



TWENTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

2018 Annual Report





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2018 Global Underwater Explorers

EDUCATION, CONSERVATION,
EXPLORATION



ABOUT **GUE**

Global Underwater Explorers is building global communities of passionate divers, empowered by high-quality training, and organized to support wide-ranging diving activities. These communities contain and partner with dedicated explorers, conservationists and scientific researchers to conduct a diversity of aquatic initiatives around the world.

GUE is committed to:

- Developing safe, skilled, and knowledgeable divers
- Undertaking and promoting underwater research
- Pursuing global underwater exploration
- Safeguarding the integrity of the underwater world
- Providing the public with a comprehensive resource on all things aquatic

**“There is no place I feel
more at home, more
connected, or more at
peace than while in deep
embrace with the magic of
the underwater world.”**

-Jarrod Jablonski

© Ali Perkins



LETTER FROM JARROD JABLONSKI PRESIDENT

It is with a deep sense of awe that I reflect upon the last 20 years of GUE development. I remember, as if it were yesterday, the unbridled enthusiasm of amazing spirits, working to make our dreams take shape. I also remember the many naysayers, poking fun at our desire to reshape the industry. I was repeatedly told that nobody would invest time and resources to train hard for something they were already certified to do. Yet, people with wide-ranging qualifications flocked to GUE Fundamentals classes, and those same programs have been copied by every agency in our industry. It also pleases me greatly to see that many GUE standard procedures and equipment configurations have steadily become commonplace as well.

People that fought mightily against GUE/DIR principles slowly adopted and often began claiming ownership of these very same ideas. It is truly a testament to the lofty ideals of the human spirit that so many people, including those of exceptional experience, would commit themselves to the rigors of GUE's training programs while keeping an open mind to the new ideas they would confront.

The adoption of GUE and DIR concepts by so many different camps has mostly been a positive evolution. In most cases, the atmosphere around these deliberations is no longer charged with

emotion, which is much more in sync with the personal aspirations of GUE leadership. Meanwhile, the industry in general, and divers in particular, benefit from safety-oriented protocols and refined diving techniques, including a greatly enhanced focus on body position and buoyancy control at all levels of diving. We feel grateful for these many positive industry developments.

On the other side, we must guard against the misuse of these ideas by those that would profit from the style while forgoing the substance. Regrettably, we often see nearly word-for-word copying of GUE text, website content, and course materials, with the substance of these offerings sadly lacking. We regret the experience of those that will be misled but remain confident in our direction and in the value of offering deeply substantive programs. I think JFK said it best when he said “... we do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone”.

We have come a very long way within GUE and the diving industry as a whole. And yet there is much to do. GUE is really just now taking shape with active and vibrant communities spanning the globe. One need only study this year’s exploration report to see a small share of the many exciting projects being conducted by GUE communities on a regular basis.

Cutting-edge exploration, pioneering archaeology, and life-sustaining conservation programs around the world are becoming the norm for GUE divers. And, as we begin the next 20 years, we do so with ever-more dynamic plans to usher in the next generation of GUE divers and explorers. We will be enhancing our high quality programs with modern tools, as well as expanding our communities and the talents they bring to a rapidly widening set of inspiring global initiatives. We look forward to seeing you in the water, having fun at a local dive site or joining one of our many global projects.



Dive safe and have fun!

Jarrod Jablonski



© Julian Mühlenhaus

“... we do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone”.

-U.S. President John F. Kennedy



© Kirill Egorov

EDUCATION

IN 2018
86%
 OF CAVE 1
 STUDENTS
PASSED

CAVE & TECHNICAL DIVING



© Imad Farhat

For tech and cave, 2018 was an exciting year filled with many great projects and expeditions as well as continuous development of our technical and cave curricula.

GUE Sidemount Class

GUE divers and associated projects continue to explore the farthest reaches of very remote caves, requiring that divers sometimes navigate through narrow passages and/or dry sections. Many of our senior people have been using specialized configurations, including sidemount systems, for many years. Yet, the expanding frequency of caves requiring these configurations en-

couraged the design and implementation of a new GUE Cave Sidemount program. This program teaches the principles of sidemount equipment configuration while guiding divers through proper dive planning and execution. As with all GUE programs, the team component remains an important piece of the course dynamic, helping divers apply buddy, team, and project diving to small and restricted areas of the cave. Among its many useful components, this program carefully integrates an equipment configuration that maintains synergy with other GUE standard configurations, reduc-



“Enjoy the journey and be open and willing to learn as much as you can along the way. No one has all of the answers and there are so many people out there with different experiences to share. Find mentors you trust to learn from to guide you as you gain experience progressively in the areas in diving that inspire you the most.”
 -Lauren Fanning

© Kirill Egorov

ing complications for the many divers that will switch between backmount, rebreather, and sidemount configurations. The GUE Cave Sidemount class was released in late August 2018 and is available for all GUE Cave 2 divers.

GUE CCR Cave Endorsement

The growing popularity of rebreather diving is leading to their use in a wide variety of diving locations, requiring divers and landowners to consider the suitability of previous instruction. Rebreather diving is best learned by divers in a more forgiving open water environment, leaving some gaps in a diver's experience with overhead-related rebreather skills. Recognizing this aspect, divers and private landowners began asking agencies for a tailored, cave-specific program. GUE has chosen to augment our existing training by offering an endorsement that focuses on cave-specific skills while diving a closed-circuit rebreather. All teaching requirements and prerequisites for this class can be found in GUE Standards v9.0. The text-only version of these training materials is finalized and currently undergoing final editing. We are looking to release the completed program materials by the end of the second quarter of 2019.



DPV Cave Materials Update

Due to recent releases or updates of Cave 1, Cave 2, and Cave Sidemount materials, as well as CCR Cave materials being in their final stage of development, we have started working on a matching set of Cave DPV materials. These are planned for release during the second quarter of 2019.

New GUE Cave Manual

A new version of GUE's cave diving manual has been finalized, passed through editing, and is being finalized with graphic design and layout. Release is planned for the first half of 2019.

New GUE Cave Instructors

During 2018, two GUE instructors joined the ranks of our cave instructor family. Peter Gaertner and Sven Nelles became new Cave 1 instructors, while John Kendall and Osama Gobara were upgraded to the GUE Cave 2 instructor level. Additionally, Kirill Egorov became a DPV Cave instructor.

Updated GUE Tech 2 Materials

During 2018, a working group of GUE technical instructors set out to redesign the existing Technical Diver Level 2 program, building a new set of materials from the ground up. To create the most modern and up-to-date program, the consortium worked as a group, making sure that all ideas and viewpoints were taken into consideration. This slower process resulted in several delays, but also a unique update that is useful for instructors, interns, and students. These materials are undergoing final proofreading and will be released in the the second quarter of 2019.

New CCR Programs

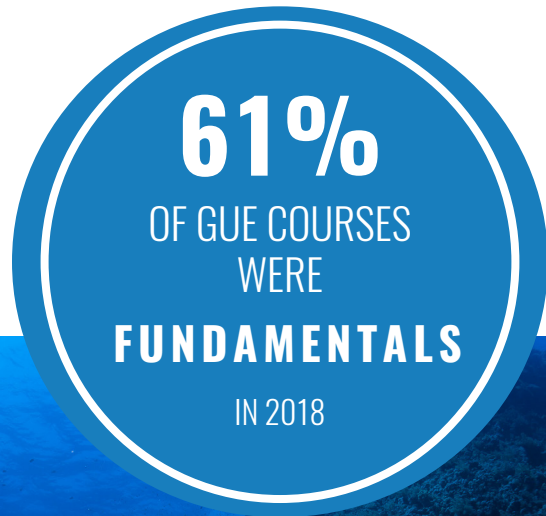
The existing CCR program was redesigned with notably expanded content and divided into two programs. CCR Diver Level 1 is designed for GUE Tech 1 divers and is primarily a user class, dedicated to fundamental principles of CCR operation, experience diving a CCR, and the principles of planning and executing CCR dives. The GUE CCR Diver Level 2 class is a hypoxic diluent class, dedicated to deep water CCR operation and emergency management. This class combines open-circuit and rebreather skills and knowledge to support CCR and OC diving.

New Tech and CCR Instructors

During 2018, Chanone Park, Meredith Tanguay, Jin Hui, and Sameh Sokar achieved the GUE Technical Diver Level 1 instructor rating. Gunnar Midtgaard, Guy Shockey, and Antonio Bresciani became GUE CCR Instructors.



EDUCATION



FOUNDATIONAL & RECREATIONAL DIVING



quested, allowing integration of suggested improvements. This exercise was a huge but important undertaking, helping assure GUE's standard approach and affirming the quality of skills presented by all GUE instructors. GUE instructors were deeply

be further enhanced with new features, including multiple language support, geolocation, and expanded utilization of project booking engines. These and other features will provide a dynamic tool for all our instructors, students, and GUE community



The year 2018 was especially busy for both the recreational and foundational curricula with advances on multiple fronts, including enhancement to instructor development, newly developed training materials, and helpful administrative developments.

During the 2017 GUE conference, the Training Director, together with the Rec and Tech/Cave Administrators, advanced a program for re-evaluating all GUE instructional representatives. The intent was to ensure all personal skills were being maintained and to establish a well-defined

benchmark with respect to skill capacity and the nuances of presentation style. In effect, GUE wanted to ensure a common standard for style and substance for core diving skills. Each active GUE instructor, including Instructor Trainers, Examiners, and BOD members, were asked to submit a video demonstration of assigned skills. These skills were evaluated by the Training Administrators and Director. Each instructor received detailed feedback outlining skill quality and presentation style. Skills benefiting from refinement were reassigned and a resubmission was re-

supportive of the process, testifying to the community's commitment to quality. The Administrators and Training Director were not surprised and were pleased by the high quality of GUE diving skills and the symmetry of presentation style and would like to thank all involved for their focused effort over hundreds of hours of filming, submission, evaluation, and refinement.

GUE recreational development is now supported by the release of a new website, including a more extensive recreational emphasis in support of our growing GUE communities. In 2019, the new website will

members as well as the growing base of GUE dive centers. The website is also designed to complement the new blog, In-Depth (<http://blog.gue.com/>), as well as the expanding library of educational videos and recreational diving initiatives.

This past year also marked a successful renewal of the European ISO certification, establishing GUE conformity with all European norms for recreational diver training. This qualification supports all programs in which a European standard exists, including Recreational Diver Level 1, 2, and 3; GUE Fundamentals; Gas Blender; and GUE

Recreational and Foundational instructor ratings. The renewed ISO certification is valid through July 2023, and all relevant GUE certification cards will carry the appropriate ISO numbers.

Revised training materials for Recreational Diver Level 2 are near completion, providing expanded support for Rescue, Triox, and Navigation Primers. Meanwhile, Recreational Diver Level 3 has undergone a substantial update, accommodating a number of adjustments to the technical curriculum, while helping extend its educational value and supporting those that use it as a preparatory course for future technical diving courses. New program arrivals like Scientific Diver and Photogrammetry Diver further extend divers' abilities to learn unique skills and contribute to GUE's global cast of unique diving projects. Updates to Drysuit and Doubles Primers provide a fresh look

and upgraded content, including more detailed student workbooks and support materials. The many enhancements to existing teaching materials are part of a general shift toward expanded student support with refined content, interactive support, and multimedia utilization. A growing series of educational videos and interactive tutorials are beginning to create a more dynamic and engaging set of materials designed to complement the robust training offered by our skilled cadre of GUE instructors.

We are very excited about 2019 with a wide range of unique projects already underway.

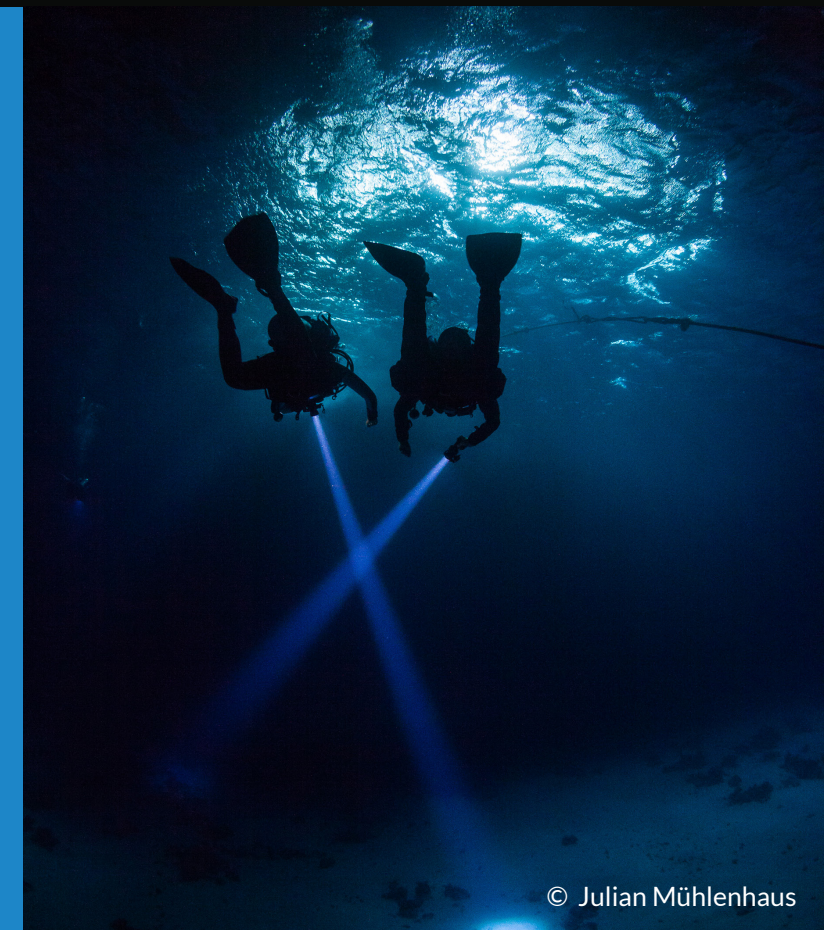
THE TOP COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR GUE DIVERS IN 2018 WAS



IN 2018, **77%** OF FUNDAMENTALS STUDENTS PASSED



“My one tip to any aspiring diver would be to just dive as much as you can. Don’t worry about deepest, longest, or most difficult. Enjoy every dive, and enjoy the journey. Get quality training, as early as possible, as this will help you enjoy your dives more, and feel more confident. You will also be safer in your diving.”
-John Kendall



EXPLORATION



©JP Bresser

GUE is leading the way in the exploration of our water systems. From springs, caves, and lakes to rivers and oceans, our members are diving below the surface to explore and share with the world what is right in our own backyard.

Small groups of highly skilled GUE divers around the world are working on these exploration projects. In 2018, projects were occurring in more than 10 different countries (this does not include Project Baseline initiatives). These projects range from the continued exploration of caves in France and Mexico to shipwreck projects like the

wrecks of the Battle of the Egadi in Sicily. For more on the projects from this year, please see the 2018 Project Reports publication.

ALMOST
200
PROJECTS
worldwide

CONSERVATION

Working together, we've grown Project Baseline to include nearly 100 teams working in 42 countries to memorialize conditions in the underwater places they love. Our database houses pictures and numeric data collected during more than 7,400 dives at over 450 sites. Despite their simplicity, this data establishes baseline conditions that can be used to benchmark future changes (declines or improvements). Moreover, the simple act of engaging has fostered many local collaborations that will undoubtedly greatly enhance efforts to understand and preserve the respective environments and the ecosystems they support. Our efforts have also introduced Project Baseline to the broader stage of environmental conservation. We're exceptionally proud of what we've created together and of all the work each of you have contributed.

As for 2018 specifically, our work at "PB HQ" has largely focused on advancing our database and seeking opportunities for future collaborations. Our database is finally searchable on mobile devices.

We're looking forward to 2019 being a pivotal year for PB.

At the beginning of 2019, Project Baseline became its own non profit organization. GUE will continue to have a key role and sponsor Project Baseline.

Project Baseline Numbers:

121 Active Projects

455 Sites

1,272 Stations

56,618 Temperature Recordings

3,237 Images

4,232 Visibility Measurements



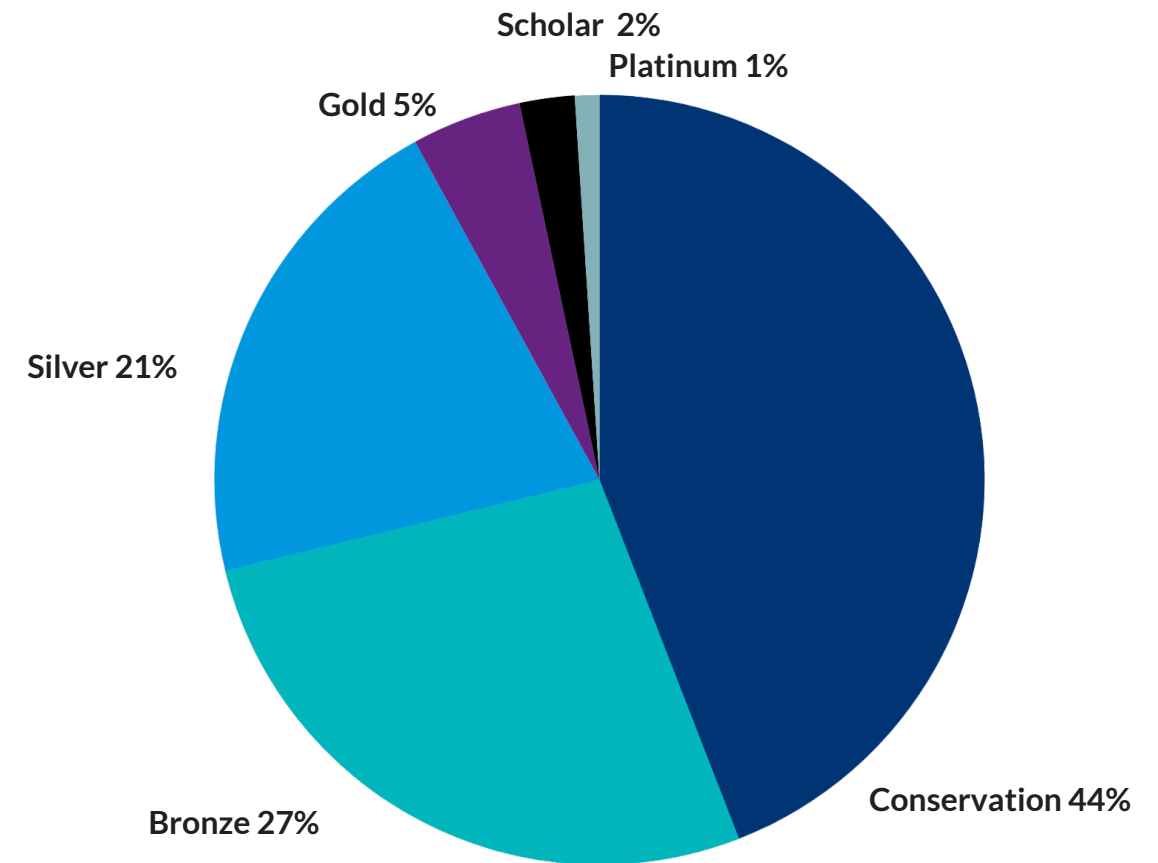
© Stella Del Curto

MEMBERSHIP

Each year, GUE strengthens our commitment to serving the dive community, and we owe our success in these past 20 years to our members. GUE membership supports advanced diver education that empowers vibrant communities and makes exploration and conservation initiatives around the world possible.

Annual contributions from our members also allow us to develop new educational programs that make for safer diving and allow us to push the envelope of aquatic exploration. Plus, a portion of each membership goes towards supporting GUE's conservation initiatives. We greatly appreciate our members' ongoing support and hope they are taking advantage of the full range of GUE membership benefits available.

2018 MEMBERSHIP LEVEL PERCENTAGES



© JP Bresser

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY TO SUPPORT GUE'S NONPROFIT MISSION.

Visit gue.com/membership to join and support the organization you love!

SOCIAL MEDIA NUMBERS

31K



8.3K

GUE.TV

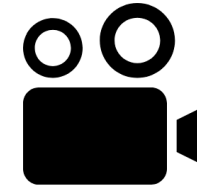
As 2018 closes, GUE.tv celebrates the end of our second year. Thanks to the support of a growing base of monthly subscribers, we can ensure the continued success of GUE.tv for years to come. With the launch of InDepth, a free scuba diving blog run by passionate divers, it is now even easier to keep up with all the latest free and paid releases on GUE.tv. We have engaged multiple content creators around the world to provide our subscribers with compelling training and documentary videos that are unmatched in the world of diving. Our primary goals in 2019 are to develop a regular release schedule, to begin revenue sharing for creators, and to mature the service into a version 2.0 with more options and features, as well as a whole new look! We want to extend another heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports GUE.tv. You are the reason for our success and why GUE.tv is unparalleled in the diving community.



35K Total Video Plays
8 million seconds played
2,222 hours
Bandwidth Usage 7.14 TB

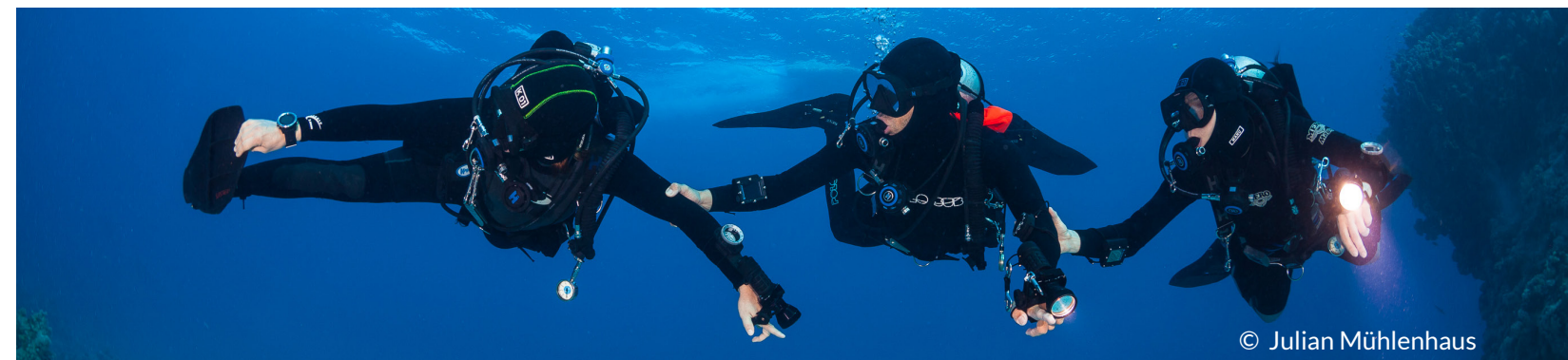


User Sessions By Device
Total 4,095
Desktop 2,742
Mobile 810
Tablet 543



Most Popular Video Series

1. JJ-CCR Handset Fail Experiment [Richard Lundgren]
2. Gear Tips: Small Backplate Dynamics [Dorota Czerny]
3. Buoyancy Tips and Tricks for Beginners [Annika Persson]
4. Exploring Egypt: Northern Red Sea [Olga Martinelli]
5. RB80 Refresher Series [David Rhea]
6. How to Label a Gas Analysis Sticker [Richard Lundgren]
7. GUE Fundamental Skills Series - SMB UW
8. GUE Fundamental Skills Series - Basic 5 UW
9. GUE Equipment Configuration Series [Kirill Egorov]
10. GUE Equipment Configuration Series - German [Sven Nelles]
11. Cave Exploration, Survey, and Mapping [JP Bresser]



INDEPTH

Get Deeper Into Diving

This year, GUE launched a blog to share our passion for technical, cave, and recreational diving with the broader diving community and industry. Free to interested readers, InDepth offers monthly content that is curated from the stories that dive geeks, explorers, educators, and conservationists want to read.

InDepth posts feature the cutting edge of exploration, conservation, and technology, including monthly incident reports from human factors expert Gareth Lock, the latest research and medical advice from Divers Alert Network, interviews with passionate diving experts and aficionados, practical diving tips and tricks, images from the photographer of the month, and aquatic data from around the planet collected by citizen scientists from GUE's Project Baseline conservation initiative.



Readers can expect to find a variety of in-depth content, from videos and infographics to articles that are relevant to all levels of divers. Community is the most important aspect of GUE and with strong support from our existing members, we hope that InDepth will serve as a bridge to the wider dive community to show and dispel the notion that we are the “buoyancy & trim police” who only dive with GUE divers. DIVE IN!

TOP POSTS:

1. Backplate Configuration vs. Jacket-Style Configurations [Dorota Czerny]
2. How Deep is Deep? The 20 Deepest Tech Shipwreck Dives and How They Compare to Dives in the 1990s [Michael Menduno]
3. December's Diving Tips and Tricks [Guy Shockey and Liz Tribe]
4. In Retrospect: 20 Years of Global Underwater Explorers [Jarrod Jablonski]
5. Make Time Fly in Deco [Amanda White]
6. Extending the Envelope Revisited: Correcting the Record of the 30 Deepest Tech Shipwreck Dives [Michael Menduno]
7. Incident Report: Knowing When to Thumb a Dive [Gareth Lock]

RELEASE STATS:



21K sessions
14K users



73.7% of users are directed to our site through social media

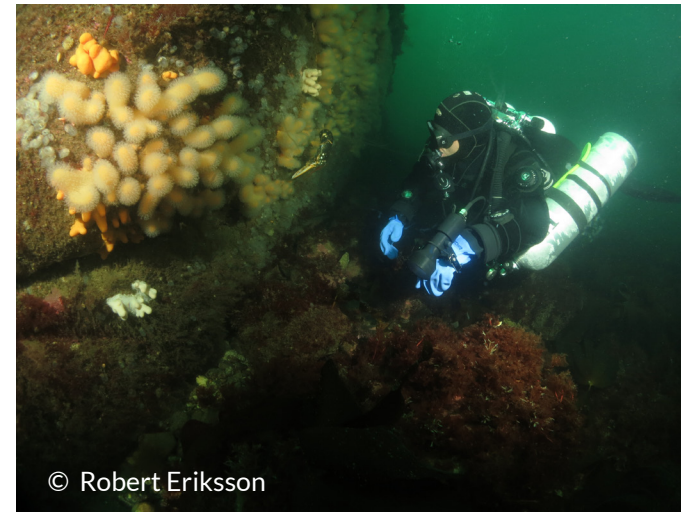
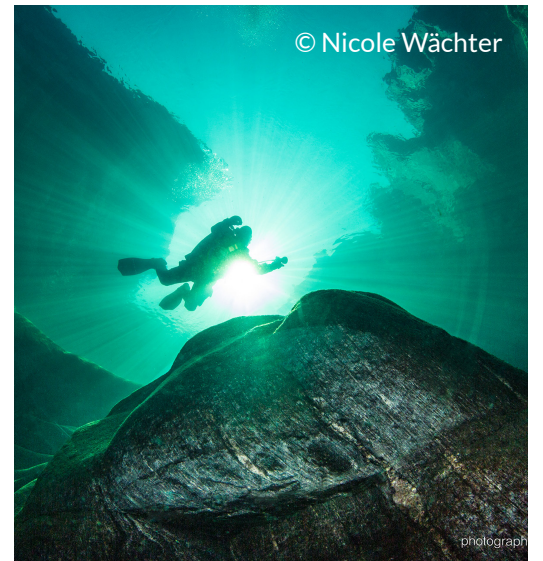


70.6% use a mobile device

TOP COUNTRIES:

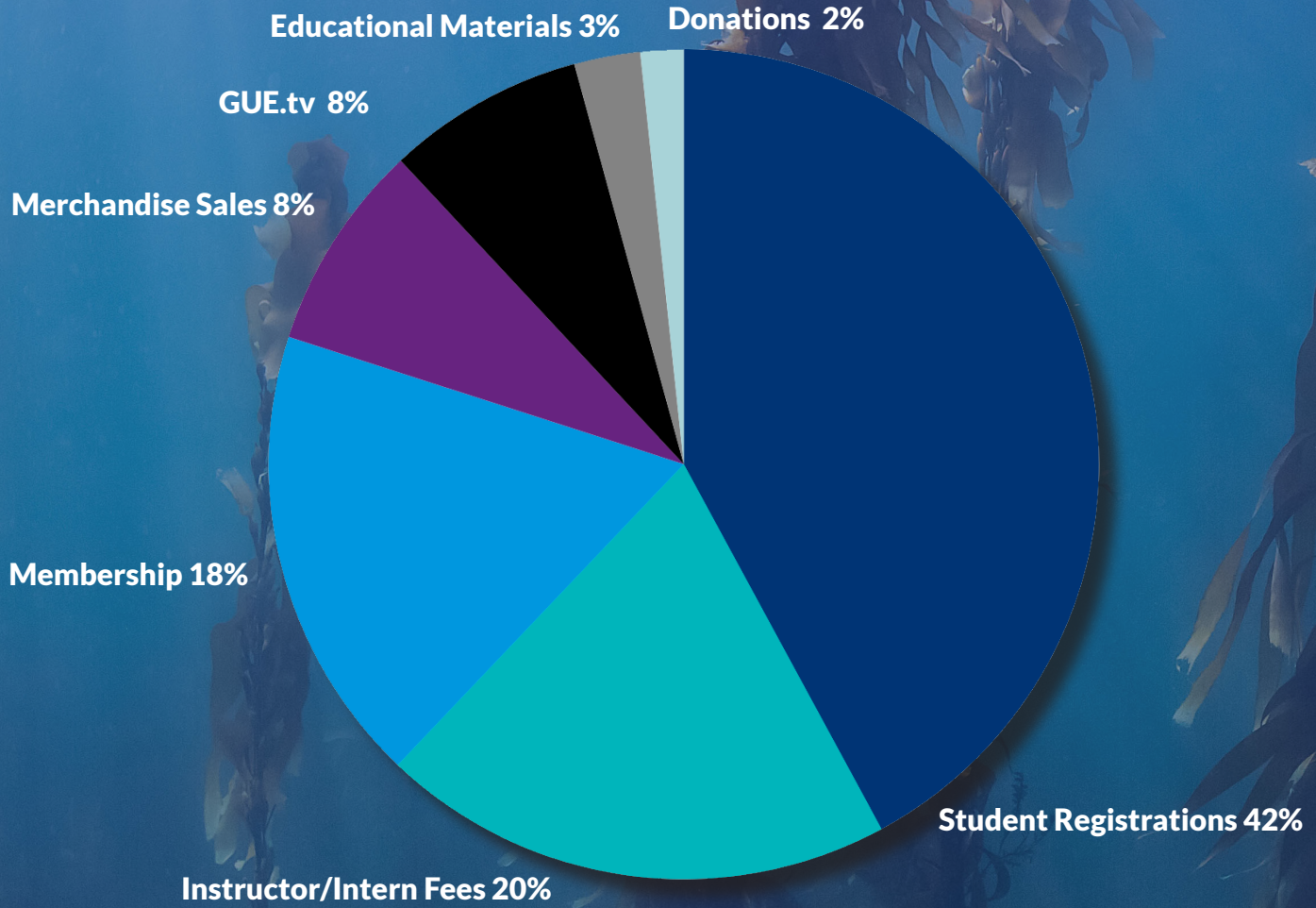
1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. Germany
4. Italy
5. Netherlands

OUR COMMUNITY

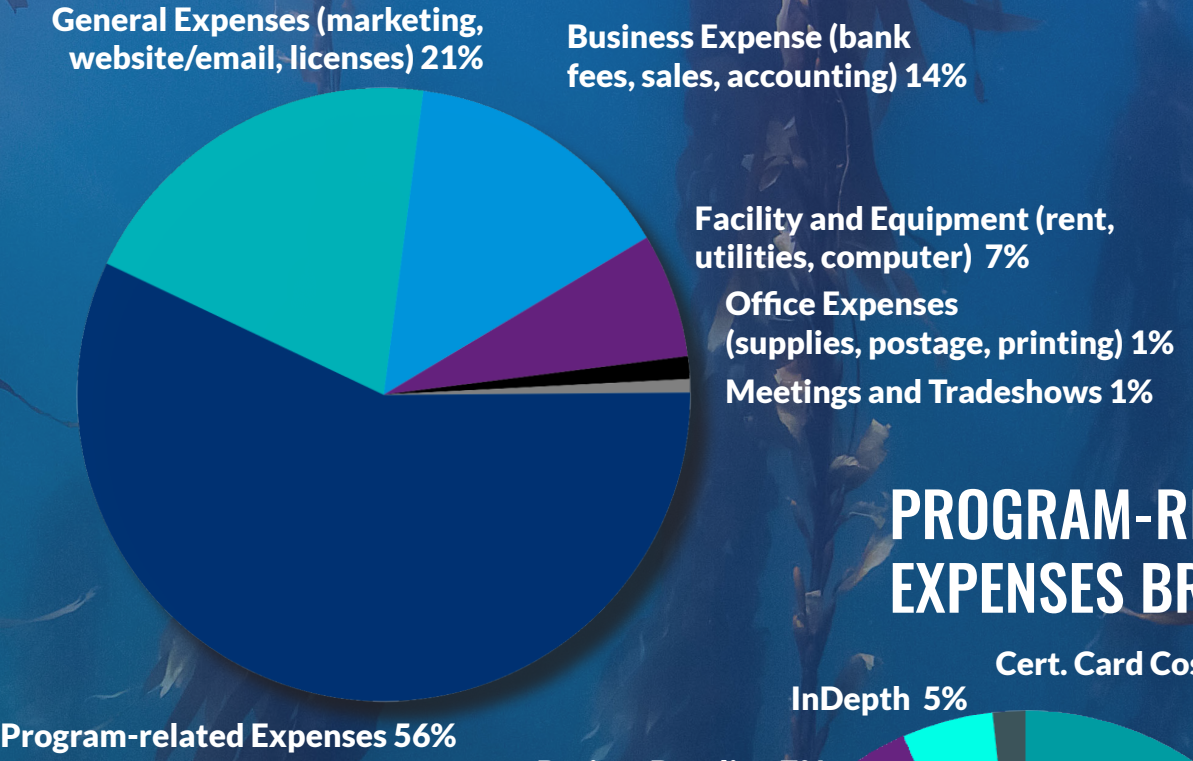


FINANCIALS

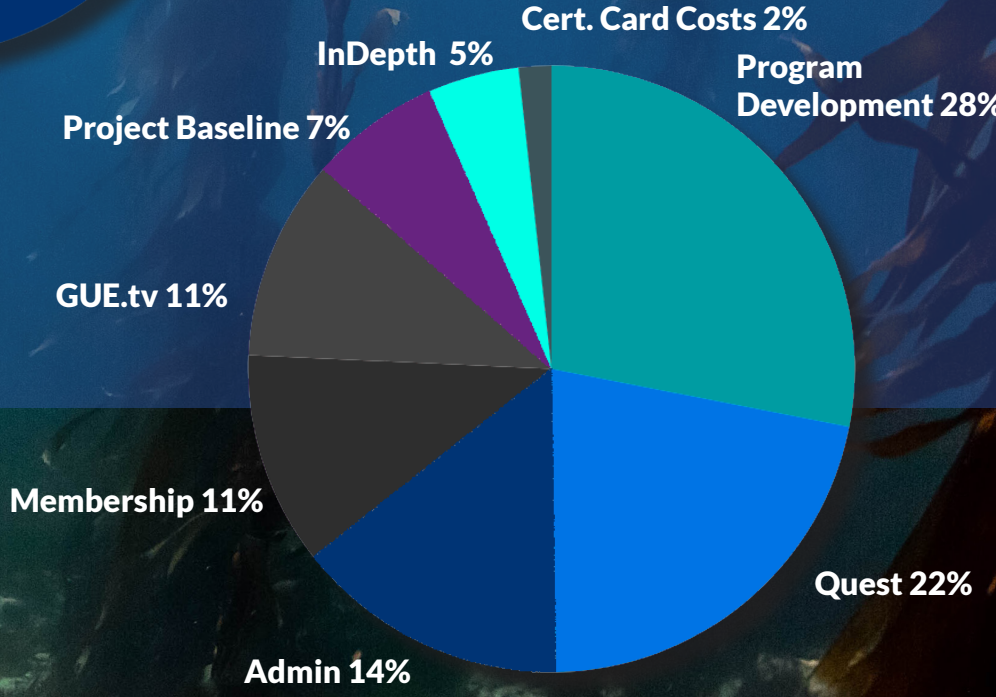
INCOME



EXPENSES



PROGRAM-RELATED EXPENSES BREAKDOWN





18487 High Springs Main Street
High Springs, Florida 32643

P: +1.386.454.0820
F: +1.386.454.0654

info@gue.com
www.GUE.com

