Fund Feminist Street Art on Campus (Expenditure Request)

What will we do?
1. Give £700 to the Edinburgh University Students’ Association’s Women’s Liberation Group to help fund the flight costs for members of the Feminist Street Art Collective: Vienna to come to Edinburgh and hold street art workshops with women students and students of marginalised genders.

What is the background to this?
1. Feminist Street Art Collective: Vienna is an Austria-based feminist group with a focus on graffiti and other forms of creative activism. As well as running general events and workshops on a variety of themes, from street harassment to anti-fascism, they also offer bespoke workshops to groups looking to explore feminist and political themes through street art. The Collective has a special focus on reclaiming space in areas that are traditionally dominated by cis men (men whose gender is aligned with what was assigned at birth), such as the street art scene.

2. One of the Women’s Liberation Group’s major focuses this year is to (re)claim space and raise awareness of women’s issues, issues facing marginalised genders and feminist issues through art, for instance, by inviting the Collective to run workshops open to all women students and students of marginalised genders. Another focus has also been to diversify our methods of activism to be more creative, as has been raised in discussions with past convenors and students who have asked for more diverse forms of activism and ways of exploring feminist issues.

3. The workshops will involve learning about street art, developing a feminist street art concept, and finally creating a semi-permanent street art mural for display on campus - for the community and by the community. We aim for these workshops to be intersectional and to ensure that the experiences of women with disabilities, women of colour, trans women and women from other marginalised groups on campus are also reflected in our work.

4. The Women’s Liberation Group has already run events and campaigns this year focusing on taking up space for marginalised genders, which is in line with the Feminist Street Art Collective’s aims, such as the photography project #UnapologeticallyMe and Fight For The Night. Edinburgh University Students’ Association has supported multiple women-led and feminist projects and motions at Council, for example End Rape Culture and Lad Banter on Campus and Support Feminist Society Campaign. The Students’ Association has also supported campaigns such as No One Asks For It and Sexpression’s consent campaign, both of which have had a focus on improving the experiences of women students and students of marginalised genders by tackling issues like harassment and rape culture. As such, this would only be an extension of the
work Student Council and the Students’ Association already do to support women students and students of marginalised genders.

5. In order for the project to take place, the Women’s Liberation Group needs funding for the flights of the people coming to Edinburgh to do these workshops. The Group will be funding other resources (e.g. advertising, art materials, and refreshments during the workshops) from our own budget, but requires some extra financial aid for travel expenses from Student Council. With Student Council funding, we can also ensure that workshops are free for participants, which would mean they are accessible to all students regardless of income.

What beliefs motivate the actions you propose?

1. The Women’s Liberation Group believes this is a project that will benefit all women students and students of marginalised genders as a form of work to take up space at the university and make our voices heard through an intersectional approach.

2. The Women’s Liberation Group believes that creative activism (in particular street art and wall murals) is often an overlooked form of activism, but one which can be more accessible and useful to many students than more “traditional” activism such as protests or petitions.

3. The Women’s Liberation Group believes that working with the Feminist Street Art Collective: Vienna is a great opportunity to create and foster feminist networks, communities and friendships internationally as well as within Edinburgh. We also believe this is a way of sharing knowledge and learning from people we might otherwise not get the chance to interact with.

4. The Women’s Liberation Group believes that the fight for women’s rights and the rights of people of marginalised genders is an international fight, and that by connecting with people across borders we are stronger and more successful for it.

5. With this money, we can ensure that the workshops are financially accessible and that members of the Collective, a group that also does not have much of its own funding, are able to come here and run their workshops without financial barriers.

Submitted with 20 student signatures in February 2017.