doing the job and they appreciated and admired my capabilities. Because when I was director of the police department in the capital I was very efficient and I helped them discover so many crimes. I dealt with it in a very good manner so they knew me very well and they appreciated my capabilities.*

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*In my book I wrote about this incident in detail and I remember that day vividly. I was on my farm and the Minister of the Interior gave me a phone call and he said please come, we need to sit for a cup of coffee and we need to consult you with an issue. Then when he came he told me that the government would like to make use of my experience. He offered me two positions. He offered me either the director of the department, the Civil Status and Passports department, or the governor of the capital.*

*He tried to convince me of the other position, the governor of the capital. He told me that this is a prestigious position. You can meet with the King on a regular basis and you meet with the elites and the notables of the country on a regular basis and socially it is better for me. I apologized for the first position, which is the governor of the capital, because I believe that the public—when I was an assistant for the director of the public security department judicial police branch, I found out that there is a problem in the civil status department because of the similar names. So I wanted to solve this problem. There was a problem when it comes to similar names, because people may have similar names to each other. The minister gave me a week to think about it because he wanted me to become the governor of the capital, but I refused and I insisted on my opinion.*

*During my previous job I could find that in five cases, it happened where people with similar names to those of criminals or something like that, when they would leave the country, on the borders they would check their names and they would arrest them and they would stay in prison. Then when they undergo an investigation or something like that they find out it's just similar names and they're not the people who are the ones they're looking for.*

*This is not an acceptable practice because some of these people who are arrested for just having the same names as criminals were doctors, teachers, and people who had their position in society. I found it unacceptable because they would face difficulties and they had nothing to do with it. I want to keep going on what I did regarding this issue.*

IYER: Do you mind if I ask when you were presented with these two positions essentially what prompted you to accept the position of the head of the Department of Civil Status and Passports was the fact that it offered a puzzle of sorts that you wanted to solve, that held similarities to some of your previous work?

MARZOUQA: You want me to clarify on this point?

IYER: Yes.

MARZOUQA: I have two reasons. Naturally I love to serve people, the public. That's why in the first place I entered the police academy because when I was a little kid in school and I used to see the police, I loved the way they served the public. So I believe that's the motivation behind this.

*The first reason is similar IDs. During six months I could find five cases for this problem. During my previous job I also served in Palestine when it was part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I used to serve in the West Bank from 1958 until 1967, the war. At that time, I had very good relations with the people of Palestine, the residents of the West Bank. They were Jordanian nationals. When I came back to Jordan, to the East Bank, and it was one country at the time, after I served in Palestine, I came back to the East Bank when they formed one country. I was the head of the Public Security Department for the capital, for the*

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*police department in the capital. So these people, these, my friends from Palestine, the people I lived with, I worked with, in Palestine, used to come for me for connections because whenever they wanted to renew a passport they would face endless difficulties. Then they would come to me for assistance, for help, because they knew me from my previous job. I knew about some problems that I could solve once I was appointed the director.*

*These are the two reasons why I preferred the other position they offered because I believe that when there is something wrong, when there is a mess, I want to solve it.*

IYER: So starting out I'd like to discuss a little bit the nature of this mess which you describe.

MARZOUQA: Yes.

IYER: I have some specific questions I'd like to ask. When you entered the department in 1991 could you talk about the main issues and challenges facing the department before any reforms occurred, what were the main problems, could you list them?

MARZOUQA: *I am to answer your question but I just want to mention that before coming to the Department of Civil Status and Passports, I never even considered that I might be appointed for this position. When I faced the problem we talked about earlier, about the similar IDs, I went to some officials and I went to some people I could help. He went to meet with the director of the Royal Society for the—the Royal Scientific Society and I talked to the director. I told him that we have problems, one, two, three, and then I told them that in America they used the social number so that these problems don't occur.*

*Personally I believe that in my own strategy I don't just point out the problem, I try to think of solutions. So before addressing the concerned entities, I don't just say we have a problem. I say, "What's the solution?"*

IYER: So basically the way we'll progress from here on is I'd like to characterize what exactly the problems were and then we'll go into talking about the solutions and the details behind the solutions. So I have some specific questions about the problems first.

MARZOUQA: *When I started working as the director of the department, I called on the same person I met with, the Director of the Royal Scientific Society and I asked him to come and see what is the problem, to investigate the devices they were using, the technologies they were using at the time and what was wrong. I found out that the things they were using, the computers, the devices, could not be adequate for the residents of Jordan, the citizens.*

IYER: I understand from the reading that I've done on the subject that there were a variety of different types of problems that the department was facing. For example, there were employee-related problems. There were problems related to the process of issuing passports. Then there was the problem you just mentioned of equipment being very outdated.

So I was wondering if you could talk about, one-by-one, about each of these types of problems, employee problems, process problems, and then equipment problems.

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MARZOUQA: *When it comes to employees I noticed that these employees who are employed by the department, they come to their job without any training and they don't know how to do the job. The predominant rule at the time was that the ex-employee trains the new employee. We had 1200 employees. According to a study that I conducted I found that only 2% attended training courses. The majority of the employees never attended training courses.*

IYER: Was the study conducted as a survey?

MARZOUQA: *We tracked the records to see who attended a training course and who did not attend a training course. I depended on several sources, but basically I tracked the records and saw if they attended the course or not. I also used interviews, personal interviews with the people, with the directors, with their bosses, etcetera, to know the information about them.*

*At the time when employees are appointed they stay in the same position for years and then they get promoted step-by-step but they don't change the department where they work.*

IYER: [inaudible].

MARZOUQA: *I have five daughters, two sons. I am talking about the nature of the employees. They are not motivated, they are quite lazy. Only the people who seek to be promoted are those who are moving from one department to another. In 1992 we formed a committee and we started working on collecting all the legislation, the registrations and the laws that govern the performance of the civil status department and we published it in this book. We organized training courses for all the employees.*

*We organized training courses and we designed a room for these training courses and the supervisor was [indecipherable]. There was a training center just inside the building.*

*This book that tells you everything about the Civil Status and the Passports Department from A to Z. All the departments that are affiliated to the main department, all the sub-departments and every director of a sub-department or every head of these departments would say something about it, would give a lecture and they were all documented in this book.*

IYER: You mentioned that the main problems in terms of employees were a lack of training, seniority-based promotion and the fact that employees were not motivated. The term that you used was that they were lazy. I was wondering if you could elaborate a bit on these problems in terms of how they played out in terms of making service delivery worse.

MARZOUQA: *Before we move to the next question, I'm just elaborating on the second point, which is seniority-based promotion. I meant something probably different so I am just elaborating to clarify what I meant before we move to the next question.*

*The problem was that so many employees were indifferent, they don't care about promotion, they don't have the ambition to be promoted. When I became the director of the department I promoted these employees according to their qualifications. I selected the people I felt were qualified and I appointed them as the directors of the office.*

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*When I talked about seniority-based promotion, I that it is not a problem. I meant that the majority of employees are indifferent and they're lazy and they don't care about promotion, so it is just routine. They stay in the office where they were appointed and they don't mind staying there for good. But when it comes to an ambitious employee who wants to work in another governmental department, it is not necessarily the Civil Status and Passports department so this person shows an ambition. Then he wants to make connections and prove that he is qualified so that he can move to another department, another governmental department that is a separate department. That is what I meant. But it is not a problem. It is a problem when it comes to the indifference of the employees.*

*I want to tell you what I noticed when I became the director of the department. When I became the director I noticed that the procedures for renewing passports for example, or anything else, would take from one to ten days. Those who had connections in the department would finish within one day.*

*When I used to meet with officials, assistants, directors of the sub-departments so they all admitted that they were facing serious difficulties. They had serious problems that needed to be solved. They all admitted, they never denied that. Most of these difficulties are related to the daily procedures. They all agreed that the mechanisms they were working with were not up to their expectations. They were insufficient, inefficient, and needed crucial solutions. They needed a solution within a timeframe so that they could guarantee it would be implemented.*

*First of all they needed to identify the key problems and then they needed to know what are the solutions. I found that there was a problem, the major problem or difficulty for citizens is that according to the regulations of the Ministry of Finance, the department would stop receiving citizens who could pay for the fees after 12:30 p.m. which means any citizen has to come back the next day to pay.*

*The second problem was where there is a large number of citizens coming to the office, there were not enough employees. On the contrary, the other offices where there is a smaller number of citizens coming to the department, they would have more employees.*

*The employees were not experienced and they did not have the sufficient skills. Also the data entry employees, there were not enough people to do this job. They were not well trained to use the computers. They used manual ways to double-check the information. Everything was manual: the passports, the birth certificates, everything was issued manually. Although the computer was used since 1983, they never used it because the devices were inadequate for the job they were doing. There were not enough devices anyway in the offices. Even the offices were not convenient in terms of location, in terms of the parking for cars. They had difficulty finding the files of the people, because the places where you document these files, where you keep them, were inconvenient, and they were not organized on a regular basis.*

*When I came to the department I noticed that you have to take all of these procedures when you finish an application. Sometimes it is very difficult because the department had three floors. The files are in the basement. Then you can apply for something on the first floor, then you have to pay, for example on the first floor, but you have to get something from the second floor and you have to get something else from the third floor. That affects the efficiency of the department.*

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*That was when I came to the department. There were twelve procedures, twelve steps to take, but I made it four steps. This happened because I moved the offices that were on the upper floors to the first floor so they can be all in one place so whenever a citizen comes he can finish all the procedures on one floor. So I made it four steps. Previously the citizen had to go to the upper floors and now they are all in one place. It means, you could tell the difference when this happened, it was a very obvious difference. Now I am going to talk about it.*

*We lacked the human resources, the qualified human resources. That of course had an impact on the performance of the department. There is something very important, the closed door policy. The general director had a door that would not be opened unless there is permission. Even the assistants and even the officers, directors, they had someone who would stand at the door and no one can enter the office unless this person gives them the permission.*

*When I became the head of the department, I asked the secretary to keep the door open. This secretary disagreed and she told me that she couldn't do this because previously she was responsible for the permissions, but now she wouldn't be responsible because the door would still be open. Also other employees told me that if I kept the door open it meant I would lose prestige among the other people.*

*So when I became the head of the department I used to go and sit at the counter to see citizens directly, to observe what is happening in detail. I would sit for two months when he became the director at the counter, at the main counter where people come and go for the applications. I formed a committee and I asked the directors of the offices, the sub offices, for each one to identify a problem that he faced in his field of the job and then write recommendations and solutions for this problem and then this committee will discuss it.*

*I formed four committees. One of them is concerned with—one of the committees is the development, training, and modernization committee. When I became the director I also asked the offices' directors, the heads of these offices, to submit a monthly report on their jobs, on what they have achieved during this month and the daily tasks, a summary of the daily tasks and what they do.*

*Also the second committee I formed was tasked with observing the job. I had people who would observe the administrative procedures, people who would observe the legal aspect and people who would observe the financial issues. All of these people were asked to submit a monthly report on their observations. And I organized a meeting with the heads of the departments from all over the kingdom, the branches of the department, from all over the kingdom. It was a meeting that aimed at specifying the objectives.*

*I asked these people who attended the meeting to specify their objectives and put them on a board and work on achieving them. I used to do this myself because I had my objectives on a board and I would be motivated to implement them, to achieve them. My objectives were coordination with the Royal Scientific Society. I wanted to coordinate and cooperate with the Royal Scientific Society when it comes to the use of computers.*

*So the first objective was cooperating with the Royal Scientific Society to work on updating the computers and developing them so that they can start using the national number. I focused on this and as I explained, the computers were not suitable for the data force for all of the citizens in Jordan. It only constituted the information of like a third of the population. I focused on this objective, on*

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*developing the computers and updating them so they can have the data for all of the people. Did you have a question on this point?*

IYER: I wanted to move back a little bit. You mentioned that you formed four committees. One on development, modernization and training, the second one on the legal, administrative and financial aspects of the job. I was wondering if you could just quickly tell me what the other two committees were about?

MARZOUQA: *I formed another committee for the complaints of the citizens because sometimes they would take from them the passport. They wouldn't renew it and they would take the passport. So we formed a committee of three senior employees. Previously the citizen if this happened with the citizens they would have to file a lawsuit in the courts. So I just saved time and formed this committee so that they can file complaints directly to this committee so that they can solve it.*

*This committee was very efficient. I selected three senior employees who had legal experiences, who had experiences in law. They were experts in their fields. So the citizen who faced a similar situation, instead of filing a lawsuit in the courts, he would file a complaint directly to these people and he had someone who resembled the general prosecutor. It was someone similar to that, it wasn't exactly the same, but it was something similar to that. This committee proved its efficiency because during three years there were no lawsuits filed against the department.*

IYER: And what was the fourth committee?

MARZOUQA: *It was a committee tasked with following up on the issues related to employees, issues related to employees of the department.*

IYER: I wanted to quickly ask—.

MARZOUQA: *The title was one name but in fact there were two units, one for the civil status department, one for the passports. But when I became the head of the department I worked on merging these two into one unit. I trained the employees in this department on the issues that they can deal with citizens in this department so that they can all relate to it. So I gave training courses for employees in this office on the jobs of the people in the other office so that they can do the same job.*

IYER: I quickly wanted to ask—.

MARZOUQA: *So this decision to merge the two units was made in 1988 but it wasn't actually implemented, it wasn't actually fully implemented. When I became the head of the department I worked on merging them completely doing this actually. When I became the head of the department I worked on amending and changing the entire structure.*

*The director would have a public relations office, a secretary, and he had a special office, his own special office. All of this information I mentioned is found in this book in detail. No matter how much I talk there is still a lot that I can't depict.*

*When I worked on amending the structure of the department we got rid of some officers we did not need, we could do without. I did not finish all the objectives I made during that time. These objectives are like a constitution for me. How do you abide by a constitution? I abided by these objectives and asked the employees to abide by the same objectives.*



*The first objective was coordinating and cooperating with the Royal Scientific Society. The second objective I had was that you had to finish the application and carry out all the procedures within one day.*

*The director had this information from this case study, this book. I am going to tell you the story now and I can give you a copy of this book. As an initial suggestion I wanted to carry out all the procedures during one day, in the span of a day. Then in the future I wanted to carry out all of these procedures in one hour. I had this objective to become more efficient and fast so that people do face the same difficulty.*

IYER: Can I just quickly ask, how did you set these benchmarks in terms of processes? Where did you get these numbers of one hour, one day? Were you looking at numbers from other countries? How did you develop this goal?

MARZOUQA: *These are my ideas, my own suggestions. I did not have to look for other countries' examples and I went to the Minister of Finance to work on improving the economic conditions and the salaries of the employees. If the government could afford giving them higher salaries I would make them work from—. I suggested that if they could give them higher salaries, I would make them work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. so that they could carry out their duties.*

IYER: I just wanted to interrupt quickly here. I understand that there are several areas of reform and several have been covered in various books. I just quickly wanted to go backwards and ask the question of, going back to the challenges and how you identified these challenges.

You'd mentioned previously that there were various employee and process problems, and process problems, for example, you yourself observed at the counter what was happening and you formed these committees. Just a quick question, but were these four committees formed at the beginning of your tenure and did they exist throughout the time that you were in office or were they formed initially just to identify problems and then later on they ceased to exist?

MARZOUQA: *Yes, when I left the department the committees were still active.*

IYER: I wanted to ask, going back to the problems, why had these problems not been addressed previously. I understand that a lot of the reason why reforms occurred now is the fact that leadership, new leadership had come in. But I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about why you feel that reforms had not occurred previously in the department and why reforms did occur now? What was facilitating—?

MARZOUQA: *In 1991?*

IYER: In 1991. What was the context behind these reforms? Just to elaborate on that, were there any sort of political or economic circumstances that may have facilitated your reforms?

MARZOUQA: *Any reform has to be linked with a political will and administration that is capable of carrying it out. I want to reemphasize on the point that when I became the director of this department it was a personal motivation because I wanted to solve these problems. Because for example, someone who would leave to study overseas or something, he would need a week to renew a passport. I found this unacceptable.*

*The government, since 1980, issued regulations—when the government of 1980 was formed, it was tasked with developing the performance of the public sector. They had this goal. They asked the heads of the different departments in the public sector as a whole, to develop their performance and provide developed performance, but it was never implemented. There was nothing practical. There was nothing implemented. It was all about slogans.*

*This was never implemented until I became the director of the department, updating or developing the performance. So this is a letter that proves, or some people would appreciate and admire my performance, they would say that there was a crucial change in the performance of the department. So this is a letter from Leila Sheraf who used to serve—she was a member of the Senate, House in Jordan and she was a minister at one point. She was Minister of Information at one point. She wrote this letter for me.*

*I dedicated a book for her. You can have a copy of it; I have to read it first for you.*

IYER: If we could maybe read it, have it translated afterwards if that's all right.

MARZOUQA: *Of course.*

IYER: If I can have a copy.

MARZOUQA: *It is the Chief of the Royal Court. He was the prime minister and the Speaker for the Senate. All of these people gave me letters to appreciate his efforts.*

IYER: I wanted to ask related to that, you mentioned that there was political will for reform and then all of these letters indicate that there was clearly an appreciation of your efforts after reforms occurred. I was wondering, the department is within the Ministry of the Interior so how much freedom did you have to manage these reforms? How much agency were you given to really take ownership of the process?

MARZOUQA: *I had complete freedom; I never cared about someone's reaction. I never cared about how would they react to certain decisions that were related to the performance of the department. That's why when I became the head of the department I dismissed six employees because I believed they were deterring the reform.*

*Of course, some people protested again the dismissal. When I took the decision to dismiss these employees, it has to be approved by the council of ministers. The approval of the decision was postponed twice because they protested against it. But I challenged the decision. I said, it is either I stay or they stay. So afterwards they were pressured and they approved the decision because I believed they were inefficient.*

IYER: So related to that. Going back a bit, when you entered the department, who were the main members of your team, the implementers if you will who helped you get the job done and how were they identified and brought on board? Were they previously at the department or did you have to bring people in?

MARZOUQA: *No, I did not appoint anyone new. They were all employees, previous employees in the department but I worked on training them, on developing their capabilities and I worked on praising their performance so that they felt motivated to work.*

IYER: This is only in managerial positions, is that correct?

MARZOUQA: *What do you mean managerial positions?*

IYER: When you say there was no new hiring done, that was mainly at the managerial level, the senior level, because from the data I've seen the employee numbers of the department increased steadily from year to year and new people were hired. So I was wondering if you mean, just to clarify what you mean, that no new people were appointed at the managerial level.

MARZOUQA: *I did not appoint people from outside, from other positions. I just promoted employees, who were previous employees in the department and who I felt were qualified to help me with developing performance. I just promoted them and they became my assistants. But I never appointed someone new, entirely new, as an entirely new employee from outside the department.*

*I want to say something about the appointment of employees. Previously employees would prefer to work in places where there is no real load of work. They preferred places where there are lower numbers of citizens. I would study the cases and I would see where there is pressure and I would appoint new employees for this position.*

IYER: Instead of employees being distributed politically, we could say they were distributed based on population density?

MARZOUQA: Yes.

IYER: I wanted to ask now going back to the main members of your team, could you name, who would you name as your reform team?

MARZOUQA: *[He is a straightforward man. It is important to note that when the department underwent this reform process, it had a reputation, a very good reputation among the public I would receive people from all over the kingdom with very good experiences and people who had told me previously in the university and where I served—so these people would ask me to offer their services for the department because they appreciated my efforts and the reform process.*

*The next one was the General Director of the Public Security department. Then he was, at this time he was the Director of the Academy. This was a graduation ceremony in 1976. They used to consult him with anything they did. I wish you could meet him but he is working with UNESCO.*

*These people I just mentioned, they had a very good roll in the reform process. So all of these people had a role in the reform process, but it is important to know it is all about the leadership. So I led the team and it is all about my efforts. It is all about the leaders' efforts.*

*I want to keep going on the objectives I had. After keeping my office door open all the time for citizens, I wanted to change the stereotype the citizens had about treatment in the public sector. I wanted to give them more reassurance that they will be treated well in these departments. I emphasized abiding by the regulations and laws in a transparent manner and I made it a priority for every employee to abide by the laws. People who were under me, the directors of the sub-offices and the sub-departments, they could take decisions on their own except for financial or for example punishment, these decisions. But anything else they did*

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*not need to go back to me for a decision that they could take on their own so they could facilitate the job and it can be done easily.*

*Also on training courses, they needed to consult me. They could not send someone for a training course without my approval. Also the distribution of the job duties, they should be based on merit and qualifications.*

IYER: I'd just to ask quickly a question related to the—you've described several employee problems and the solutions that you used for them but specifically when you described merit-based promotion, for example, what were the criteria used? Was it sort of formalized or was it something that was informally done. I mean you mentioned beforehand that you promoted several people based on their qualifications and my understanding was that this was informally done.

So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about throughout the department was this something that was formally instituted and what were the criteria used for promotion.

MARZOUQA: *First of all I would like you to know that my decisions were very often met with protests from other people because I dismissed people who were not qualified, because I promoted people who were qualified at the expense of other senior members or senior employees who were older in age. This was done based on their qualifications, based on their enthusiasm to work. Why not promote an employee who is eager and who wants to do something, who is enthusiastic and is motivated to work, when you have another employee who is very indifferent and he doesn't care about cooperating with citizens? But other people protested against these decisions. They did not like it because they weren't used to this kind of treatment.*

IYER: So then my question was, was it done informally or was it done formally? Was it a formal system that was introduced throughout the department?

MARZOUQA: *I mean I employed the rule the convenient person for the convenient place, the qualified person for the convenient place. But according to the regulations we used for employees previously, we promoted the senior people. So it was according to how many years they spent working. I did not abide by this. I only promoted people who were qualified. I did not take into consideration how many years they worked there.*

*People protested against the decisions. I would follow up on the objectives. I had issued regulations that they needed to finish all the procedures within one day. So I would come at the end of the day and I would find people's applications and they were not finished. I would find them in the offices. I would find, for example, 80 or 60 applications that were not finished and I would ask the people responsible for this, why didn't you finish them? They would give me excuses and they would say, we did not have time, et cetera, but this was unacceptable for me.*

*This director, the head of the office who was responsible for the delay in the procedures for citizens, I asked why did you do this and he said, we did not have time. Because I was not authorized to take any other decision, I just replaced him with someone else and I moved him to another office. I was not authorized to take any other decision in this particular case.*

*Previously the office used to issue or to renew passports from 300—previously they used to work on from 300 to 400, that's the range, of passports on a daily*

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*basis. When I became head of the department, this office dealt with 1000 to 1500 passports on a daily basis, especially when we faced the Gulf crisis.*

*I met with heads of the sub-offices on a weekly basis. The sort of the protests that I faced during this reform process is that I suggested finishing the procedures for renewing a passport within one day. One of the directors of one of the offices whom I was meeting with suggested that we were committing a mistake, that we couldn't finish within one day, it was the wrong policy. That was what he believed, the other person. He believed that finishing the passports within one day is the wrong policy.*

*When I asked him why he said because the citizen, if he finished the procedures within one day, the passport would lose its value and then he would lose it and then he would not care about the passport because it is very easy to acquire one. If the procedures were made easy, it would be also very easy to lose the passport.*

*I said, for example, this is a personal opinion. I told the officer that you don't know more than the legislature knows and there is a law and you have to abide by it.*

IYER: It seems that a lot of the resistance you faced, some of it was obviously related to people who were used to the status quo and didn't want to change essentially. I was wondering how much—you mention quite a bit of hiring and firing issues and I was wondering how much did rigidities in civil service laws affect you in terms of hiring and firing. Not hiring individuals but in terms of firing or moving individuals to other departments.

I understand that civil service regulations are very rigid in terms of hiring and firing, employment in general. So I was wondering how did you bypass these regulations in order to achieve your objectives?

MARZOUQA: *I did not have the authority to appoint anyone. It had to be within the civil service. I did not have the authority to appoint new employees. It has to be through a special office. I wanted, but I did not have the authority, to appoint people for data entry. I wanted to train people for this job but I couldn't do it. Even when it comes to firing policies, it is very hard but I insisted that when someone has a bad performance he has to be fired.*

IYER: So basically you had to reform the department using the same previously under-performing employees. You describe training as one solution that you used, but I feel that a lot of it is also changing behaviors over time. I wonder if you could talk about how exactly did you try to change behaviors over time and what were management techniques that you used to really affect this change?

MARZOUQA: *Observing, continuous observation, strict. I used to go and observe them on a daily basis. I did observations, I visited all the offices and I visited the governorates' offices on a monthly basis. I had the names of all of the directors of the sub-offices, everybody, what they do and the reports of their performance. I insisted that if someone has a shortcoming, I have to address it.*

*There was a policy in the department previously, we used to give employees 11,000 at the end of the year, 11,000 JDs (Jordanian Dinar) were distributed on 1100 employees. So every employee at the end of the year would get 10 JDs as an incentive or something like that. But they all got an equal share of this, regardless of their accomplishments from the general director to any employee in*

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*the department. They used to get the same amount of money, 10 JDs for everybody.*

*So I changed this policy and I started giving them this incentive according to their accomplishment. So the person who dealt with higher pressure for example in an office where there are more citizens got more than someone else who is working less.*

IYER: I'm very interested in this. I was wondering how did you systematically measure accomplishments in order to distribute money?

MARZOUQA: *How many passports, who is more qualified for this money, someone who works on 120 or someone who works on 20 passports? I used this criteria, the number of passports issued on a daily, weekly basis, and how many applications they can carry out and how many applications they finish, etcetera.*

*Previously employees at the department could not meet the general director, the head of the department without previous permission but I changed this policy, they can come and meet me at any time.*

IYER: I wanted to just quickly conclude this segment of our interview by asking how would you measure your successes and what measures would you use, whether formal or informal, to determine what worked well and what did not work well?

MARZOUQA: *You mean the measurements of success?*

IYER: How would you measure your successes is what I'm asking formally and informally. For example you could measure your success in terms of how many passports—the number of passports issued increased. That's a formal, very clear, quantitative measurement. I'm wondering if you could give examples of measurements that you would use to indicate his success both formally in terms of numbers and informally in terms of various changes.

MARZOUQA: *100% it was a successful operation. Even professors who teach administration at the universities in Jordan they asked me to write a case study about my experience because it was a remarkable one. They used to tell me that they worked on theories but they needed to know more about the practical side. They did not know how their theories worked in the field. So they asked me to write my experience.*

*The former head of the department who preceded me had asked for a British consultant or British expert to come to the department and issue recommendations. This British expert, when he came to the department he issued recommendations and he gave us a plan which we could implement. He expected that by 1999 we would start applying the policy on national numbers. You read the entire document?*

*This British expert recommended the national number but he expected to implement it by 1999. The surprising issue was in 1992 we started working and applying the national number, so it was like seven years before the expected date, that's number one.*

*I did not ask for the British expert, it was the former head of the department. I did not care about the British expert because I had my own strategy so I did not mind that there was a British expert appointed.*

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*I wanted to say something about the equipment. The department did not have the budget, did not have an allocated budget that was sufficient for the equipment it needed. I worked on this point. Would you like me to elaborate more on this?*

IYER: I think that this interview gave us a very good overview of the challenges and solutions, and if possible I'd like to arrange a second interview that would go more into detail about the specific questions. In that interview I think we'd like to cover the specific details on the how, you could say, of each of the different reform strategies that were implemented.

MARZOUQA: *In the second interview?*

IYER: Yes.

MARZOUQA: *I wanted to say at the end of this document I mentioned that these efforts qualified me to become a senior official in the public security department and my efforts on the national aspect. [end of file one]*

IYER: This is Deepa Iyer interviewing Mr. Nasouh Marzouqa part two. Essentially in our last interview we focused quite a bit on the challenges facing the department when you entered office and briefly how you addressed these challenges especially in relation to employees. Today I'd like to focus a bit on the challenges faced in terms of equipment and computers and also in terms of processes and discuss specifically how you addressed these challenges, so what exactly you did.

MARZOUQA: *Okay.*

IYER: Could you first tell me when you first came into office what were the key equipment and computer-related challenges you faced?

MARZOUQA: *First of all I am not an expert on computers and I was never an expert on computers so I had to ask for the assistance of the Royal Scientific Society. I asked them for experts to come and investigate the cases of the devices in the department and the conditions. Then I went to see the leader of the Air Force because they had devices that were similar to those found in the department. Together we formed a committee.*

*First of all I asked the leader of the Air Force to provide the department with additional screens, if they had additional screens, if they had screens that they could do without, to give them to the department. But the leader said they did not have them, they could only help in terms of forming a committee and assisting them in other ways.*

*So we formed a joint committee, a technical committee and we investigated the conditions of the devices in the department. Then we found out that the devices were not as modernized as they should be. We could not take the information, the memory in it, we could not take the information of the entire population in Jordan. So they had to be expanded.*

*There are other findings of the committee. We found out that the computers needed other supportive services, services of support including the generator—when they would face electricity cuts, there would be a generator for emergencies—and photocopying machines and the need to connect the devices*

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*in the branches to the main service in Amman so that employees could easily look up information.*

*The lack of qualified employees to double check the data entered into the computers was a problem.*

IYER: I have some questions related to these if that's okay.

MARZOUQA: *Sure.*

IYER: First you mentioned that you contacted the Air Force because they used similar devices. I was wondering if you could elaborate on the similarity of devices used. Why did you feel that the Air Force was best to approach in terms of forming a committee?

MARZOUQA: *Because in countries like ours you need public relations to take these measures. When I contacted the Royal Scientific Society they told me to contact the Air Force. The leader of the Air Force was a friend of mine and he could provide aides people for trainers and for people who were assigned for the data entry. He told me that I could keep these employees until we finish with the development process. They stayed in the department for two years.*

*My previous job when I was working in the Public Security Department as an assistant to the general manager, so this made me know all of the senior officials. So this made me know all of the senior officials. I decided to take advantage of these good relations I had to develop the department.*

IYER: A few more questions related to the computer-related initiatives you mentioned. You mentioned that a committee was formed along with members of the Air Force in order to investigate conditions and that one finding was that the memory was not sufficient for the entire population. So did this mean that you had to get new machines with sufficient memory?

MARZOUQA: *We did not have the financial resources to buy new devices, we could only afford the expansion of the devices we already had. But the government promised us after that to provide us with the financial resources. After issuing the national number and after becoming, developing the passport process so that it could be issued within one hour, we could actually pressure the government to give us the financial resources we needed. We had the power we needed now to pressure the government.*

IYER: I'd like to ask at this point what were the computers used for specifically in the department. From what I understand there is a data entry function, there is validation of the data that is entered, a double-checking if you will, and there is the printing process of the passports and the national number linking process. So correct me if I'm wrong but were these the main things that a computer was used for in the department at this time?

MARZOUQA: *So it is issuance, data entry, passports—.*

IYER: Data entry, double checking data entry, printing the passports—.

MARZOUQA: *The national number information.*

IYER: Yes.



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MARZOUQA: *You're right, the major points we used computers for but I was just elaborating that a very little percentage of the information of the civil status was entered into the computers. There were so many mistakes that had to be corrected at a later stage. Once when I was checking the computers, when I was checking the holes where computers were put, I could see hundreds of files of backlogs that were not entered into the computer with information that was not entered into the computer.*

*It took us also so long to correct the mistakes because we had the wrong information, wrong names and wrong numbers.*

IYER: How did you address this backlog? Was there a priority placed on first getting rid of the backlog and then working on new cases? I was wondering if you could elaborate on how this was done?

MARZOUQA: *Yes, we started what you could call a campaign to enter all the information in these backlogs. The person who really helped us was the leader of the military force because he could actually assign four of the members who worked with me on the data entry, with Mr. Nasour assisting in the data entry. So we started what you could call a campaign and we started working intensively on entering all the data in these backlogs.*

IYER: You mentioned that there were several services for support needed in terms of a generator, photocopying machines, connecting branches to the main server. Can you describe how you accomplished each of these, where did funding come from? How did you obtain new equipment?

MARZOUQA: *So we had from 50-60,000 JDs from the government allocated to the department. There was a conference in the early '90s and it was a conference for the United Nations Commission in Jordan. The conference focused on the accuracy of statistics on population and vital issues. During the conference I talked to Mr. [Indecipherable] and I told him, do you actually mean what you said?*

*Then the person asked me what do you mean. I said, "Are you concerned with the accuracy of the statistics? This is the core value of our work at the Department of Civil Status and Passports but we need equipment for that so are you willing to help us with that." So I was offered a grant of \$50,000 but I refused because I said that this grant, if I had taken it, it would be subject for negotiations with the Ministry of Finance.*

*If I accepted the grant I would have to inform the Ministry of Finance and then the Minister of Finance would tell me you can do with \$25,000 and give us the rest. This would be subject to negotiations. So I decided to give Mr. [Indecipherable] a list of the needs of the department and then he would buy them for the department instead of taking a financial grant.*

*Mr. [Indecipherable] brought five professors of administration and people specialized in computers and they helped us in the development process. The first computer we bought was for Aqaba because it had citizens from diverse backgrounds in Jordan, from Irbid, Amman, Zarqa, etcetera. The aim was that any person, any citizen who lived in Aqaba and wanted to renew a passport could do it from Aqaba instead of traveling all the way to Amman.*

IYER: So you mentioned that Ali [Indecipherable] at the UN was responsible for buying new hardware and installing it for the department. You also mentioned there was a lack of qualified employees to deal with this hardware initially. You mentioned

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that the military and the Air Force recommended individuals come to do initial installation and training but I was wondering if you could describe how employees were trained over time to deal with the new machines and also just to make sure that the system was sustainable over time.

MARZOUQA: *I am not an expert on computers as I have already explained but I had four qualified people, not only four other people who were assigned by the military Air Force and were assigned and they did contribute a lot to the development process by training employees. That was in the beginning.*

*Then whenever we heard about a training course that was conducted by the Royal Scientific Society, we would send employees to this training course. Whenever we heard about any training course on computers we would send employees to this institute. Also on the employment policies at that time we gave priority to people with data entry and accountants. So we focused on these two segments of employees. We wanted to employ new people and they focused on these jobs.*

IYER: Did your hiring qualifications change any because of the new equipment and computerization drive within the department? Did you now seek out people who had computer-related degrees for example? How did the qualifications for hiring change?

MARZOUQA: *We had the assistance of the Air Force and the assistance of the Royal Scientific Society to evaluate the newcomers, to evaluate the new employees. In the employment policy we focused once again on data entry and accountants. Any person who has a certificate that proved that he or she attended a training course on computers would be prioritized and would get the job but they would also sit for tests and go for interviews. We had the assistance of those people to evaluate them.*

IYER: That concludes my questions on computerization. Now I'd like to shift to the area of office reorganization if that is all right.

MARZOUQA: *Of course.*

IYER: Related to office reorganization I was wondering why did you reorganize the offices first of all.

MARZOUQA: *Because first of all the structure of the offices did not achieve the purpose of merging the two units. Because it seemed to me that it was as if we hadn't taken the decision to merge the two units.*

*We had this paper on the organizational structure but I found that the decision was not implemented. I found out that we still had one assistant for the department of passports—I mean the general manager had two assistants, one for the issues of passports, one for the issue of civil status. Also in the office they were separated. We had a director for passports and a director for civil status. Each one of them had a different team of people focusing on passports, people focusing on civil status. They both followed different sets of regulations.*

IYER: If I can just quickly interrupt and ask you—.

MARZOUQA: *Each one of them, of the two units, passports and civil status had different budgets in terms of budgets and bonuses and all this stuff related to—. So I found out that it was very important to merge them to the fullest, starting from*

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*merging the budget, having one budget for both units and mixing all of the employees in one office. So the employee of the passports is no longer separate from the employee of civil status. After that time they all did the same job. When they had a workload on passports, all of them would work on passports.*

IYER: You mentioned that structures were not officially merged. I was wondering why did you feel it would be more efficient to merge them? I was wondering if you could speak more about how this merger was done because today, for example, even if you go to the department there are two separate counters for civil status documents and passports documents. So I'm not quite understanding how exactly this merge played out.

MARZOUQA: *They are not two completely different counters. There may be two different counters but sometime there may be a very high load on passports so we would have to assign the employees who worked at the civil status to do the passports job, they could do it. But because sometimes they have a workload on one aspect and they don't have so many people doing national IDs or getting certificates.*

IYER: So all employees were mixed in one office in order to facilitate the shifting of employees between functions, is that correct?

MARZOUQA: *That's right. It depends on the workload. I use the weekly and monthly reports to evaluate the workload. I see how many documents for example are issued for certificates of birth, of divorce, of marriage. I evaluate and I try to estimate how many employees does this job need. Then when they have workload they would ask others to assist in this because they're already trained to do this job.*

*I misunderstood the question before. I understood that you asked me about how we made it all in one office at one counter. That facilitated on the citizen because previously they would have to go to the upper floors.*

IYER: I wanted to ask this specifically, how you made the office space one area to facilitate the citizens' experience. Could you elaborate on that and talk about how this may have made the employees more visible perhaps to the citizen.

MARZOUQA: *If you see the hall in the building in Amman previously half of it was for the counters and the other half was closed rooms with closed doors. The first step I took was to make it all in one place and to make all the employees visible to citizens. This increased the efficiency of employees. There were women who worked on printing the passports and their efficiency was around zero because they stayed behind closed doors all the time and they just chatted about nothing that was relevant to their work. They talked about movies and things and women's gossip. So they did not have much—I can't tell you everything about what used to happen, how they wasted their time and they talked about things that were very irrelevant to their work. When they moved to the counter they were all visible. They couldn't chat about irrelevant topics and they had to work, so that was a real challenge for them. That increased their productivity.*

*One of the directors of the offices who was previously in the upper floor, whose office was in the upper floor he did not accept and he refused to go down to the counter to sit with other employees at the counter. I could do it by force but I did not want to force him into it. He said, "Okay, you can stay in the upper floor," but he also assigned three deputies for this director. So he assigned three deputies who could sign on behalf of the director, so it was if he had no role in anything. So these deputies would sit at the counter and they would sign the passports on*

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*behalf of the director. So whether he was absent or he was there, he did not have any role.*

*This step showed that there was a real change, a crucial one, in facilitating the processes.*

IYER: Can I ask, when you say all the employees were brought to the counter and made more visible to the citizen, what did this involve structurally? Did it involve enlarging the counter area? Did it involve breaking down walls that may have been between offices?

MARZOUQA: *We broke the wall between the two offices.*

IYER: In that case, where did funding come from and how difficult was it to implement this?

MARZOUQA: *This did not cost much. I recommend this step for every other public institution to follow it. It did not cost much because we had already 2000 JDs allocated for maintenance. That maintenance was meant to be for the offices all over the kingdom but at the time I had to use this money just for the main offices in Amman to make this change happen. It did not cost much because I borrowed the equipment from a friend of mine and I got people who worked on it, the laborers who worked on it and I was the supervisor and I followed up with them every day. They just painted it without really focusing on how it would look like, whether it would look fancy or not; just painting to make it happen.*

*I received a letter from someone who appreciated my efforts because I used to work day and night. The person noted in the letter that someone who was just abiding by the laws in detail and followed everything in regulations and laws and suddenly I became general manager of a department that had nothing to do with laws and regulations and was very inefficient.*

*So the writer of the letter was wondering who would affect the other? Would I change the department to become more organized, or would I just leave it like that and I would become less organized just like the department.*

IYER: Do you mind if I ask, when exactly did this office reorganization occur within your tenure? For example, the counter reorganization, was it early on in your tenure, was it later on? Do you remember the exact year perhaps for example that the walls were torn down?

MARZOUQA: *The end of 1991. All of these issues took place at one time because I talked about the organizational restructuring. We had the meetings at night because I did not want to hold them up in the morning because they had other work to do.*

IYER: Where did you get the idea for this organizational restructuring in terms of the counter initially? Who were the members of this committee that met at night in order to facilitate that process?

MARZOUQA: *Nobody assisted me in this particular mission.*

IYER: So the construction committee met at night is what you meant probably.

MARZOUQA: *When I was appointed I would sit in the hole in the counter and I would observe the processes. I would monitor the performance of the employees and how citizens were having difficulties with them. I felt that the inefficiency of the*

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*department was attributed to the fact that the applications and all of the papers, and citizens also would have to keep moving from one floor to another. There wasn't a logical order of steps. That's why the time was wasted.*

IYER: The office reorganization was it done only in Amman or was it done first in Amman and then in the other branches?

MARZOUQA: *At the counters?*

IYER: Yes, at the counters. Was it done first in Amman and then at the other offices? How was it rolled out?

MARZOUQA: *We started implementing it in Amman but after noticing the impact, the success of the experience we tried to do it also in Irbid and Zarqa where there are major offices.*

*It was my idea of the reconstruction of the counters so that all employees would be visible to citizens. Although that was my idea, of course I had to ask for the assistance of architects and engineers who would come to tell me if it were possible or not.*

IYER: I'd like to ask, you mentioned—moving on to discussing processes and how processes were changed—you mentioned that you used to sit at the counter to monitor employees and observe processes. I was wondering did this intimidate employees at all? Were you sitting at the counter in disguise perhaps? I feel that employees might change their behavior if they knew that their boss was watching them so I was just curious about this.

MARZOUQA: *The other part where they told us about the incident, the scarf on my face, they did not see me. Yes, it happened once because I would receive complaints about an employee in a branch, in one branch. Then when I would talk to this employee I would find that he was very polite. But then when I went there and I sat between the people and the hole, I found out that he had a very aggressive and defensive attitude. But when I confronted this employee he would deny it so that's why I had to do this.*

*I would receive complaints from citizens and after that I would go to see for myself what is happening. Once I received a complaint about an employee who was very aggressive and he would push citizens. He would push them in a very bad way and they would be humiliated. So then I went there to see the employee and I found out that it was true so he asked the employee to come to my office and I told him please go home and I'll send you your salary at the end of the month to your home; I don't want you at this department.*

*Sometimes when I received complaints about employees, I would go back and check for example their family circumstances, their economic circumstances, etcetera. I felt that there was a link between how they performed and how they lived at their house, etcetera. Then I wanted to answer the other part.*

*So many employees [end of file 2], when I had to sit at the counter the assistants of the general manager also had to stand there too and they would start complaining. Although they were younger than me, they would start saying, "I have diabetes I can't stand," "I feel dizzy, I can't stand," "My legs, I can't stand." So they would start complaining about illnesses and why they can't sit for so long at the counters.*

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*In fact, I feel that the real reason they were complaining, they felt they would lose their prestige if they sat at the counter because previously the citizen would have to go to their offices to sign the paper and now they were over there just in front of citizens. So that means they would lose some of their prestige.*

IYER: I see. My other question, if an employee, if your boss is sitting at the counter watching you wouldn't they change their behaviors? I was wondering, how did you get an accurate depiction of what was actually happening. I feel like if employees knew that their boss was there they would behave differently and try to perform better.

MARZOUQA: *If I did not stand there at the counter I wouldn't know that citizens would have to go to the four floors to get their applications done, nobody would have told me.*

IYER: In terms of processes.

MARZOUQA: *Yes, processes.*

IYER: Now moving onto processes, you observed that there were quite a few steps in quite a few of these procedures and you decided to reform specifically the passports line first. I was wondering why did you focus first on passports?

MARZOUQA: *I want to answer the question. Some of the people you interviewed last week they called me and asked me why did you think about having the passport issued within one hour. So I have an answer for that question, do you want me to answer that?*

IYER: Yes.

MARZOUQA: *Ever since I was appointed in 1991 I felt that the department had to undergo a comprehensive reform process in terms of issuance of documents, passports, renewing passports. My initial suggestion was three days; I wanted to issue a passport within three days, not one hour as an initial suggestion but then that changed. So I had this initial suggestion that a citizen for example would apply for this passport and then the employee would specify the exact date and time for the citizen to come and pick it up.*

*I changed my mind when the manager of the Employees' Affairs Unit told me some of the facts about the department. We had 1100 employees divided between civil status and passports. The actual number of passports issued was 600. So on average each employee would just issue one passport. I felt that was a very big mistake—.*

IYER: This is daily?

MARZOUQA: *Yes, on a daily basis. I felt that we were not fulfilling our job. The total of passports issued was 600. Amman office would issue 400 and 200 was distributed all over the kingdom. This does not meet the need of reform and the needs of citizens because on average an employee would issue one passport on a daily basis. So that wasn't—that did not meet the expectations and the needs of citizens. That is why I visited all of the office all over the kingdom.*

*After those visits I realized that there were employees who were doing nothing in some offices, they did not have anything to work on. On the contrary, in the office of Amman where there was a very high load of work, there was a shortage of employees. They needed employees. So that's why I asked all of the directors of*

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*the offices to submit weekly, monthly reports and on an annual basis to measure the achievements of each employee, how many documents he issues, how many passports he issues, etcetera. Then I would study these reports and then I would move employees according to the workload to other places where they need employees.*

*Then I moved to develop the process itself, the time it needs and the steps, the procedures. We already talked about this. It took ten steps to issue a passport, twelve. These were simplified and they were made four steps. We already talked about this. So this happened as a result of this monitoring process because every employee started doing his job properly. That's why passports were issued from one hour to three hours as an average. Employees started doing their job properly, they did not waste time.*

*That happened also as a result of simplifying procedures. Previously we would ask the citizen to photocopy his old passport, to bring a certificate from a witness and a copy of the family book. We canceled all of these procedures.*

IYER: So I guess my key question is why did you focus on passports first, why didn't you focus on any of the other civil status document procedures. Why was the first thing you focused on reforming the passport procedures? Why did you see this as most problematic?

MARZOUQA: *Because issuing a passport was harder than other procedures. There was a very high demand. That's what people complained about. They complained about the delay in the issuance of the passports. The personal ID would take one month to issue them but people did not complain but they complained about the delay of passports.*

IYER: Was a huge problem the large backlog? For example you said that each employee would only issue one passport a day, 600 passports daily. So essentially I feel that you have a large demand that isn't being met by the supply or output produced. I was wondering if there was a large backlog of passports that needed to be issued lying on the table that needed to be looked at.

MARZOUQA: *We addressed this issue just like previous problems. We started working on the backlogs also. Then we started receiving the other applications.*

IYER: Do you recall how large the backlog was? How long did it take to remove it completely?

MARZOUQA: *I don't recall the number but I remember that we used to stay to 6 p.m. to finish the backlogs and then we would start all over again. We don't have an accurate statistic.*

IYER: Do you remember how long it took to get rid of the backlog before you started issuing new ones?

MARZOUQA: *For the backlogs I don't recall how long it took but it took us approximately a month or so. Unfortunately this coincided with the Gulf Crisis so we had a large wave of people coming back from the Gulf countries. We had to renew and issue on a daily basis an estimated number of 1500 passports. So this was a very large number according to the managers of the department.*

*There was another point he worked on. According to the law if you wanted to renew a passport for a person who is living abroad you need permission from the*

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*General Intelligence Department. But when the Gulf Crisis was taking place in 1991, people in Kuwait, they needed to renew their passports as soon as possible so they couldn't wait for permission from the General Intelligence Department. So that's why I went to the department, went to the General Intelligence Department and I asked them to renew the passports without getting the permission in advance. I wanted to make this exception. I asked them just for that period of time to issue passports without their permission because people had to move from those countries when there was a war and they couldn't move without their passports. So there was a humane need.*

IYER: They did this?

MARZOUQA: *We did this. We issued passports without the permission of the Intelligence Department although there were so many people on the wanted list.*

IYER: Related to the Gulf Crisis, it happened very early on in your tenure in 1991, 1992. The reform process hadn't really had time to sink in yet you can say. Suddenly the department had to issue daily 500 passports when before it was only issuing 600 passports a day. I was wondering, how did you prevent bottlenecks from forming? I mean, this seems like it was a huge challenge because you hadn't had time to have reforms really settle in yet. How did you meet this high demand?

MARZOUQA: *We would stay until 7 p.m. We were trying to make the most of every second. We did not waste time and they stayed until 7 p.m.*

IYER: And this change from twelve steps to four steps had occurred when the Gulf Crisis occurred and when this demand arose?

MARZOUQA: *We may have facilitated the procedures on citizens during the Gulf Crisis, but after that we made it a simplified—we simplified it in a systematic procedure. During the Gulf Crisis we had employees coming into the main offices in Amman from the offices where there wasn't a similar workload. They were not needed in their office so they would come in where they were needed.*

IYER: So essentially the Gulf Crisis was a sort of testing ground you could say through which you tried to see how you could modify procedures and then later on procedures were formally modified, is that correct?

MARZOUQA: *The Gulf Crisis added a burden onto us, and this may have motivated us to go ahead with the reform process.*

IYER: I'd like to now talk a bit about this twelve step to four-step change. Essentially the twelve steps that the passport process previously entailed, I was wondering if you could list them. We have had them translated, but I'd like to just check if what we have is correct. So if you could describe each part of this twelve step process briefly.

MARZOUQA: *For presenting the application to the employee you would have to photocopy your old passport. Sometimes if you don't have it already photocopied you would leave and photocopy it and come back afterwards. Then the application is accepted and checked and then here it is double-checked. Then they go over to the files. After going back to the files, they would send it to someone to double check, to the person who double checks. I would just make sure that the information which is found in the file is compatible with what is in the application.*

IYER: What was the purpose of going back to the file?



**MARZOUQA:** *To make sure that the information is consistent. Then it is transferred to the director of the office for approval. Then to the reception desk. They would call the person, the citizen. Then he is transferred to the accountant to pay the fees. Then they send an order to the issuance unit. When the document is issued they go back to the director to sign it. Then they put back the files and the last step is giving the passport to the citizen. Each step may have taken a day, so that could be ten days or twelve days.*

**IYER:** And here they shorten it into four steps, which essentially removes all of the double-checking, is that correct? Can you clarify that?

**MARZOUQA:** *They could check it from the computers. Previously there was a different policy for that but when I was appointed, I issued orders that every citizen, when presenting the application would pay the fees directly so that employees would not have any excuse not to issue the passport. So that employees would find ways to get away with it. They would tell me that there was a legal problem when the citizen pays directly. They would say what if the person or applicant turns out not to be Jordanian, how could we give them the money back because they would send the money to the Ministry of Finance.*

*So I told them let him pay and then if he is not Jordanian I would give him the money back from my own pocket.*

*Remember when I said I had three deputies for the director of the office who could sign the passports? As a result there was better efficiency and we could issue passports as quickly as possible because we had people to sign it on behalf of the director. What did you like about the department?*

**IYER:** I very much liked observing the processes and watching the employees interacting with the citizens. The citizens seemed very pleased with the process.

**MARZOUQA:** *Remember the men who were calling us at the department to fill the applications? I tried to—remember the men who used to call us for filling the applications? I tried to end this situation and I tried to let them go home because I felt it was not a civilized scene where they called people and asked them to fill applications. Also the department does that job. Remember when we walked in the department there was a desk on our left? It was a desk for information, a help desk? These people are assigned to fill out the applications for the citizens. So those people who were outside calling for us they just did it for money and they charged you one JD for the application while the department gives it for free. So I tried to let them go home, but then I faced so many difficulties. I couldn't do it because members of the Parliament would pressure me and would say this is their job and that's how they earn their living and their incomes.*

**IYER:** So just to summarize, the four step process involved approving and checking the application, then paying the fee to the accountant, the printing and issuance and then the director of the process signing it and handing it in person. I'm just wondering, this twelve step to four-step transition, did you develop it based on just observing processes constantly, or did you have any consultants come in to help you in developing this change?

**MARZOUQA:** *I used to apply this policy all the time. On a weekly basis I would gather all the employees of all levels and all jobs and I would discuss with them any suggestions. If they had any further suggestions we would discuss it, brainstorm, and come up with the proper suggestions. So although it was my idea, but then I*

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*would discuss it with employees and see what they could add to it. Yes, I used to consult also professors at the university and I would ask them for advice. This was very useful also.*

*Remember when I told you that so many people resisted the change? When you engage these people, the professors and people from the universities, they would advocate for change just like you wish.*

IYER: You mentioned that today when you go to the counter in Amman you have all four employees sitting next to each other and you mentioned that this is done in other branches like Irbid and Zarqa as well. I was wondering, today for example, do all of the branches have this format? By which time did all of the branches incorporate this? The four-step process with each of the employees sitting next to each other at the counter.

MARZOUQA: *Okay. There are two parts of the question. When it comes to the procedures yes, all of the offices have to abide by these procedures because also the press is doing a great job. When there would be a delay they would complain to the press and the press would shed light on this issue. But, you meant the counter right, also?*

IYER: Yes, by which time did all branches incorporate the change?

MARZOUQA: *I don't recall that. I cared about the result but it took time to find new buildings which could accommodate the new process.*

IYER: Just a quick question about the process, this four-step process again. We mentioned double-checking and you mentioned that the double-checking was now done by the computer whereas previously it was done manually. I was wondering, correct me if I'm wrong, but the double-checking involves first of all checking if the inputs are correct, if the entered material is correct and second of all if the entered material is consistent with what is in the archives. Can you clarify on this? Is that correct?

MARZOUQA: *There is also an assistant who will double check even with the computers. Yes, that's correct.*

IYER: Were both of these, you said there is now an assistant doing this double checking as well, but the computer automatically could check if it was consistent with the archived which means were the archives made electronic at some point or was this done later? I was just wondering if you could clarify on that. From what I understand, that was done in Mr. Yarvas' time.

MARZOUQA: *Yes, all of the information in the files was entered into the computer but I don't know the exact time of that.*

IYER: That process was finalized during Mr. Yarvas' time, is that correct?

MARZOUQA: *When Mr. Yarvas was appointed, all of the information was already there in the computers. Mr. [Indecipherable] will give you more accurate information on all of that because he specialized in it.*

IYER: Okay. You mentioned for example that other processes, like the personal IDs that took one month and I was wondering in what order were the other processes then reformed? You addressed passports first, but how were other processes

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addressed? Did you change any of the other processes during your tenure and if so in what order was this done?

**MARZOUQA:** *The second thing was the national IDs. There was only one office in Amman that would issue the personal IDs. The personal IDs would take a month to be issued. When I was visiting the offices I noted that there was only one office in Amman which issued national IDs, the personal IDs. I asked the employees over there why do you issue these personal IDs? Why are you the only ones who issue it here in Amman?*

*They told me that the machine that covers the ID, it needed a machine that was only found in Amman and it cost 3000 JDs. So if you would buy machines for all of the offices that would cost 90,000 JDs and of course we couldn't afford it. Then when I was visiting the offices I noticed that there were other machines, other machines which did this job, and they were not used, they were just put in a store.*

*So I asked them, "How come did you tell me that we did not have the machines? What are these four?" He said they were broken, the employee told me that the machines were broken and they needed maintenance. I asked them, "Why didn't you ask someone to do the maintenance for them?" He said it would cost a lot of money.*

*I got to the Public Security Department and I asked them for maintenance over there because I had good relations with them and they told me that they couldn't do it but they recommended someone who could do it and then he did it. Then I distributed the machines all over the kingdom.*

**IYER:** I was wondering how much did the processes differ? I understand for example that the birth certificate process seems very simple but personal IDs seem to be quite complex as well in that you have a different set of inputs you need to analyze and double check and then assessing it, verifying that it is correct in the archives and then printing and producing the output as well. So could you speak a little bit about the personal ID process and how similar it is or was to the passport process and whether you reformed this in the same way you reformed the passport process in terms of the steps.

**MARZOUQA:** *I should also add that the office which previously issued only personal IDs was canceled and then it became attached to the other civil status documents so that a person can apply for an ID just where he applies for any other civil status document.*

*No, the personal ID procedures were simpler than the passports, it took only ten minutes.*

**IYER:** Why were they simpler? I feel like you would have the same double-checking?

**MARZOUQA:** *Because passports would take longer to issue and print but the cards are easier to print. The demand also is not as high as passports.*

**IYER:** Just related to that, I find that very strange because I would think that the demand for national IDs would be far more than the demand for passports because passports are only obtained by people who are traveling in any sort of way and national IDs are something that are fundamental to Jordanian citizens so can you comment more on that?

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MARZOUQA: *We may be different in this aspect because there is a high demand on passports because we have large numbers of people who are traveling all the time. But yes, national IDs are very important especially when it comes to elections.*

*Yes, once I had the suggestion but the officials did not accept it. I wanted to issue special passports for businessmen to facilitate their traveling, but officials did not accept it.*

IYER: So basically, the reason why travel is so high here is it because residents often—because the emirate was formed in the 1900's, basically citizens still go back and visit Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank? Is that why there is such a large volume of traveling and a large demand for passports as opposed to national IDs? I'm just trying to understand this phenomenon more.

MARZOUQA: *It doesn't necessarily have to do with this. Because of the geographical proximity, because people go to Lebanon sometimes twice a month because it only takes like two hours or three hours. Especially during the eight holidays people will travel for vacations, for tourism, for business and also because they have their families in Lebanon and Syria and the West Bank, so yes, because we have families all over these countries.*

*When expanding the offices I sometimes approached municipalities and asked them for offices. They did not approve this. I suggested having mobile vans which would tour around the kingdom and reach places where people don't usually register births. Some people don't register births and you only get to know that they have a son when he turns 18 and he wants to serve in the military.*

IYER: So I'd like to now elicit some of your reflections as we conclude the interview. First, what do you feel that you've personally accomplished and how do you feel that these accomplishments have endured in the department?

MARZOUQA: *I am very proud of the work I did because I believe that when I work in a position I give all of his attention and I am dedicated to the job. Among my colleagues in the Royal Police Academy I am the only one who was appointed as the General Manager of the Public Security Department. I also occupied the posts which were better than my colleagues because I was always dedicated to his job.*

*So this is a report which was written by some visit from London. He advised officials here in Jordan to take my advice because after sitting with me and discussing issues, he realized that I had very advanced way of thinking. I always had ideas to implement regarding the development process in different units. When I was also in the public security I also suggested cooperating with the local communities, I suggested further cooperation with the local communities.*

IYER: If you could go through the entire process again, what do you think you would do differently?

MARZOUQA: *I would like to implement this, I would like to have two different shifts for the employees at the department so some employees would work from 8 a.m. until 2 and other employees would work from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. This could have facilitated the processes for the citizens because some people couldn't leave their work in the morning to issue documents, they worked at schools, at universities, at banks, etcetera, so they couldn't leave their jobs.*

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IYER: Last but not least, if you were writing a book on reforming a passport department in any country, what do you feel are the major lessons that you would incorporate in this book? What is the most important thing you would advise someone else to do?

MARZOUQA: *Focusing on the human resources. The main focus will be the human resources and the categorization of human resources. How many employees do they need for data entry, how many do they need for other jobs? And using technology of course. The third point is having employees who are visible to citizens. Also having spaces to park their cars for the citizens because we have a problem in this department.*

*Of course they should have ongoing evaluation processes, ongoing evaluations for their achievements and accountability of course. And for the committees which were included in the organizational structure, to do their job. There should be a specialized technical committee which should evaluate the job and the needs of the department.*

IYER: Thank you so much.