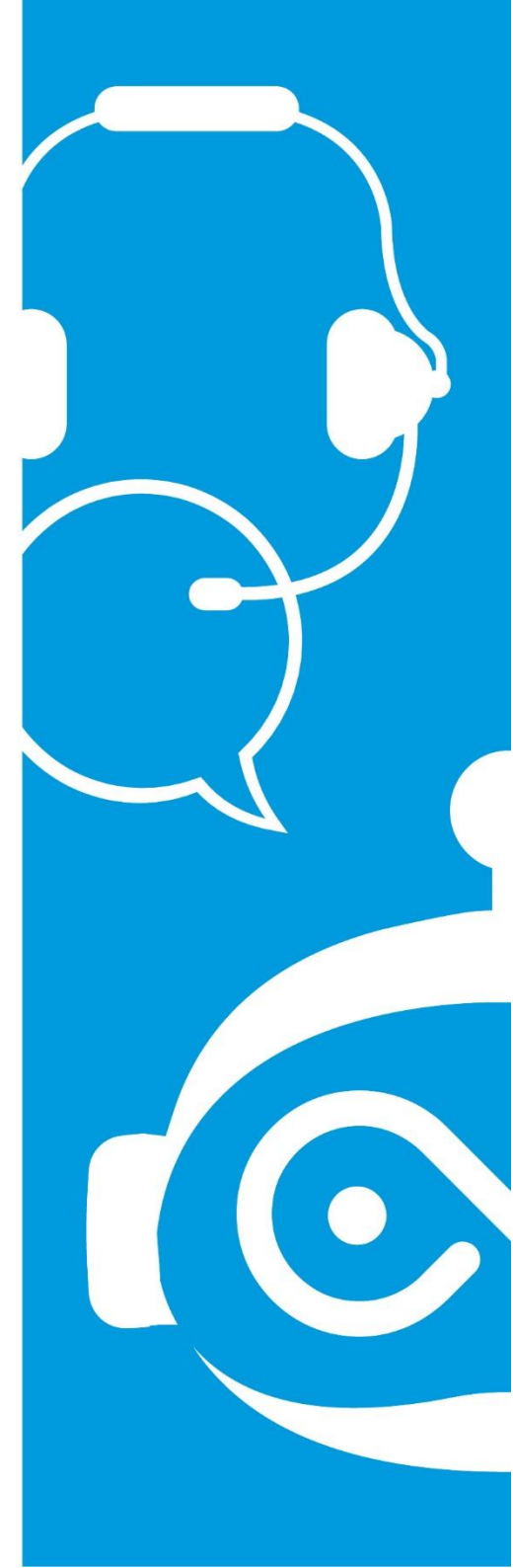ALEX

ONLINE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: WOMEN'S MARCH
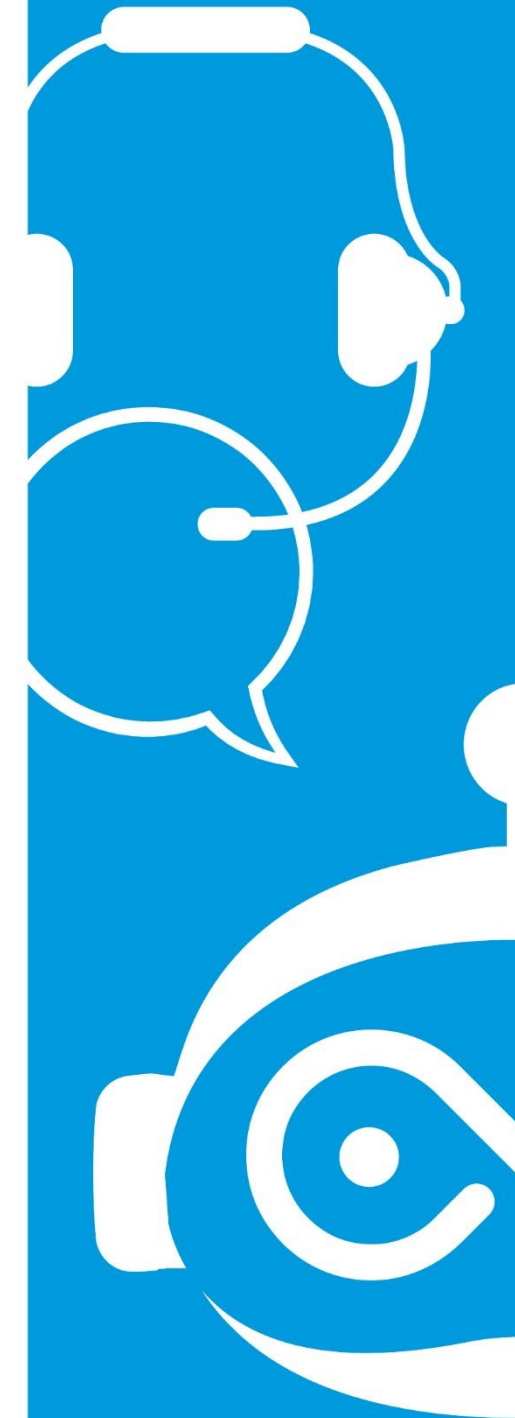
What is it?

The Women's March originated as a **digital phenomenon** in which online groups called for the end of violence against women and for the promotion of women's rights as a whole. The digital space played a key role in organising and disseminating such a movement and its global spread. At the beginning of the 20th century, women fought for their voting rights, and many female workers went on strike to secure fair working conditions and wages. Others had to contend with various forms of discrimination and social inequalities. Demonstrations took place in different years all around the world. In the latter half of the 20th century, the internet began to support such actions, paving the way for the social media-led Women's March to gain steam in 2017.

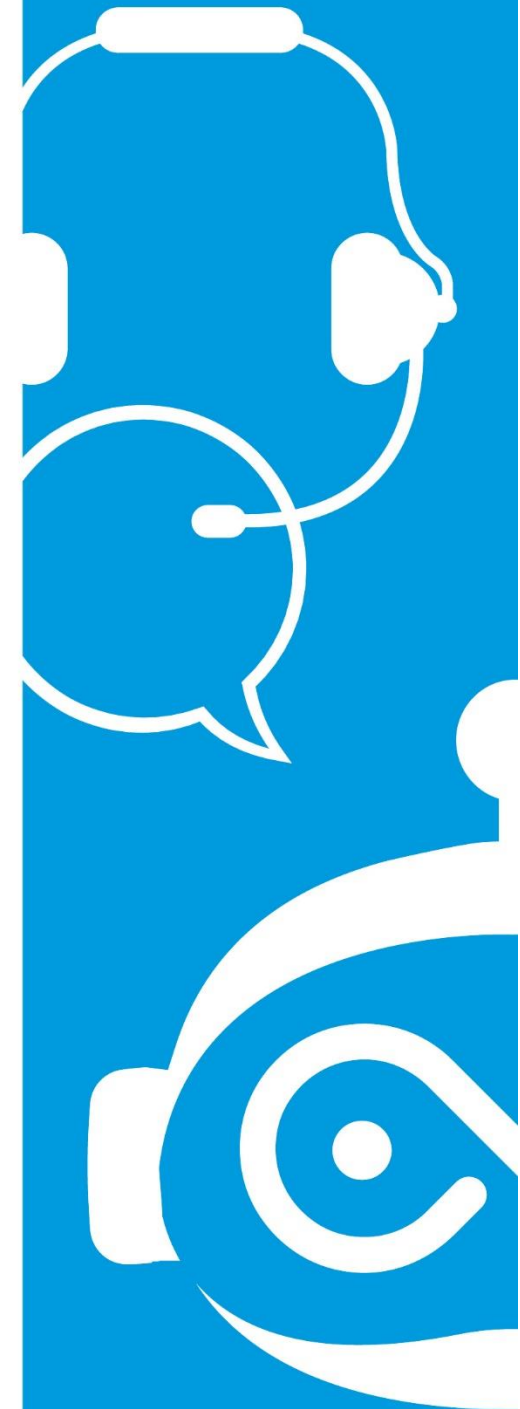## How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Women's group demonstrations and informational actions on the internet concerning this topic can contribute to putting an end to violence against women, liberalisation of abortion regulations, and equal opportunities for women in society. This has an impact on fostering a greater sense of security among young people engaging in sexual life and deriving pleasure from it without concerns such as unwanted pregnancies.

Due to their accessibility and reach, women's marches present on the internet and especially on social media such as X (formerly Twitter) teach tolerance and equality in sexual life regardless of sexual orientation and gender, strengthen women's sense of worth and reject sexual violence. The danger in such phenomena may lie in negative or biased and untrue comments regarding women's strikes that young people may encounter on the internet. However, they present valuable arenas in which young women's and trans women's voices and experiences can be supported and championed.

What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Show that young people can experience support from adults who often serve as role models for them. Demonstrate that adults do not condone acts of violence by participating in and promoting such actions.
- Emphasise the involvement of well-known and famous individuals in these actions, and their refusal to tolerate violence, which helps strengthen the mindset that sexual violence is unacceptable.
- Teach young people how to express and demonstrate their disapproval of actions that threaten their rights and diminish their sexual satisfaction.
- Raise awareness that such actions have an international reach - young people have the opportunity to learn how issues related to addressing sexual violence are addressed in other countries.
- Familiarise them with forms and methods of resistance to sexual violence, such as boycotting the activities of individuals/organisations with misogynistic views, boycotting companies that use sexism in advertising or discriminate against female employees based on gender, and manifesting solidarity with acts against sexual violence and gender inequality through clothing or its elements.

Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Online social movements: #MeToo
- Online social movements: Black Lives Matter
- Misconceptions & misinformation: Gender expression

Further reading:

- Mikrut-Majeranek, Magdalena. "Strajki Kobiet w Dziejach Polski, Europy i Świata." HistMag, 2020. https://histmag.org/Strajki-kobiet-w-dziejach-Polski-Europy-i-swiata-Galeria-21499.

- Polityka. "Marsze Kobiet Na Całym Świecie: W Jakiej Sprawie Się Jednoczą?," 2017. https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/swiat/1691280,1,marsze-kobiet-na-calym-swiecie-w-jakiej-sprawie-sie-jednocza.read.

- Rubano, Julia. "How Social Media Started the Women's March on Washington." Accessed October 12, 2023. https://info.primalstorytelling.com/blog/how-social-media-started-the-womens-march-on-washington.