

**Call for Applications Program on Artivism and Legal Mentorship  
(Law Students – Application Deadline 10 August 2021)**

Program Objectives:

This program aims to:

- provide special mentorship to Kashmiri law students and provide them with a network of established lawyers and like minded peers, mentors and supporters who they can use as life long resources for their legal learning, law practice and advocacy, and career development and growth,
- build capacity of Kashmiri law students, art students, and social work students to engage in collaborative learning and *artivism* as a means to unite their communities to advocate for peace and human rights, and
- address mental health concerns of Kashmiri youth by equipping them with self-care techniques including through use of art and meditation.

Dates & Location

17 August – 27 August 2021. This program will be run over the course of 9 days as an intensive pilot program. In alignment with covid-19 guidelines issued by universities and the government, this program may be run virtually and if possible, we will try and run it physically in Srinagar. Students will be required to commit 5-6 hours on the Program dates (weekends not included).

Application Documents & Selection Timeline

**10 August 2021 (4 pm Indian Standard Time):** Law Students from all law schools in Kashmir are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to final year and senior law students. You can apply by emailing the following documents to Advocate Meher Dev at [md3592@columbia.edu](mailto:md3592@columbia.edu)

1. Statement of Purpose no longer than 500 words explaining why you want to participate in this program, how do you think it will fit within your larger career and education plans and any other motivation or detail that you feel would be helpful for us to know as we assess your application
2. CV/ Resume no longer than 3 pages
3. Affirmative commitment to remain available on program dates in your cover email

**10 August 2021:** Selected candidates will be informed via email that they have been shortlisted for a 30 minute interview. Please look out for an email on 10 August 2021

**11 August 2021:** Declaration of selected candidates

**17 - 19 August 2021:** Program Theme 1: Art, Law and Artivism (Days 1-3 of the Program)

**20, 23 – 27 August 2021:** Program Theme 2: Mentorship for Law Students (Days 4-9)

**See enclosed Tentative Program Details**

## Curriculum for Program on Artivism and Legal Mentorship

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- address mental health concerns of Kashmiri youth by equipping them with self-care techniques including through use of art and meditation.

Sustainability and Long-term Continuity of Program:

Law schools and lawyers in India and in the U.S. such as Columbia Law School based on the outcomes of this pilot have shown interest in engaging with Kashmiri law students through regular mentorship programs. Currently, Columbia Law School runs a special program for students from Africa applying for higher education to Columbia. They provide special counseling on application drafting and scholarship opportunities. The aim is to have a similar program for Kashmiri law students interested in higher education opportunities.

Program Structure:

Below is how the program is structured under two themes.

Theme 1 Art, Law and Artivism spans over 3 days that serves as rapport and student community building across law, arts and social work disciplines.

Theme 2 Mentorship for Law Students spans over 6 days that focuses on mentorship for law students.

### **Theme 1: Art, Law and Artivism (Days 1-3)**

Overview: Increasingly the merit and benefits of interdisciplinary study and student engagement is being emphasized globally. Thus, sessions under this theme will focus on providing Kashmiri law, social work and art students the space to share their experiences of living and growing up in Kashmir. Law students will be at the centre of these sessions with supporting participation from students from other disciplines of social work and art.

Objective: The participants of the below sessions will learn how to use art to channelize their emotions and express themselves. They will be equipped with self-care techniques for their mental health and may act as first-responders to trauma that other youth in their student or family community may be facing. They will also learn how to resolve conflicts through mediation techniques. These sessions will also serve as ice-breaking and student bonding spaces.

#### **Day 1 Story Telling, Poetry, Canvas Art**

This day will focus on a session where *artivism* is used to express one's feelings, experiences and voices. Artivism means using art to express one's voice, emotions or legal opinion. Students will use various art forms including Story Telling, Photography, Poetry, and Canvas Art to express their emotions. Their art will open a dialogue between students from different disciplines and how they can learn from each other's experiences. This will help in student community building and bonding across law, social work and art disciplines.

Tentative Resources: Art professionals and local Kashmiri folk artists and social work/ art faculty and students will also be engaged as facilitators in this healing and sharing process. They will be requested to provide artistic tools that students can use to express themselves. The Broadway Advocacy Coalition from New York and the Centre for Institutional and Social Change that lead similar workshops for lawyers and artists at Columbia Law School have shown interest in sharing their resources on impactful story telling and using art as a means to voice your activism through art and law.

### **Day 2 Meditation and Self-care Techniques**

This day will focus on mental health and well being sessions for law students, social work and art students. Two separate sessions will be conducted. One session will be devoted to basic self-care mental health techniques on how one can deal with challenging emotions such as anger and frustration. Second session will be a meditation session facilitated by meditation practitioners who have held such sessions for law students at Columbia Law School.

Tentative Resources: With resources in a mental health toolkit prepared with the potential help of Columbia Law School's Human Rights Clinic and MindKind Institute who is a leading global meditation institute that has worked with law students at Columbia Law School, Kashmiri youth will receive self-care tools and meditation techniques for their mental health.

### **Day 3 Mediation and Conflict Management**

This day will focus on helping law students in building mediation skills through a workshop titled 'Make Difficult Conversations Easy'. The workshop will focus on helping students convert difficult conflicts and conversations into growth spaces. It will help students undertake conversations that they may find challenging and address day-day to conflicts and frustrations they may be facing in their lives. The workshop will provide them a structure (in thought not art design) to put their conflict into art form hopefully with a positive outlook and new realizations.

Tentative Resources: YCM, a pioneering mediation initiative in India will facilitate this session. Before the session, YCM will undertake an anonymous survey to gather information on the types of challenging conversations that students would like training on how to tackle these scenarios.

## **Theme 2: Mentorship for Law Students (Days 4-9)**

Overview: The mentorship program is a means for law students interested in constitutional and human rights lawyering to learn practical skills and develop advanced knowledge that they will require once they start practicing law. Sessions under this theme will focus on providing Kashmiri law students structured mentorship to help them build quality legal skills and become fine lawyers in their area of interest. The motivation for this mentorship program originates from a mentorship program for law students *ran in Delhi* in 2016-2017 where special seats were reserved for Kashmiri law students recognizing the hurdles they face in accessing mentorship. However, due to the erratic nature of the school schedule impacted by lockdowns, the students selected for the program were unable to join. Thus, this mentorship program now will be *based out of Kashmir* to fill the gap of legal education and address gaps based on a survey and needs identified by the Kashmiri law students themselves.

Objective: Through this mentorship program established lawyers will hand hold law students through their legal education and help them transition into lawyers for peace and human rights. Through seminars, mentorship, and career counseling, enrolled law students will be exposed to constitutional legal issues including state autonomy, access to internet, right to education, freedom of expression, gender discrimination and women rights. They will also learn how to place these issues within an international

human rights framework.

The mentorship program will have 3 main components that will take place over the course of 6 days. Each day will start with a seminar, followed by connecting law students to potential mentors for internships, and conclude by counseling on higher education and career:

1. **Seminars:** Interactive seminars will be led by lawyers, experts, and law faculty on select legal topics. Tentative Seminar topics include:
  - a. Public International Law (Sources) and International Human Rights Laws (India's International Obligations)
  - b. International Refugee Law (Protections for Refugees and Asylum Seekers)
  - c. Indian Constitutional Law (India's Domestic Obligations)
  - d. Special Status of J&K
  - e. Human Rights and Gender Justice in J&K
  - f. Corporate Social Responsibility
  - g. Farm laws
  - h. Other topics as identified by law faculty and students in Kashmir based on their interest as expressed in a survey.
2. **Mentorship in Law Practice:** Students and recent law graduates will be connected to lawyers and academicians in Kashmir and Delhi who will serve as their mentors and host a structured internship for them on a full-time or part-time basis as required. These can be virtual or physical based on circumstances of the law student. The goal is that no deserving student be left behind and providing students opportunities to intern alongside their studies and during winter break.
3. **Career and Higher Education Counseling:** Internships and job interviews will be arranged for law students. Counseling will be provided for interviews and higher LL.M. education in law schools in India and abroad and also on scholarships opportunities. Based on a survey undertaken with students on their interest in areas of law practice, lawyer and job opportunities will be identified in varied fields of law.

Tentative Resources: Chevening Scholars will provide counseling on U.K. law schools. Columbia Human Rights Fellows and University of Pennsylvania Scholars will provide counseling on U.S. law schools. Select human rights, constitutional law and other lawyers, experts, professors and scholarship holders from Kashmir and all over India will serve as mentors, seminar speakers and career counselors.