

RESEARCHERS WITHOUT BORDERS. *By Riaan Cedras*

Perhaps the African Marine Science week should form part of the Western Indian Ocean-Early Career Scientists Network’s (WIO-ECSN’s) annual calendar. WIO-ECSN certainly used this platform effectively to formally debut its outreach and ocean literacy campaign for early career scientists in the WIO region.

Doing what we do best: Madagascan ocean explorer. © Aina le Don



“Africa has the capacity, and I am challenging the youth of Africa to build capacity across borders,” said Justin.

A [WIO-ECSN video](#) was featured during the opening of the first day of African Marine Science week, a four-day online event hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), under the Africa Group, and sponsored by the African Union from 25 to 28 May 2021. A key message in the video was the need for better connection and collaborations between neighboring countries. WIO-ECSN voices expressed their views on the challenges facing early career scientists –perhaps the African Marine Science week was an event where these drowned out voices could be heard? It certainly was a platform to showcase regional talent and give visibility to the youth through reports, videos and photos and storytelling.

On the last day of the African Marine Science week, a local organizer, Justin Ahanhanzo from

UNESCO gave WIO-ECSN a special session as part of the closing ceremony. This was a remarkably successful online event which featured prominent scientists from African states and from across the globe collaborating to energize the African youth.

The WIO-ECSN has started actively mobilizing early career researchers in the region, and it is a platform where the comfort zones of all early career researchers may be tested. Could we develop concepts and projects by the youth for the region? An early career scientist programme is starting to take hold; a stimulating idea is to develop skills in publishing, necessary to communicate findings, understand a changing environment and become informed scientists in the world.