Applicant Information

Name: Jean Millerat
Location: Maurepas France
Citizenship: France

Organization Information

Organization Name: wecena.com
Organization Website: http://www.wecena.com/
Organization Description: Provides ambitious non-profit social innovators with pro bono IT engineering and consulting services.
Location: Maurepas (Paris region) France
Service Breadth: National: Multiple regions across a country   France
Existence: Less than one year
Program Area: Community Improvement / Economic Development
Population Served: Economically Disadvantaged
Learned of Echoing Green: Website: conversationsnetwork.org
Previous Applicant: No

Essay answers

Q: What is your new, innovative idea to create lasting social change? Be clear, specific, and jargon-free in your answer

A:

Wecena services are pro bono (free) Information Technology (IT) engineering and consulting services that allow nonprofits' big IT projects to benefit from at least 1 person-year of professional IT skills each. Wecena services bridge the digital skills divide between nonprofits and corporations.

Access to corporate-grade IT skills will enable yet unforeseen technology-based social innovations. It will also allow nonprofits to increase the scalability and efficiency of their programs.

Wecena services are offered by engaging French IT services firms into delivering big amounts of pro bono work then by also turning pro bono IT consultants (work time) into volunteers (free time).

We use the French tax benefits systems to have IT firms donate big amounts of pro bono work. Everyday, the French IT services industry pays the salary of more than 10,000 employed *on-the-bench* (idle) consultants who are inactively waiting for their next customer engagement. The French tax law generates significant tax savings for employers who deliver pro bono work for non-profits. Wecena donors agree to give these tax savings back to nonprofits as an additional budget that allows us to get paid.

Q: What drew you to this issue? When and how did you come up with your idea?

A:

Having been scouting since 8, I could feel there was something beyond life in French cosy suburbs. When 18, a friend (and role model!) of mine, both social worker and priest, introduced me to a community immigrant youth nonprofit in *the hood*. We gathered a small team of young volunteers from the community and I led our video making project. Awarded as the best *youth* project of 1992 by the French scouting organization, I followed-up in 1996 by creating a national nonprofit program using the Internet as a *children attractor* for 10 community centers.

Volunteering in communities allowed me to discover what *real life* means: how both enriching and challenging diversity is. As a geek, I then realized I can't have more fun and accomplish myself better than by devoting my career to   bridging social gaps using my engineering skills. Having assisted more than 10 nonprofits in their technology programs, I identified that their scarcest IT resource is not hardware nor software but corporate-grade skills. Seeing the amount of brain power being wasted in the IT industry, I researched ways for tapping this source then invented and funded wecena.com.

Q: As specifically as possible, demonstrate the need for your organization. Use statistics and references

A:

Among nonprofits having received assistance from the US trade association for nonprofit technology assistance providers (NTEN, 2003 survey), 95% consider IT as important for them to achieve their mission and for the non-profit sector as a whole. IT has improved the ability of 87% of them to reach more people in need of their services.

But IT budgets are extremely limited. Around 50% of non-profits spend less than 1% of their budget on IT (Leverus.com 2004 ; Bayer Center for Non-Profits Management 2006). Even big NGOs spend less than 2.5% in IT compared to a 2.6% to 8.0% figure for like-sized public and private sector organizations (NetHope 2008). 57% of US foundations consider their technology adoption to be *lagging behind* (Grantmakers Information Technology Survey Report, 2007). IT cost is the most often mentioned barrier to tech adoption.

In France, 1 year of IT engineering costs about 80 kEUR ($100k USD). But 92% of French non-profits have a budget of less than 100 kEUR ($130k).

Wecena services represent significant in-kind resources for non-profits. We can boost their ability to achieve their mission and let them become early adopters (if not designers) of socially impactful IT.

Q: What's the root cause of this problem? How does your idea tackle this root cause?

A:

Time spent idle *on the bench* by consultants is considered a non-avoidable waste in the IT service industry. There has been no channel for *recycling* this waste so far. Such time is most often too short for any productive assignment: unless costly knowledge management (KM) methods and tools are used, learning a new project context takes some time and knowledge can't easily be transferred from consultant to consultant. Most IT firms would rather invest in sales efforts to reduce the size of their bench. And there has never been any effort at marketing pro bono work as a solution to their own specific needs.

The French laws allows wecena services to generate significant tax savings which are converted back into money donations for supported nonprofits. With this money, wecena.com is hired to offer appropriate KM methods and tools that let consultants become productive fast enough and which encourage them to become volunteers once their pro bono mission has ended. We thus sell IT firms a zero-cost opportunity to increase their Corporate Social Responsibility which allows them to recruit and retain better consulting talent. We distribute free IT skills and provide productivity support.

Q: Help Echoing Green visualize what your organization will do. Describe the specific programs that your organization will engage in to deliver your long-term outcomes

A:

A nonprofit (NP) requires better or new information technology for its new program. The NP staff leads the project and hires wecena.com for providing complementary IT staff for free.

Wecena.com allows the NP to promote its program while emphasizing both its skills requirments and its expected social impact. Wecena.com identifies and meets French IT service firms which offer proper skills and services and *sells* the NP program needs to the IT firm.

On-the-bench consultants apply on wecena.com for the program of the NP on a voluntary basis. The best of them starts the mission at the NP premises. After a couple of weeks, she stops and moves on to a new commercial engagement. Another on-the-bench consultant takes on the tasks left by her colleague. The NP staff uses wecena.com as a knowledge continuity management platform. At the end of the month, wecena.com generates tax receipts to the donating firm on the behalf of the NP. Based on the calculated tax cut, the firm donates money to the NP which in turn pays wecena.com for the services provided. A portion of these consultants turn into volunteers in their free time with the blessing of their employer.

Q: Describe your long-term desired outcomes. How will you measure your progress toward these outcomes?

A:

We envisage a world where pro bono IT services are considered a critical enabler for major social innovations from education to environment via poverty reduction. An army of computing experts and

corporations join the fight for changing the world. Wecena services are considered the secret weapon of high-impact social innovations. IT firms compete in donating more and better skills to prominent social entrepreneurs. Specialized for-profit social ventures emerge and compete with wecena.com.

By the end of 2010 we expect to deliver 10 full-time equivalents (FTE) of pro bono IT consulting and engineering to less than 10 ambitious non-profit projects and to increase this volume with a rate of at least 4 FTE per year. We will build non-profit satisfaction (surveyed) and loyalty (measured retention rate). At least 10% of the employees involved pro bono will turn into volunteers in their free time. Anecdotal evidence and impact indicators shared by nonprofits will show that wecena services increase nonprofits programs reach or efficiency by a factor of at least 3.

Q: Innovation is important to Echoing Green. Explain how your idea is truly innovative. Identify other organizations that are addressing this issue and how your approach is different and has the potential to be more effective

A: Wecena.com offers the first and only IT assistance solution for big social innovations (requiring more than 1 person-year) that costs nothing for both nonprofits and for corporate donors without relying on volunteering or direct governmental subsidies. Other organizations provide IT assistance to nonprofits :

   - either they offer donated software and hardware but no IT pro bono service (e.g. **Compumentor/TechSoup**);
   - or they offer pro bono IT service but their grants are worth no more than $35k USD (e.g. the **Taproot Foundation**) or mainly target a couple of weeks-long interventions (e.g. French **mobee.org**, **KOEO.net** or **charitic.fr**) compared with a <u>minimum</u> $64k USD (1 person-year) per wecena grant;
   - or they strictly limit the number of potential recipients because of the cost of dedicating individual consultants for the whole project (e.g. **Accenture France** can't donate much more than 10 FTE each year by chunks of 3 months to 1 year-long individual interventions) whereas wecena teams of "on the bench" consultants allow any IT firm to try out pro bono work a try at no cost, which generates higher volume of donations while turning more consultants into volunteers.

Q: Building a new organization is challenging. How are you entrepreneurial? Describe your skills and experiences that demonstrate you can lead a start-up organization

A:

In 1996, I co-created a French nonprofit. I raised funds from the French government for its *Internet in the hood* program. I led this program which provided technological assistance to more than 10 nonprofits in local immigrant communities in France.

In 1998, I co-created and led a small Internet consultancy, experienced its downfall and managed its

closing without bankruptcy. I had earned customers including governmental agencies and the Fondation de France (the biggest umbrella organization for French foundations).

In 2000, I joined a Fortune Global 200 firm (Saint-Gobain) as head of its corporate web technology group. In 5 years, I turned this 5 persons team of engineers into a more than 20-consultants-big skills center offering engineering and consulting services.

In 2005, I became leader of the French Motorola Labs team researching Web x.0 technologies for Motorola phones and set-top-boxes.

When ready to launch my wecena.com venture, in 2007, I negotiated a compensation package with my management line so that I could safely leave my position even though I am the only source of revenue for my family of 6. I funded Wecena SARL in July 2008.

Q: Why are you uniquely qualified to lead your specific organization? Describe your experience working with this issue and population

A:

My project requires the following skillset : managing innovative IT projects, being an entrepreneur, serving the non-profit field.

As the head of a corporate IT department then as the leader of an IT research team, I demonstrated my IT skills : I led the creation of a global electronic identity system for more than 200,000 corporate users worldwide and created technology which generated academic publications and patents. I managed the growth of an IT service team until it was 20 IT consultants big. I supervised 100 intranet projects and have been the champion of free software and open source in corporate environments.

I succesfully faced entrepreneurial challenges by taking organizational initiatives, raising required funds and selling innovative services to customers. I raised and managed an 8 millions EUR budget in a corporate environment for a project I led.

I have served nonprofits as a volunteer (Boyscouts, Ingénieurs Sans Frontières, Red Cross), as a board member and volunteer (my tech assistance program for 10 immigrant youth communities), during 8 months as a public servant (urban policies agency) and occasionally as a consultant (Fondation de France).

Q: How much money have you fundraised to date? Who is your largest funder and what is the size of their grant? Provide an estimate of your total budget for each of the next two fiscal years

A:

I funded Wecena SARL in July 2008 with 3 k€ ($3,890 USD). I am the only (hence largest) funder of this company. Thanks to family savings, I can work fulltime on this until September 2009. Then my annual revenue needs are of 150 k€ ($195k) which include:

-

my salary and attached social taxes

-

administrative and operating costs (IT included)

-

corporate taxes

These needs will be covered by nonprofits paying for my services thanks to money donations from the IT firms I recruit. It is costless for IT firms because of the tax savings their pro bono work and donations allow. Either one firm donates a yearly 150 k€ or no more than 3 firms donate 50 k€ each.

This represents about 4 FTE in pro bono work. My time is split between servicing nonprofits, mobilizing IT firms and developping the web application used for managing donations. By the end of 2010, I hire a consultant and have 10 FTE donated to nonprofits and a yearly revenue of 250 k€ ($324K).

Seed funding would keep me working fulltime on the project in case I only get the expected revenue flow after September 2009. Then it would accelerate the hiring of additional consultants.

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Graduate engineer Master's degree
Ecole Centrale de Lille, France
French nationality

INTERNET SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

SKILLS DOMAINS

- **Managing** teams (up to 20 persons) and projects (up to 8 millions euro)
- **Innovating**, from applied research to entrepreneurship, marketing and sales of technology-based services
- **Information Technology** (IT) for knowledge engineering, advanced Internet and mobile architectures
- **Consulting**, IT-related: functional requirements analysis, change management for administrative processes

OCCUPATIONS

2005 – 2007 MOTOROLA LABS (applied research laboratories of the US phone maker)
  ➢ **Team leader " Personalisation and Knowledge Lab "**
  -Managed a team of 7 researchers (machine learning and reasoning) in a strongly multicultural environment
  -Prototyped a personalized recommendation engine on a mobile phone
  -Co-authored 2 patents, 3 academic papers and a chapter in a scientific book

2000 – 2005 SAINT-GOBAIN (Fortune Global 200 company in building materials and retailing, corporate IT department)
  ➢ **Head of the Web Developments Group**
  -Transformed a 5 web developers team into a « project factory» of 20 IT consultants, managed its growth
  -Supervised the making of 70 web applications
  -R&D and expertise in Web architectures, *knowledge management*, free software and the semantic web.
  -Created the Saint-Gobain infrastructure that electronically identifies its 200,000 employees and organizations

2000 FONDATION DE FRANCE (as a *free-lance* contractor for the French foundation with 900 million euro in assets)
  ➢ **Auditor, expert in non-profit Internet projects**

1998 – 2000 RELIANCE SARL (Internet search and monitoring startup which also provided organization consulting)
  ➢ **Internet entrepreneur**
  -*Business development* in the governmental sector, created and managed the company
  -Software research and development of a web content management system
  -Led on-demand operations of competitive intelligence, environmental scanning and organization consulting

1997 – 1998 DÉLÉGATION INTERMINISTÉRIELLE À LA VILLE (French gov. agency in charge of urban social development)
  ➢ **Civil servant** (as a national service)
  -Located 53 M€ credit lines left unused in regional State agencies so that new projects could get funded
  -Put in place the IT network infrastructure of the agency (about 50 civil servants)

1995 – 1996 COMMISSARIAT À L'ENERGIE ATOMIQUE (French national agency for atomic energy, equivalent to the US DoE)
  then INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (U.N.O. inspectors, at Vienna, Austria)
  ➢ **Consultant in technology intelligence using the Internet,** applied to nuclear proliferation

EDUCATION

1994 – 1997 ECOLE CENTRALE DE LILLE
  ➢ **Graduate Engineer, Master's degree**
  -Designed software for community communication in social housing projects areas
  ➢ **Consultant in a Junior-Enterprise**
  -R&D in artificial intelligence for EDF,the main French electricity provider; Internet trainer in Dublin and Brussels

VOLUNTEERING

  ➢ **Community service**
  -Projects with immigrant youth in social housing projects using video and the Internet as catalysts; Emergency care for homeless people and certified first responder as a volunteer for the Red Cross; 2 weeks humanitarian mission in Morocco, scouting for 14 years
  ➢ **Social media**
  -*Blogger* (http://www.akasig.org/); Writer for the *Ecole Centrale de Lille* alumni newspaper; Radio host assistant for *Ingénieurs Sans Frontières*; Instructor and instructor trainer in video editing for a non-profit church studio

MANAGEMENT

Saint-Gobain

Organized an intranet " projects factory "
Defined and adopted a matrix organization, project management methods, a weekly reporting process and a dashboard for project portfolio management. Offered 5 services to 35 corporate departments.
➢Over 5 years, supervised 100 Web projects in knowledge management, content management, directories, corporate reporting, e-learning, administrative processes, industrial planning, online quotes.

Saint-Gobain

Recruited, coached and managed a team of 20 engineers and consultants
Including 5 employees with a skills development program, 10 on-site contractors and 5 off-site consultants
➢Five of them obtained significant career advancements based on experience gained in my team

INNOVATION

Motorola Labs

Designed and prototyped a virtual sport trainer in a mobile phone
collaboratively with researchers from Finland, Germany, the UK, the USA and India, as part of MobiLife, a research program funded by the European Commission; combined semantic web, machine learning, machine reasoning and context-awareness technologies into a new personalized recommendation engine
➢Demonstrated the prototype in front of 70 European journalists and industry analysts; shared our experience in 3 published academic papers and a book.

AkaSig

Author of a weblog about technology, open innovation and their impact on society
Daily technology intelligence and environmental scanning effort since 2002 at http://www.akasig.org/.
➢Online conversation with about 300 daily readers and commenters

Reliance SARL

Created and led an Internet startup
provided strategic intelligence services (using Internet search engines) and consulting services to French and middle-east governmental agencies, a multinational chemistry firm and a French telecom operator.
➢With my associate, we hired an intern and an employee and sold 135 k€ -worth of services.

**SIner'J
(non-profit
organization)**

Created and led a technology assistance program for community centers in " the hoods "
Co-created a national non-profit organization; hired a program leader; managed a budget of 150 k€.
➢Enabled Internet-based activities in 10 community centers led by young immigrant leaders in French low-income housing projects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Saint-Gobain

Created and led the Saint-Gobain " electronic identity " program to digitally identify individuals and organizational units in an industrial and retail conglomerate that contains over 1,500 subsidiaries. Analyzed key processes to optimize: the hiring and firing of persons. Led and managed change with HR, IT and facility management stakeholders. Led the design and deployment of the technical solution : an IT architecture for data synchronization, *Single-Sign-On* (single password) and *electronic provisioning.*
➢A 3-year deployment effort allowed 200,000 employees to be managed via these optimized processes.

Saint-Gobain

Recommended a global IT architecture for knowledge sharing communities
Collected functional needs from the corporate scientific departement. Designed an intranet architecture for organizing business experts into worlwide communities of practice. Supervised the making of the solution based on free software technologies.
➢The solution I recommended has been adopted and deployed worldwide.

CONSULTING

Saint-Gobain

Raised a multi-year 8 million euro program fund from 9 business divisions
Collected functional needs from 130 key stakeholders representing all business units and departments from the corporation. Led 20 international workshops dedicated to the IT project to be funded. Organized the collected needs into executive presentations used for further management and fund raising efforts.
➢I obtained approvals for the global budget and a 1 million euro commitment for the year to come.

**Fondation de
France**

Audited grant requests and provided expertise to subsequent programs
Assessed the technical feasibility and rated the expected social impact of 10 non-profit Internet projects. Provided technology assistance to 2 of these projects, including consulting to a network of 30 medium-sized social enterprises in the design of their internal knowledge sharing system.

**C.E.A.
(French DoE)
+ I.A.E.A.(UNO)**

Expertise for the CEA then the IAEA on Internet-search risks for nuclear proliferation
Searched the Internet for technical knowledge required by nations in search of nuclear weaponry.
➢Presented my method and conclusions to the anti-proliferation inspectors at the UN IAEA in Vienna on behalf of the French department of defense.