

Biography of Mr. Jaykumar Menon

An international human rights lawyer, scholar and social entrepreneur, Jaykumar Menon is currently Professor of Practice at the McGill University Institute for International Development, in Canada. He holds a JD and a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University along with a BA degree and one year of medical school at Brown. His research, teachings and practice focus on open innovation approaches such as crowdsourcing, innovation prizes and open IP to realize human rights and next generation economic rights including the right to food, water and health. He is a founder of the Open Source Pharma Foundation, which aims to help generate breakthrough affordable new cures in the areas of public health.

His approach to innovation has been in the area of development concepts that have recently received over \$111 million in funding from groups such as the Gates Foundation, Tata Trusts, Rockefeller Foundation, the Soros Foundations, CIDA, AusAid, DFID, and the G-20, aimed at making a dent in the severe problems affecting over a billion poor people.

Previously, he led the international development and education programs at the X PRIZE Foundation, a radical innovation group funded by the founders of Google and Facebook that awards \$10+ million incentive prizes to teams that achieve targeted “radical breakthroughs for the benefit of humanity”. He founded X PRIZE’s operations in India and has worked on innovation and development with WFP, IIT-Delhi, the UN Secretary-General’s Office, the Prime Minister’s Office of the Government of India, and other groups. He also worked with McKinsey.

As a human rights lawyer at the New York City-based Center for Constitutional Rights and working alongside activists and community groups, he won a string of victories in high profile cases. He represented the student leaders of Tiananmen Square against the ex-Premier of China, and helped win a \$4 billion judgment on behalf of victims of the Bosnian genocide against Radovan Karadzic. He helped represent the family of Nigerian environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in a landmark corporations and human rights suit against Royal Dutch Shell (\$15M settlement) and freed a man from death row in Indiana. As the fifteenth lawyer to take up the case, he hunted through the prisons of New York for the real killer and helped exonerate a man named David Wong who has served over a decade of a life sentence for murder.

As a scholar, he has written articles in top peer-reviewed international human rights law reference journals and books, including those published by the Oxford University Press. As an entrepreneur, he has co-founded a venture-funded Internet company that currently has seven-figure revenues. He is a published creative writer and has written a short story in an anthology that collectively won the American Book Award.

Through his creative and strategic approach, he hopes to bring about a just and large scale social change in the communities he works with.