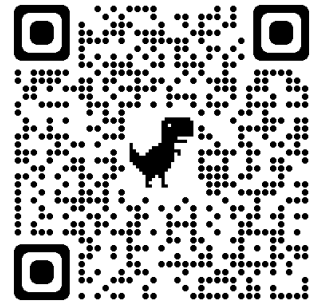


Empowering Japanese kids to protect themselves



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20231113092459596/>

The tune may sound light and fun, but the message is anything but. The song is called “Don’t mess with me.” It teaches kids how to respond to the threat of sexual abuse. It’s a hit in Brazil where it was picked up by TV and went viral on social media. The director of the music video, Paola Bellucci, lives in Japan. She’s a survivor of sexual abuse herself, so she knows how traumatic it is.

Sometimes it’s your father, sometimes it’s your uncle, sometimes it’s your professor, so it’s hard to say you are doing something wrong.

Paola wants to spread the word in Japan, but there are challenges. A school teacher friend says there may be some hesitation about including sex abuse education in classes.

Teachers are scared about how parents will react. Even with good material, there’s the question of how to include it in the curriculum and how to ensure accountability.

Paola needed to make the topic more approachable. The direct translation of her song title is “sawaranaide” or “don’t touch me.” For Japanese people, that’s too blunt. A friend suggested an alternative, “kimi wa taisetsu” it means “you are important.”

The title “Kimi wa Taisetsu” is a more positive word. It’s more likely to get attention.

This is too disruptive for society now.

From now on, the Japanese society is starting to break the silence and break this taboo. Talking more about it and embracing the victims.

Paola tested the revised version of the song at an English language school.

What is protect? I protect. What does that mean?

Now I know how to protect myself.

We don't have this kind of opportunity to learn about self-protection, so it would be great if my daughter and I could get more of it.

We should talk about this in an educative way. I really hope that children don't suffer what I suffered when I was a child, so that's what I'm doing today.

The language and culture may differ, but the message is universal.

Source: NHK World News

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. What is your opinion of showing this video in schools?
2. Why do you think teachers are scared about how some parents will react?
3. Why is it a taboo to talk about this subject in Japan? Why do you think it's starting to change?
4. Can you think of any other difficult subjects that should be taught in school?
5. Do you agree that Sawaranaide is too blunt? Why do you think Kimi wa Taisetsu is a better title for a Japanese audience?