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Al Ismaelia, Coventry University Cairo partner on urban development education



Al Ismaelia for Real Estate Investment and Coventry University Cairo Branch at The Knowledge Hub Universities (TKH) launched a collaboration on May 6, 2025, to link academic learning with practical urban development in Downtown Cairo. The initiative aims to give students direct experience in the area's revitalisation and enhance architectural education standards in Egypt.

Unveiled at a media roundtable at Consoleya, the partnership will integrate academic training with fieldwork across architecture, interior design, product and graphic design, digital media, and film production.

Students will work on Al Ismaelia's Downtown sites, research development challenges, and explore design in a historically layered, evolving city. The collaboration aims to prepare students for urban work by allowing them to shape real projects and learn to balance heritage, function, and design.

"Education doesn't stop in the classroom. Downtown Cairo, with its historic architecture and layered urban character, offers an unparalleled setting for applied learning," said Philopateer Dimitri, Deputy CEO of Al Ismaelia. "What we're trying to do is simple: bring students into the field, let them work on real challenges, and help them understand how buildings, branding, and spaces affect everyday life. At the same time, we're supporting their growth as professionals."

Al Ismaelia has been involved in Downtown Cairo's revival for the past decade, focusing on adaptive reuse, sustainable renovation, and heritage preservation, aiming to balance modern needs with cultural legacy.

Under the agreement, Al Ismaelia will provide internships, host student exhibitions, and incorporate student projects into urban development. Student work will include redesigning spaces, re-evaluating pedestrian movement, and creating visual identities for Downtown that reflect its heritage and future.

For Coventry University, the partnership aligns with its goal of more practice-based programs. Students will research adaptive reuse, sustainable real estate, and public space branding, topics relevant to Cairo's development.

"Part of our mission is to ensure students learn concepts, but more importantly, apply them," said Prof. Dr. Yasser Sakr, President of The Knowledge Hub Universities, Coventry University Egypt's branch host. He added, "Partnering with Al Ismaelia was a natural choice for us. Few companies in Egypt have demonstrated the same level of care, expertise, and long-term commitment to sustainable urban development. This approach offers our students a rare opportunity: to learn from a living example of how heritage, modern design, and community needs can come together successfully."