



Futures Institute at Dollar Academy - October 2025 Update

This edition brings you the latest on the construction of our new Futures Institute, as well as updates on our International Sustainability Diploma, and opportunities to get involved. As always, we welcome any questions or feedback. Please feel free to [contact us](#) at any time.

I visited the Scottish private school named best in Europe and it was truly mind-blowing

FIDA Article in The Herald

"...This isn't just a shiny new toy for affluent pupils or a status symbol to further boost the reputation of the world's oldest day and boarding school - it's an attempt to start rethinking education in a way that could, and arguably should, have implications for all of us, especially our children.

When completed, its backers hope that it becomes an educational and architectural beacon showing what can be achieved when innovation and sustainability are made top priorities, and there's no reason to think they won't succeed in that goal..."

We were delighted to welcome journalist James McEnaney to Dollar last month. As a passionate advocate for educational innovation, James has long recognised the potential of FIDA to reshape learning in Scotland, opening up opportunities for all young people, not just those at Dollar.

He followed his visit with a fantastic feature in The Herald on 11 October, highlighting FIDA's bold approach and the difference it could make to the future of education.

The response to the article has been remarkable, sparking interest across the globe. It's been a powerful reminder of how far the initiative has come, and of the many people who have played a part in bringing FIDA to life. Our thanks go to Andrew Whalley OBE, Grimshaw, Robertson Group, Buro Happold, our generous donors and supporters, and everyone involved in creating a physical home for FIDA. Together, we've turned an ambitious idea into something transformational.

[Click here to read the full article](#)



Behind the scenes on the construction site

"Since construction began in June, the ground floor has taken shape and the walls are rising. Early next year the timber dome will begin to appear..."

Our Rector, Ian Munro, caught up with Andrew Melville and Blair Calderwood from Robertson Group for a progress update and a look behind the scenes on the construction site on campus...click the image above or the tab below to watch the two minute video.

[Click here to watch the full video](#)



2025/26 Learner survey results

"I want to make a difference in my community, even if that is marginal, anything counts"

As the International Sustainability Diploma enters its second year, now spanning 12 schools across Scotland, we asked pupils to share their early impressions. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive and full of enthusiasm for what lies ahead.

In brief, students chose the Diploma primarily for their interest in sustainability (68%) and skills development (55%), with many attracted by its different learning style. Significantly, 85% rated the qualification as "Important" or "Very Important" for their future pathways.

A key finding relates to assessment preferences. While only 25% felt traditional exams show their abilities "very well," an impressive 88% responded positively to the portfolio-based approach. As one student noted: "Time and thinking is much more representative - not just what you can remember in a few hours."

Students are particularly keen to develop project work, public speaking, and critical thinking skills. With 75% having no concerns about the course, learners are clearly enthusiastic about this alternative approach to sustainability education.

We look forward to surveying the students again at the end of the year to see how far they've come!

FIDA at Geography Annual Conference



FIDA's Director, Jacqueline Smith, attended the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers annual conference on 25 October to give a presentation about our International Sustainability Diploma.

It was encouraging to see lots of interest from schools across the country and to meet potential partners from national organisations with similar goals. Dollar Academy's Head of Geography, Alastair McConnell, also gave a presentation about Advanced Higher Geography.

Support Our Vision



Whether you're an individual or a corporate partner, there are meaningful ways to support FIDA's vision. Your contribution toward the innovative Futures Institute could be recognised on our donor wall, or you can support our expanding educational programme, now reaching students across Scotland.

Any level of support helps us create transformational learning opportunities for young people.

To explore how you can be part of this journey, please [get in touch](#) or click below.

[Support Us](#)

UNSDG - Goal of the Month - Zero Hunger

In 2024, an estimated 1 in 12 people of the global population faced hunger and 2 billion people in the world do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food.

Food security requires a multi-dimensional approach and there will need to be investments in rural and urban areas and in social protection so poor people have access to food and can improve their livelihoods.

[Click here to find out more](#)

What our donors say...

"When I first heard about FIDA, it just sounded such an interesting and rewarding exercise – innovative, something completely different. I thought, that's well worth supporting. I can't see it being anything other than a success."

[Donate Here!](#)

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