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## **Outside the Box with the WWViews: A Policy Role for City Slickers in Global Biodiversity Issues**

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### **Abstract**

The World Wide Views (WWViews) on Biodiversity was an international public engagement project that gave citizens the chance to communicate their views on biodiversity issues to policy makers at the United Nations eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, more familiarly known as COP-11. On September 15<sup>th</sup> 2012, 3000 citizens across 25 different countries took part in this global event. WWViews on Biodiversity set out to engage citizens in the process of policymaking by providing them with a unique opportunity to share their experience of sustainable living and discuss the topic of biodiversity. The Canadian arm of the project held events in Calgary, Toronto and Montréal. In this poster, we focus on the results of the Montréal event, with brought together 71 people for a day long discussion, voting on policy issues and interaction with an art installation. The results were disseminated 'live' online and showed that Canadian participants are "very concerned" about the loss of biodiversity (89%) and how it will affect "most people in the world" (91%). After the event, a 17% increase in participants' level of awareness of biodiversity issues was noted. Overall, we highlight the unique strengths and challenges of the WWViews model as a method of public engagement that seeks diverse input on biodiversity issues.

### **Bio**

Patricia Hanney grew up in Dublin, Ireland where she completed her higher education. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Social Policy from Trinity College Dublin in 2005. She went on to pursue her Masters of Science in Sustainable Development at *The Dublin Institute of Technology* and successfully completed her thesis on 'The impact of an environmental organization on a community's environmental awareness' in 2008. Her interest in environmental sustainability led her to Montréal where she has been living for the last 6 years. Patricia has been working in a research capacity with Dr. Secko and Dr. McIntyre on the Genozymes / GE<sup>3</sup>Is project, a renewable energy and public engagement project for the last four years. It has proved to be both a rewarding and fruitful experience for her. In 2010, Patricia sat on the Board of Directors for Sustainable Concordia where she gained a strong insight into campus actions towards sustainability. Her special fields of interest include public policy, stakeholder engagement and the impact we have as individuals on our environment.

