

Dear students of the class

Welcome to the Indonesian island of Sumba! I'm Arief and I'm 8 years old. Today, I want to tell you what I think is important in order to be able to achieve one's plans and make one's dreams come true. You won't believe it, but for me it's important to take care of myself every day: everyday hygiene, brushing my teeth, medical care, healthy food and drinking clean water. You probably wouldn't think that someone could treat all these things that parents tell us to do as a value. I will tell you why it's so important to me

Each of us likes to have fun: run, jump, read, watch something, go on a trip. Look at the pictures I have prepared for you.



My friends and I often play on the beach.

Do you know how much strength it takes to stay on your feet in these waves?! We need to be healthy for this, too!



Look at one of the views of Sumba
– it's beautiful here, isn't it?

Although, after seeing these pictures, you may think that people live a wonderful life on such a beautiful island as Sumba, our everyday life is not so nice at all. It is difficult to find drinking water, there is not enough food, access to doctors is limited. Our region is home to the most dangerous species of mosquitoes transmitting malaria – an infectious blood disease. These mosquitoes, combined with the poor hygiene and poor health of the inhabitants of our island, make a lot of people ill.

You probably know for yourself that if you are weakened or ill, you don't have the strength to play and you can't study. It is hard to concentrate, nothing stays in your head, and your body gets tired quickly. That is why many of my older friends have not finished school and cannot start work. And if they don't work, they don't have the money to buy food, which means that they have little strength and they can't study or work. It's called a vicious circle because it's so hard to get out of it.

With the help of various organisations on our island, actions are being taken to help us break out of it. The solutions are often so simple! Still, they need money to be carried out. For example, money is needed for digging new wells so that we can have clean drinking water, and not use water from the river in which animals swim. Regular blood tests to quickly treat someone who has fallen ill before the disease develops further are also expensive.

Sometimes we also get extra food so that we don't lose our strength. We protect ourselves from mosquitoes with mosquito nets. See how it looks.



Here you can see my friend who wanted to show you what a mosquito net looks like. It's a thin net, resembling a curtain, which protects beds, so that at night we are not bitten by mosquitoes that infect us with malaria.



This is what our dinner looks like sometimes – we eat rice, some vegetables and a small piece of meat – although we eat meat the least often because few people in our village can afford it.



Here you can see taking a blood sample for testing whether we are healthy and whether we have malaria or not. It's not terrible, as you can see, and it's always better to check yourself in order to start medical treatment as soon as possible, if you are ill.

And here you can see the new intake of clean, drinkable water in our village. It will make us all healthier.



Believe me, I don't like blood tests either. I'm scared of syringes that are used for vaccinations and sometimes I wish I didn't have to brush my teeth before going to bed. But I know that these activities and care help me to be healthy and have the strength to do everything I would like to do. You have to take care of yourself every day, and not when something bad starts in your body, e.g. when you have a toothache. Isn't that true? Say it yourself!

I know that if I do not take care of my hygiene, if I don't rest at night or eat healthy meals, sooner or later it will turn out that I cannot play, go to school, have great adventures, because I will not have the strength to do it. That's why I think it's very, very important to take care of yourself. This is, in my opinion, one of the greatest values.

Do you agree with me?

*I send you my warmest greetings,
Arief*

