Jacinta Kimani
GUE NextGen Trainee #26
GUE Performance Diver – Diani, Kenya

I spend a lot of time researching diving. One day, while deep in an online diving rabbit hole, I came across videos of divers who looked different from anything I had seen before. They were calm, precise, almost effortless in the water. I remember pausing the video and thinking, there is a whole side of diving I have not experienced yet — and this is the kind of diver I want to become. A diver who moves through the ocean without disturbing it. Not because it looked impressive, but because it looked intentional.
As someone who cares deeply about the ocean and marine conservation, I have always believed that how we dive matters just as much as where we dive. Seeing that level of control made me curious. It felt like a way of diving that respected the environment in a quiet but powerful way.

That curiosity led me to apply for the GUE NextGen Scholarship. When I received the email saying I had been selected as a trainee, I felt excited but also aware that I was stepping into something completely new.

I completed the three-day GUE Performance Diver course in Diani, Kenya, under the instruction of Jenn. The course began with two intensive days in the pool, where we focused on achieving stable trim and refining four propulsion techniques. Movements that had once felt automatic were broken down and rebuilt with precision. We also trained using the standard GUE regulator configuration, practiced the S-drill, and worked through minimum decompression ascent procedures. On the third day, we transitioned into the ocean, applying everything in real world conditions. Calculating surface air consumption, managing buoyancy in open water, and integrating skills into structured dive scenarios. The progression from pool to ocean highlighted how intentional practice translates into confident, controlled diving.

On the first day, my biggest surprise was my instructor, Jenn. I expected someone intimidating, but she was energetic, friendly, and incredibly supportive, which immediately made me feel at ease. The real surprise of the course, however, was realizing how much I still had to learn.

Very quickly, I noticed that many things I had been doing in my diving were based on habit rather than intention. Movements I thought were fine suddenly felt unrefined. I felt humbled, challenged, and sometimes frustrated — not because I couldn't do the skills, but because I had to relearn how to think about diving. Even the online theory, especially air management calculations, felt overwhelming at first. But with patience and guidance, it started to make sense. And when it did, I began to understand that this style of diving was not just about skills — it was about awareness, planning, and responsibility.

The progress came in small moments: understanding my air consumption, managing a back kick with purpose, and on the last day, finally finding myself in proper trim — not perfectly, but consciously. That word stayed with me: consciously.

This experience taught me something far beyond diving techniques. It taught me patience, attention to detail, and the importance of doing things with intention.

As someone who wants to inspire more people, especially young people, to care about the ocean, this way of diving made even more sense to me. Protecting the marine environment is not only about cleanups and education — it is also about how we behave underwater.

This course did not just change how I dive. It changed how I think about diving, and that will shape the kind of instructor and ocean advocate I continue to become.
Would I do it again? Absolutely. Because this was not just a training course. It was a reminder that diving, when done with awareness and intention, can be a very quiet form of conservation.

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