

Irene Tan Liang Kheng (ITLK)  
Conference Grant Recipient  
**Ms Caryn Pang Zhiqin**  
**Natural Sciences & Science  
Education, Doctor of Philosophy**





With support from the Irene Tan Liang Kheng (ITLK) Conference Grant, Ms Caryn Pang, a PhD student from the Natural Sciences & Science Education Department, participated in the European Coral Reef Symposium (ECRS) held from 2 to 5 July 2024 in Naples, Italy.

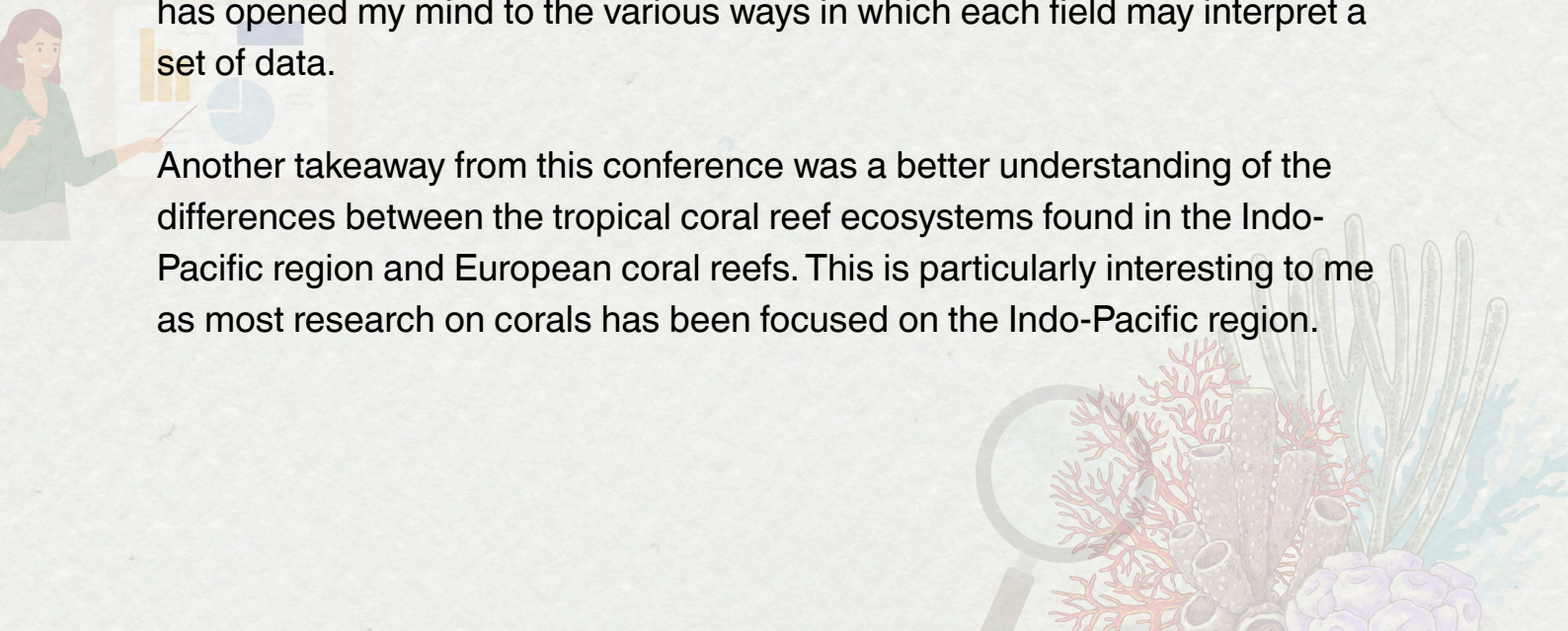
## **Hi Caryn, share with us more about the ECRS.**

ECRS is a gathering of coral reef scientists. Attending the presentations and discussions of my fellow participants has allowed me to get a better sense of where the field of coral reef research is headed. And more importantly, I learnt how I can be at the cutting edge of coral reef research.

## **Sounds interesting! What were your key takeaways from this experience?**

My greatest takeaway from the presentation experience was the confidence that it gave me in articulating and presenting in front of a larger audience. Presenting in front of an international audience from diverse but related fields has opened my mind to the various ways in which each field may interpret a set of data.

Another takeaway from this conference was a better understanding of the differences between the tropical coral reef ecosystems found in the Indo-Pacific region and European coral reefs. This is particularly interesting to me as most research on corals has been focused on the Indo-Pacific region.





Yet another takeaway from the conference was the networking opportunities. Attending the ECRS allowed me to get to know others in the field in both professional and social contexts as the ECRS not only has presentations but also optional social programmes whereby I can meet other coral reef researchers and build up a researcher network. I met researchers from all walks of life from undergraduates to retired professors.

### **Any advice to students who are preparing to present at an international conference for the first time?**

The best advice would be to not worry about being the only representative from your institution at a conference. I met many participants who were the only representatives from their institutions and I guess one advantage of everyone being in adjacent fields of research was that it was very easy for everyone to open up once we started talking about our research projects.

Another piece of advice would be to sign up for as many social programmes and tours organised by the conference as possible. All the social events and tours provided valuable opportunities for networking. Also, all these events provided us with the opportunity to visit many of the historic sites in Naples!

**DON'T  
WORRY**

