



Futures Institute at Dollar Academy - February 2026 Update

It's been an exciting start to the year at FIDA, with our pupils making excellent progress on the International Sustainability Diploma and the building continuing to take shape. Here's a quick snapshot of what's been happening over the last couple of months.

As always, we welcome any questions or feedback. Please feel free to [contact us](#) at any time.

Teacher Support for FIDA

"It's not every day that a curriculum shift feels less like a "requirement" and more like a revolution, but that is exactly what happened at our school last year when we welcomed the pilot of FIDA's International Sustainability Diploma."

J Sharkey, Teacher,
West Dumbarton

Jen Sharkey, a teacher at one of our pilot schools last session - and a school that continues to deliver the Diploma - followed her comment above by saying:

"As a school, we are proud to support this forward-thinking approach to qualification delivery. It moves away from 'teaching to the test' and toward 'teaching for the future.'"

We are delighted to hear such positive feedback from those at the coalface of delivering the Diploma. It strengthens our confidence that we are moving in the right direction and truly being the change we want to see in education. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jen and her team, and all our delivery schools, for their continued support of FIDA and for the commitment they show to their pupils every day.

Futures Institute milestone - Steel Signing





“The Futures Institute at Dollar Academy brings progressive sustainable design and education together in one place and the steel signing today marks a major milestone on the project. The building shows how flexible, highly adaptable learning spaces can support innovative teaching approaches and will provide a setting that enables the Futures Institute to extend its reach to more young people across Scotland.” Elliot Robertson, Chief Executive Officer, Robertson Group,

In January, we were delighted to be joined by colleagues from Roberston Construction for a steel signing ceremony at the site of our new Futures Institute. This marked the completion of the building's steel frame. We can now see the roof being assembled and we look forward to updating you further next month.

[Read more and watch the video here](#)

International Sustainability Diploma - school workshops



FIDA's Director Jacqueline Smith has been out across the country running workshops in some of our Diploma schools. Learners tackle one of their Global Challenge Projects as a 2-day 'design sprint', giving them experience of a different way of working that is more closely aligned with workplace approaches.

Over recent weeks, Jackie has been at Tain Royal Academy, St Benedicts in Linwood, and Grove Academy in Dundee. It is proving both valuable and enjoyable to meet and work with some of the teachers and pupils across the country who are doing our FIDA qualifications.

FIDA on the international stage



Our Director Jacqueline Smith spent two days at a workshop for sustainability education leaders in Vienna. It was valuable to learn how different countries are approaching the challenge of bringing sustainability into the curriculum and to share our experience of launching our Sustainability Diploma. This generated a great deal of interest among the delegates and we look forward to these conversations developing.

SCQF



In January, Jacqueline Smith spoke at an SCQF Conference, attended by teachers and pupils from the Glasgow area.

Interest in the Diploma is continuing to increase, and it was also inspiring to hear from the creators of other accredited qualifications who are 'breaking the mould' and engaging young people with learning in new ways.

Rotary Club of Falkirk



Our Fundraising and Sponsorship Manager, Rebecca McFarlane, was delighted to be invited to speak at Falkirk Rotary Club's Annual Charter Evening. It was a valuable opportunity to share the FIDA initiative with a new audience - particularly one made up of local entrepreneurs and business leaders with a strong interest in education and innovation.

We are grateful to the Club for their warm welcome and look forward to building further connections through similar networking events in the months ahead.

Climate Education Event



Argyll and Bute Climate Action Network invited our Director to speak at an event launching their new Future Learning Pathway. This includes our Sustainability Diploma, which aligns strongly with their climate-focused education initiatives across the region.

Support Our Vision

At the end of 2025, we were incredibly grateful to receive a five-figure gift from a supporter to strengthen and expand our educational programme. This transformative investment will significantly enhance our capacity, particularly by enabling our Director to respond to growing demand for her expertise at national and international events, while continuing to lead and develop our work at home.



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

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](#)

More than 800 million people still live in extreme poverty in 2025. A surge in action and investment to enhance economic opportunities, improve education and extend social protection to all, particularly the most excluded, is crucial to ending poverty and leaving no one behind.

“Poverty is not a personal failure; it is a systemic failure – a denial of dignity and human rights. Let’s stand with people living in poverty, and act with solidarity to end poverty for good.” – António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, 17 October 2025

“I have very fond memories of my time at Dollar and would be delighted if my donation can be attached to the school. I look forward to visiting the Futures Institute in the years to come and staying connected.”

Former Pupil,
Class of 2011

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**That's it for now, we'll be back again soon.
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FIDA News

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