

Critically analyse how a local, national or international campaigning organisation has engaged with a topic of your choice over the last year.

Your answer should refer to theory and legislation as part of your analysis.

This essay will be discussing an ongoing campaign, which is commonly known as the #MeToo movement. Throughout this essay, the aim will be to identify what the #MeToo movement is about, and how it gained popularity, and what it hopes to achieve, and whether they have reached their goal or not. This essay will also be exploring what people gain from this movement, who has been affected by this movement and comparing the positive and negative outcomes the campaign has received. This essay will also be identifying a variety of statistics which support the movement as well as not in favour for the #MeToo movement.

Briefly looking at the history of the movement, the #MeToo movement was established in 2006 by Tarana Burke, with the purpose of supporting and helping victims of sexual violence. The movement originally aimed to support Black women and girls, and those from low wealth communities (Me Too, 2018). The aim was to ensure the appropriate resources were made available to these women, and to empower these survivors to become community advocates themselves, while being on the frontlines finding solutions to end sexual violence within their own communities (Me Too, 2018). Shortly after this movement began, the #MeToo movement became a key discussion regarding sexual violence, becoming viral on a global scale due to the hashtag, and a global discussion relating to this topic where survivors from all walks of life and different nationalities came together to de-stigmatise what surviving sexual violence means, by emphasising on how deep of an impact it can leave on an individual (Me Too, 2018). The #MeToo movement now aims to support a broader group of survivors, which include individuals who are transvestite, individuals with disabilities, individuals who are homosexual, all young people, women and girls who are black and a variety of different ethnicities (MeToo, 2018).

The #MeToo campaign has been a well known topic of conversation, no doubt on a global scale. With what it appears to be that many are revelling in its success at bringing men who have caused sexual violence to women to some form of justice. There are several examples of this, especially in America, with many high profile celebrities. These include the well known rapper, commonly known as R. Kelly. Several women have come forward over the decades claiming they had been sexually assaulted by R. Kelly, while others have only recently come forward due to the fear of them not being believed (USA Today, 2019). However, at the time of these accusations being made, these were not women, in fact they were just young girls, some as young as thirteen years old, all stating they had been sexually

assaulted by R. Kelly. The arrest of Kelly was undoubtedly strengthened by the #MeToo movement, which was focused on throughout the trial, especially due to so many being underage and the girls being black or mixed race (USA Today, 2019).

Another example of the #MeToo campaign helping to hold someone accountable for their actions is the former film producer, Harvey Weinstein, who similar to R. Kelly, has been accused of several accounts of sexual assault over decades. However, many famous female celebrities came forward in 2017 against Weinstein, declaring they were victims of sexual assault and harassment caused by Weinstein, ranging from the 1980's to present day (BBC News, 2020). An alarming amount of women came forward throughout 2017, over 100 women to be exact, and in 2020, Weinstein was sentenced to 23 years in prison for sexual assault and rape, massively contributed by the #MeToo movement (Al Jazeera, 2020). This extortionate amount of women who came forward accusing Weinstein of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape undoubtedly fuelled the #MeToo movement on a global scale (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Evidently, the #MeToo movement has contributed to several positive outcomes which derived from very sinister circumstances. The movement provides plenty of informative statistics which support how important it is to keep the campaign going and acknowledged, some of these statistics include an alarming 12.3% of women were aged 10 or under when they were first sexually assaulted or raped, 1 in 5 Black women have been raped in their lifetime, eight percent of rapes take place in the workplace, 47.1% of rape victims' perpetrators were a current or former intimate partner, 1 in 3 women experience sexual assault in their life time, and 60% of Black girls experience sexual assault by the time they are 18 (Me Too, 2018). These statistics could be considered as a demonstration of how vital this particular campaign is in spreading awareness of sexual assault, and how important and needed this campaign is help eradicate the on going issue on a global scale.

With this campaign, because it is so well known globally, it may be considered that there was a lot expected from it in achieving the perfect outcome, especially after the rise of the movement in 2017. Therefore, was all that was pledged by the campaign achieved? Evidently, there were positive and negative outcomes to the movement. The positive outcomes include the awareness for sexual assault that has been raised, and the impact it has made on the public, raising awareness for how frequently sexual assault in the workplace is still happening, and the impact it can have on the victims for the rest of their lives (Morrison, 2019). The campaign demonstrated that it could bring down even the most famous, rich and powerful, and bring them to justice for their heinous crimes against women. Indicating that if this movement can bring them down, they could bring anyone to justice and ensure

they will be held accountable. Another campaign similar to the #MeToo movement is the #TimesUp movement, however this focuses solely on sexual harassment in the workplace, with a more focused goal supporting the victims to seek justice (Morrison, 2019). #TimesUp focused on bringing men who were formerly getting away with their actions, were now being held accountable. In comparison to the #MeToo campaign, it seems more focused on a set group they wish to support, with a set goal they wish to achieve, including broadening legislation in order to discipline companies who continue to allow and permit persistent harassment (Morrison, 2019). Perhaps if the #MeToo was more focused on a certain group of individuals and it would achieve a more desired goal.

There have been a few setbacks that the campaign has received, with even 43% of African Americans stating that they believe the #MeToo movement has gone “too far” (Morrison, 2019). Some of the negative aspects of the outcomes of the movement are that many feel that the campaign encourages women to lie and make false allegations, that could end up destroying the life of someone who is entirely innocent. However, this has been widely disputed by supporters of the campaign, who state that stating something like this only gives more power and protection to the perpetrator to continue to get away with their actions (Morrison, 2019). Another form of criticism the campaign received is regarding the workplace, a group of researchers conducted two separate surveys to 152 men and 303 women, the topic went on to explore what men and women viewed as sexual harassment in the workplace, due to some men claiming they were not aware that what they were doing was classed as sexual assault (Morrison, 2019). The research identified that there were no significant differences among the surveys, therefore concluding that men are aware of what sexual harassment consists of. What was not expected were the staggering changes in the following year to hiring women in the workplace. This was demonstrated through the following statistics in 2018, that 16% of men said they would be reluctant to hire attractive women, the following year this increased to 19%. 15% of men said they would be reluctant to hire women for jobs involving close interpersonal interactions with men, the following year this increased to 21% (Morrison, 2019). Therefore, due to these results, many individuals view these outcomes as a step backwards in the wrong direction, rather than a positive development in this area, causing some to believe the #MeToo has simply gone too far.

In regards to legislation, the #MeToo movement has contributed to a few accomplishments in the succession of laws and policies regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, being passed in certain states of America to protect women due to this particular movement. These states include Oregon, New Jersey, New York and Illinois, who all have passed new laws which will protect women from sexual harassment within their workplace, as well as gender discrimination within the workplace, all due to the massive impact the #MeToo campaign made in 2017 (Vice, 2019). This new movement also has its own slogan, which is #20by2020, which is hoping to encourage other states in America to

follow in their footsteps to advance the progress of policy reforms in the workplace to be achieved by 2020 (Vice, 2019).

Evidently, the #MeToo movement has been a campaign full of controversy, however, it is clear it has also been rewarding, passionate, genuine and even life changing for some. The movement may have started out small, but the impact it has had on the world is large. The positive aspects can be seen as outweighing the negative, with the incrimination of the likes of powerful and rich men such as R. Kelly, and Harvey Weinstein, demonstrating that this movement does not care who one is or where they come from, if one is able to commit these atrocious crimes, they will be punished. Also, ensuring the victims are empowered to speak up and get justice, is rewarding in itself. Although there has been backlash from the campaign, it is clear the movements aim is genuine and not self serving, solely with the aim to help victims of sexual assault find a way to move on and get closure.

Word count: 1649 words.

References:

Aljazeera (2020) *Harvey Weinstein sentenced to 23 years in Landmark #MeToo case*. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/harvey-weinstein-sentenced-23-years-landmark-metoo-case-200311132736214.html> (Accessed: 11th April 2020).

BBC NEWS (2020) *Harvey Weinstein timeline: How the scandal unfolded*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-41594672> (Accessed: 11th April 2020).

Me Too (2018) *About*. Available at: <https://metoomvmt.org/about/> (Accessed: 10th April 2020).

Me Too (2018) *Statistics*. Available at: <https://metoomvmt.org/statistics/> (Accessed: 13th April 2020).

Morrison. S (2019) *MeToo Movement Fallout: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*.
<https://www.eleapsoftware.com/metoo-movement-fallout-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/> (Accessed 16th April 2020).

The Atlantic (2019) *The 7 Most Defining #MeToo Movements of 2019. How the movement continues to spur a cultural reckoning*. Available at:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/12/most-defining-metoo-moments-2019/603490/> (Accessed: 10th April 2020).

USA TODAY (2020) *R. Kelly case spotlights abuse of underage girls in #MeToo era*. Available at:
<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/music/2019/03/18/r-kelly-case-spotlights-abuse-underage-girls-metoo-era/3199960002/> (Accessed: 11th April 2020).

Vice (2019) *15 States Have Passed New Laws To Protect Women After #MeToo*. Available at:
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/a35z3p/new-harrasment-laws-me-too (Accessed: 16th April 2020).