

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARDS AND M.A.D. TRANSFORM INDIAN PUBLIC SPACES

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills launched its biennial Community Engagement Awards in May in support of law students who create a positive impact in their communities.

As the submissions deadline of 15 July draws near, the firm spoke to previous winner, Making a Difference by Being the Difference (MAD), to share its insights and experiences as a winner and the importance of taking part as well as the benefits to the community.

MAD is a student-led activist group whose aim is to keep the city of Dehradun clean and create works of art for the community.

Why is your initiative so important to the community and what benefit does it bring?

One of India's foremost problems today is sanitation, lack of hygiene and improper garbage disposal, and the city of Dehradun is no exception. Our initiative was to beautify dirty and poster-clad shabby locations into beautiful public spaces by painting wall murals. The beneficiaries are the Dehradun public who have benefitted aesthetically and hygiene wise. We are currently working on a project - the Parade Ground wall beautification project - for the Tibbети Market community to help improve their businesses and to make their presently dirty workplace one of the city's most attractive destinations.

What support have you received since winning the community engagement awards?

We have received substantial help after winning the Herbert Smith Freehills Community Engagement Awards at several levels. It gave our reputation a major boost, particularly in the Indian law student community. Many law students across the country are natives of Dehradun City and we received positive support from the legal community who came forward as volunteers. The Award's grant also helped us facilitate the raw material costs that were necessary to execute the wall transformation activity. This process has helped enhance our credibility and made it easier for us to obtain necessary permissions from public authorities to execute wall painting activities.

Why would you recommend taking part in the awards to others?

This experience helped us in our effort to continue transforming locations in Dehradun City. We received first-hand experience on how to create impact from the Herbert Smith Freehills team. We know as previous winners that the amount of experience you gain and the gratification that one derives after winning amongst widespread public participation, makes the Community Engagement Awards worth signing up to.

What does the future of your project look like and what do you continue to do for the community?

We aim to complete beautification of the entire Parade Ground periphery of Dehradun City – the Parade Ground is one of the most iconic locations of the Dehradun City and sadly also one of its shabbiest areas. We expect to completely beautify the entire stretch and then move onto other landmark locations in the City continuing our mantra of Making a Difference by Being the Difference.

In addition to our wall painting projects, our organisation is involved in a big campaign to rejuvenate the drying rivers of Dehradun Valley – a campaign which has been backed by the Chief Minister of our State of Uttarakhand as well as the Government of India by the Union Minister of Water Resources and the Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Transforming public spaces is one of our important campaign aims and we plan to continue with greater zeal.

To find out more about the Community Engagement Awards and submit an entry, please click [here](#).