

## Online game helps to feed the hungry

An Internet game, which donates 10 grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) for every correctly answered question, has passed the one billion grain mark after one month.

The amount donated by FreeRice.com, founded by the United States fundraising pioneer John Breen, reached 1,008,771,910 grains last week, 32 days after the site was opened. That is enough to feed more than 50,000 people for one day.

According to the FreeRice website, the game has two goals which are: to provide English vocabulary to everyone for free and to help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free.

WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran hailed the FreeRice game as an example of how the Internet can mobilise millions of people worldwide to end want.

“Every grain of rice is essential in the fight against hunger,” she said, adding that hunger claims more lives than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

“FreeRice really hits how the web can be harnessed to raise awareness and funds for the world's number one emergency,” said the WFP executive director, praising the site's marketing success.

FreeRice relies on payments from companies that place advertisements on the site to underwrite its donations to WFP, the world's largest humanitarian agency.

On 7 October, the first day of the site's operations, only 830 grains were donated.

But with the help of bloggers and social networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook, the numbers have grown exponentially, and last week more than 77 million grains, or the equivalent of seven million clic was donated.

FreeRice is a sister site of the world poverty site, Poverty.com. Poverty.com was created for all people around the world who want to end poverty.

It was started in January 2007 also by Breen who has no political, religious, or corporate affiliation with the site.

About 25,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, according to the United Nations, this is one person every three and a half seconds.

The problem is that hungry people are trapped in severe poverty. They lack the money to buy enough food to nourish themselves.

Being constantly malnourished, they become weaker and often sick which makes them increasingly less able to work, which then makes them even poorer and hungrier. This downward spiral often continues until death for them and their families.

There are effective programs to break this spiral. According to the Poverty.com website for adults, there are the “food for work” programs where the adults are paid with food to build schools, dig wells, make roads, and so on.

This both nourishes them and builds infrastructure to end poverty.

For children, there are “food for education” programs where the children are provided with food when they attend school, which will in turn help them to escape from hunger and global poverty.

Play the game here: [www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)

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