We Are Where Students Are: On the Web

The WFP Students and Teacher section of the website was launched in May of 2009. It was envisioned that the site would be a place for learning, exploration, and interaction amongst people with the power to change our world. Since its launch, the site has grown from a simple storehouse of content, to a dynamic and engaging source of news and information. The site features original videos, photos, and stories. Many of these are guest written by students around the world. This website has become a platform on which the work of students fighting to end hunger can be showcased, and in turn has become a place for youth to come for ideas and inspiration.

Analytics for the site have been upward trending, with the average time spent on the site consistently over 7 minutes. The engagement rate is high, which indicates users visit the site intending to interact with its content for extended periods of time. We credit this largely to the engaging nature of the stories and the large percentage of user-generated content.

As can be understood from looking at the map below, the majority of our traffic comes from North America. Youth in this area express a growing interest in resolving social issues, and are taking an initiative in the fight against hunger. Youth in the UK and Italy are also frequent visitors of the site. Schools in the UK have active UN societies, whose initiatives are often the focus of stories and videos featured on our website.
Constantly-Changing Content

Fresh content on a regular basis encourages Students and Teachers to visit the site frequently. We update content on a daily basis, and there is always a new feature being developed by our Youth Outreach team. The most recent addition to our site is a Forum, on which teachers and students of all ages can engage in global dialogue on the issue of hunger and potential solutions. The Forum, titled “Food for Thought,” is primarily geared toward University students and those looking for a deeper level of intellectual engagement. Guest writers, including speakers and globally-known authors will be featured on the site, each writing and engaging with students on a different topic. The forum can be accessed at groups.wfp.org and anyone is welcome to create a user login. “Food for Thought” offers an incredible way for WFP to harness the intellectual conversations that are already occurring in the University community and provide resources and a platform for discussion on all issues surrounding hunger.

Where do our Users Come From?

As can be seen in the graph to the right, visitors to the Students and Teachers section come from two primary sources: Refering Sites and Search Engines. The primary referring site is freerice.com, which has been a driver of traffic to the site since we began linking in the Freerice blog. The strong search engine percentage indicates that web users are actively seeking out hunger-related content.

Food Force and Virtual Edu-tainment

In addition to a wealth of on-site material, the Students and Teachers section also offers links to other activities and games created by the World Food Programme. One of these activities is “Food Force,” an educational video game which takes players through 6 missions on the fictional island of Sheyjan in order to help them understand the steps involved in providing aid during a food crisis.

The game is free, and downloadable from the website. It is available in English, French, German, Portugese and Suomi. Though the game was launched in 2005, it is still played in schools around the world, as well as downloaded onto personal computers for at-home play. The game symbolizes the World Food Programme’s innovative partnerships in technology and commitment to education as a means to fight hunger. Engaging children in entertaining ways captures their attention and allows us to help them understand hunger issues through a medium they already enjoy interacting with.
Site Breakdown

In its most basic sense, the site is divided into two separate sections: one for Students and one for Teachers. The two are accessible from the main World Food Programme website through a link on the homepage. These sections take the form of blogs, with entries geared toward their different audiences. The blog format allows us to include a wide variety of content, including videos, full-form web stories, and blog entries from the students and teachers themselves. Over time, an increasing amount of our content has become “user generated,” with video footage being submitted by schools, blogs emailed in by student activist groups, and ideas on how to help from kids taking hunger issues into their own hands.

Teachers Section

We believe that students have the ability to create a world free from hunger, but we know this is only possible if their teachers are committed to helping them understand the world they live in. This section of our site aims to provide the materials teachers need in order to do just that. In this section, teachers find everything from stories about classes campaigning against hunger to printable lesson plans. Over time, this site has become a center for teachers seeking practical and innovative ways to bring hunger issues into their curriculum. The teachers blog has organically become a place to highlight the incredible work being done by teachers around the world, as they integrate hunger and other social issues into their curriculum.

Lesson plans on the site analyze issues of geography, current affairs, mathematics and more through the lens of hunger. They each feature descriptions, instructions, and are downloadable in PDF form for easy in-class use. We have recently partnered with Rubicon Atlas, an online curriculum-mapping company, where our materials are featured. Working with this site will also allow us to encourage contribution from teachers around the world in the creation of curriculum materials.

Students Section

Today’s youth aren’t afraid to take matters into their own hands, and they are ready to be vocal about the issues that matter to them. The difference between these youth and those who have come before is that the tools they employ to transmit their messages are global, powerful, and viral. The World Food Programme has the opportunity to step in and inform these messages. If we provide the right materials to the right students at the right time, we can ensure that youth are inspired by the knowledge that hunger is solvable. This section of our site is a place where we can actively engage youth and meet them where they are at: on the web. Here, students help us create content by posting blogs, submitting video footage, and commenting on the work their peers are doing to end hunger. Our site encourages youth to communicate on a global level with one another, sharing strategies and working together to fight hunger.