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From the Selected Works of Madeleine K. Charney

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Review of Climate Change Knowledge Portal

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/charney_madeleine/90/

Review of Climate Change Knowledge Portal (CCKP):

<http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/>. Reviewed by Madeleine Charney, W.E.B Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Created by the World Bank, Climate Change Knowledge Portal (CCKP) provides online climate-related information, data, and tools. This comprehensive resource covers global, regional, and country data related to climate change and development. The aim of this website is to support development practitioners in their exploration, evaluation, and synthesis of climate related vulnerabilities and risks.

The CCKP contains environmental, disaster risk, and socio-economic datasets, as well as synthesis products, such as the Climate Adaptation Country Profiles, which are built and packaged for specific user-focused functions such as climate change indices for a particular country. The CCKP provides climate science research results to inform the decision making process concerning policies and specific measures to tackle climate impacts. The CCKP attempts to integrate scientific information into the decision making process with this site, which is comprised of flexible frameworks, data, and tools. The user can then consider the application of scientific information to the design of a project or policy.

The CCKP consists of spatially referenced data visualized on a Google Maps interface. Users are able to evaluate climate-related vulnerabilities, risks, and actions for a particular location on the globe by interpreting climate and climate-related data at different levels of detail. After selecting a region, there are tabs across the top for climate, impacts and vulnerability. The climate tab covers historical information derived from observational datasets that have been quality-controlled temperature and rainfall values from thousands of weather stations worldwide.

In addition, the climate tab covers future climate information from 15 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 4th Assessment Report Global Circulation Models. The user can click on a particular location on the map to see a chart with the values for a chosen variable (temperature and rainfall), time period (10-year intervals), and measure (mean in the future or change from the historical past).

The impacts tab provides access to data on a wide range of climate change sectors (including agriculture, water resources, and natural disasters). Specific data includes agricultural crop projections to 2050 and 2080; contribution of agriculture sector to country's overall economy; fire density; flood frequency; and mortality risks from earthquake, cyclone, drought, and landslide, as well as the occurrence and effects of over 18,000 mass disasters in the world from 1900 to present. The vulnerability tab offers a large set of socioeconomic indicators aggregated at the country level.

A Custom Analysis Tool, developed in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, provides a flexible framework that allows users to conduct customized queries of the downscaled data by using pre-defined regions, as well as create a customized webpage of outputs, including maps, graphs, tables, and GIS data summarizing the model output for both specific grid cells and entire geographic areas. The data may then be downloaded for ready use.

At the bottom of the site, the portal provides links to other resources and tools. Examples under "Other Climate Data Sources" are the IPCC Data Distribution Center and NOAA climate services. Under "Adaptation Tools," there are three categories of information: Knowledge Sharing and Reference (e.g., Adaptation Learning Mechanism, weAdapt), Tools (e.g., Hands on Energy Adaptation Toolkit, CrisTAL) and Others, (e.g., Global Adaptation Index, IFPRI Food Security CASE maps). The three categories under Mitigation Resources are Mitigation Data

Sources (e.g., Technology Needs Assessment Project, Sustainable Energy Advisory Facility), Tools (e.g., Reegle, ClimateTechWiki), and Others (e.g., ESMAP Website, Climate Finance Options).

Graphically, the tool leaves a bit to be desired. The directive to “Click on an area of the map to get started” could be moved toward the top and made bolder. The directive to “Select a Country or Territory” is very small at the top right; this might be enlarged or made bolder as well. Moving panes at the bottom provide additional tools (e.g., Climate Smart Agriculture Profiles, Open Data Initiative, Climate Information Microsites). Though eye catching, they moved too swiftly for this writer to absorb their purpose before the panes shifted again. They might prove more functional as stationary, click-through options.

While the site is intended for a “wide range of users,” this is a very dense resource. It would not be accessible to an average user, but rather is designed for scientists and development specialists. The 16-page User Guide is an indicator of the learning curve involved.