

Pink bus to help schoolgirls from falling victim to sex industry

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A bus in pink with flower patterns will be available from Oct. 17 in Tokyo to offer help to schoolgirls. (Shogo Koshida)



Rather than waiting for troubled young girls to seek help, a Tokyo-based support group is sending a pink bus to keep them from falling prey to predators in the sex industry.

The bus will be available starting from this month in Tokyo, offering advice, as well as free meals and other daily necessities.

Colabo, which provides support to girls, including shelters, operates the pink and flower-patterned bus, Tsubomi Cafe.

Yumeno Nito, representative of Colabo, said she is hoping the bus will reach out to junior high and high school girls wandering the streets of the metropolis before they are recruited into the sex industry.

“Girls go out on the streets at night because they do not have a place to call home due to abuse or to make money to finance their school trips and school meals,” said Nito, 28.

“Many of those girls never think of seeking advice, and people who aggressively call out to them are those from the sex industry. Just waiting for girls to come to us for help is not enough.”

The effort is part of a joint program between the central government and the Tokyo metropolitan government, which is aimed at assisting girls facing difficulty at home and school. The Shinjuku and Shibuya ward governments have signed up to support the program by providing parking spaces and electricity.

The commencement of the program was held in the Shinjuku district on Oct. 6. The service will start on Oct. 17.

When the small bus is parked at a location, a canopy is set up next to it with chairs and a table.

The bus offers not only toothbrushes and cosmetics, but also meals, beverages and clothes for free. The girls can also recharge their smartphones there.

Bus staff can take them to a hospital or find them accommodations if necessary.

The bus will be available in front of the Shinjuku Ward government building from 5:45 p.m. to 11 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. It will be parked from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays in Shibuya Ward.