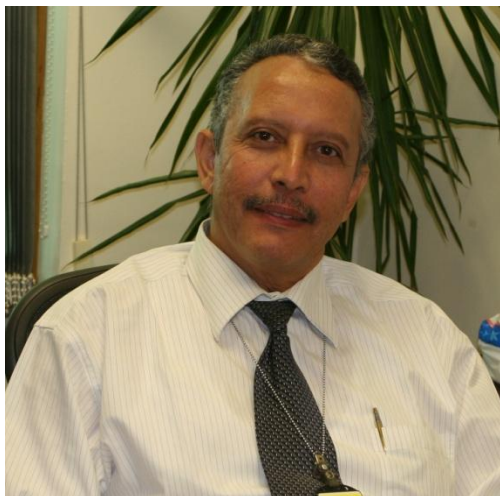


## Up-close and Personal Interview with Mr. Ali Kamel:



Mr. Ali Kamel joined USAID in 1989 as a project officer for a \$300 million agricultural policy project. After receiving several promotions in that office, he moved to the economic growth office to handle the \$1.2 billion cash transfer program. He supervised the Technical Assistance for Policy Reform (TAPR), and Technical Assistance to Support Economic Reform (TASER). Starting in 2005, he was the CTO then the COTR of the 5 year TAPR II umbrella project. In 2010, he started the USAID funded Egypt's Competitiveness Project, in addition to his responsibilities handling the economic growth \$ 110 million cash transfer. Mr. Ali Kamel has a B.Sc. in agro-economics from Cairo University, and received a Masters of Agro-economics from Michigan State University, as well as an A.B.D. in economics from the same institution. Additionally, he has studied international law at Georgetown University and has studied macroeconomics policies at economic institutes in Harvard and Colorado Universities.

### **1. Tell us one thing people don't know about you.**

I think I'm a very open person so most people know everything about me, but I love farming and the green color, I like to have pure oxygen to smell.

### **2. What drives your patience?**

I am a very patient person, and give people excuses, but I cannot tolerate non-performance. I like people who are hard workers. I like to see results.

### **3. What's your favorite expression?**

You can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. You'll do your best show people the benefit, but you cannot force them to take it.

### **4. What motivated you to work with USAID on policy reform?**

I was working in the foreign relations department in the Ministry of Agriculture, which was a subset of the Foreign Affairs Ministries. I was mainly managing USAID activities in the agriculture sector. We did many successful development activities at that time; Major Cereal Improvement Project and Rice Research which made Egypt the highest country in terms of rice production. However, during my work I noticed that farmers had to follow Government orders on what to plant, and grew



specific crops in specific areas. They had to use inputs coming from the government and sell their products to the government. It was a totally controlled sector. At that time, there was a presidential mission from the United States, headed by the President of Florida University, Dr. ET York. He asked if I see any challenges in agricultural sector in Egypt, and I mentioned all of the above. He said that this a very good start for a strategy for accelerating agricultural development in Egypt, and that's how it started.

**5. What has been the most successful reform activity you implemented with USAID?**

The work I did in the agricultural sector. Working in that field, I got several awards including Samurai of Reform and Negotiator of the year, and nomination for FSN of the year. These were in 1989 until 1992 when I left to Harvard. Now you can see the difference in the agricultural sector that became more private and liberalized. There are still some marketing and sales, training, and technology issues, but the improvement so far is remarkable. Development Support Program (DSP1) was also very successful on sector policy reform, privatization of several public enterprises, and elimination of trade barriers, I would say that TAPRII was successful as well in several areas including financial sector reform and fiscal policy. When TAPRII started in 2005 the World Bank Doing Business

Report ranked Egypt 165 out of 167, now Egypt is 94 out of 187.

**6. Where were your best memories?**

When I was in Michigan State, I was surrounded by greenery and white snow in the winter. I also love the times I spend in my farm.

**7. What are you growing?**

Mangos. The best mangos in the world! I also grow citruses. I grow them as a hobby so I'll have a place to relax when I retire. But I don't make any money out of it.

**8. If you have the option to travel through time, which time would you travel to?**

Mohamed Ali's time, it was the best renaissance time for Egypt, in all aspects.

**9. What's your favorite travel destination?**

I like to go to the US, Washington, and Michigan.

**10. What makes you laugh out loud?**

My grandson, Hamza

**11. What advices do you give to your children?**

I always tell them to be frank and honest, to work hard, and to have a good mouth when they talk to people.



**12. What do you hope Egypt will be like after USAID Egypt's Competitiveness Project**

It's not just after ECP. In 10 or 20 years, I hope Egypt will be one of the best countries in the world, a really developed country. Egyptians have the resources, but unfortunately we're abusing and mismanaging them. We are not realizing our real competitiveness, and that's why I called the new project Egypt's Competitiveness Project.