

Red Cross cartoon to demystify Pacific climate change

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The South Pacific pounds the serpentine coastline of Funafuti Atoll, February 19, 2004. The Red Cross has launched a light-hearted education campaign aimed at those it describes as most vulnerable to climate change: Pacific islanders living on low-lying atolls threatened by rising seas.

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Red Cross disaster management specialist Tom Bamforth said the Pacific's complex [weather patterns](#) were well understood by scientists, but the knowledge was not filtering down to local decision-makers.

To address the situation, the organisation has completed an animated feature entitled "The Pacific Adventures of Climate Crab", which uses humour to explain the science behind climate change in simple terms.

"If you talk about the South Pacific Convergent Zone, the Southern Oscillation, or even El Nino and La Nina, very few people know what they actually mean," Bamforth told AFP.

"This animation is part of an attempt to interpret between what scientists are saying, and what it actually means for local communities."

Some Pacific island nations are only one metre (three feet) above sea level and their long-term survival is threatened by waters rising due to global warming.

Bamforth said regional weather was becoming more extreme, and a better understanding of [climate science](#) would help islanders plan for disasters such as cyclones.

"There have been recent droughts in places like Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands where they have run out of potable water," he said.

"If we know there's going to be an El Nino [weather event](#) then we can start putting out messages about water conservation and water harvesting and these sort of things."

The video at www.pacificclimatechangescience.org/climatecrab was launched in Fiji on Tuesday night.

A second short film called "Cloud Nasara", focusing on Vanuatu, will be launched later this month. It features a reggae parrot and dancing cloud parties.

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