

LEED Fellow, Architect, and Urban Planner from Brazil - Luiza Junqueria

Introduction ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a LEED Fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. Settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee and get ready to find out why Green Building Matters.

Charlie ([00:34](#)):

Everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I've got a LEED Fellow with us Today coming to us from Brazil. I have Luiza Junqueria. How are you doing today? I can't wait to learn more about what's going on with green buildings in your part of the world. Give us some background. Where did you grow up and where did you go to?

Luiza ([00:56](#)):

I always lived in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I also studied here. I am a daughter of an architect, my father and my mother are both artists and I have always known since I was a little child that I would like to become an architect too. When I entered college, I thought I would be an architect with famous projects and wonderful houses. Along the way, life took me to the side of concern and sustainability. I started unintentionally, in an internship program to work with sustainability. I joined it to help a team that at the time it was the third building in Brazil[inaudible] LEED. It was the first (inaudible) in Latin America. I learned it a lot on a daily basis at work. After a year I felt prepared to take the LEED AP exam. My working life was preparing me for an exam. At the time I became the first Brazilian student to become a LEED AP. At the time it was only around 40 Brazilians with the LEED AP credential. I was amongst 40, but I was the only student.

Charlie ([02:31](#)):

Wow. Congratulations on that. There are a lot of firsts in there. It's cool having parents that were architects. You got your degree and even got a

master's degree. At what point did you really want to go back and get the master's and maybe get into some other parts of green building? Obviously, your parents had some influence on you as architects, but did anyone else kind of open some doors or kind of mentor you about green buildings?

Luiza ([03:01](#)):

Yes, I think it was my first boss in this area of sustainability. Her name is Julia Amareshe is an engineer and became a great friend, but she was my great influence. My mentor in this area.

Charlie ([03:24](#)):

That's amazing. What were some of those early kinds of projects you mentioned? There weren't a lot of LEED buildings at that time. Has LEED been a really good program in Brazil? Are there some other programs that sometimes your buildings might pursue?

Luiza ([03:39](#)):

Yes, actually right now I'm working with four or five different certification programs. We have a local search education program focused on houses because LEED Homes is not applicable here in Brazil. We have a national program here and also work with LEED , WELL, Fitwell, WELL With edge.

Charlie ([04:13](#)):

How does that conversation go with clients? Do you give them all these options or do you kind of study the building and make one recommendation? How does it go if a new client comes to you?

Luiza ([04:26](#)):

It depends on the client. When we have a client that doesn't know anything about green building we suggest the best sustainability certification program that could best switch to the project. We have other kinds of clients that come to us with a certification system already defined. They come to us asking for LEED, for example but it depends, but generally we suggest the most suitable certification system for the project.

Charlie ([05:14](#)):

Tell us about your career. Did you work for some other companies? I know you've also done some teaching along the way, and been active with the

Green Building Council there in Brazil. Tell us about that and then we'll talk about your current company. What kind of companies had you worked at as you built your green career?

Luiza ([05:32](#)):

I started working in a big consultants from here. Actually. It's not a consultant firm. It's a global real estate company that is Cushman and Wakefield. At that time, they started a new area focused on consultants. I started as an intern and I was the first person to join the team that time. There was only my boss. She was starting and also learning about how to make consultants in green buildings. We worked very, very closely, and learning day by day, how to work with LEED certification. The project was already sold to the clients. We had to learn and make it on practice to pass through other, consultancy firms. In 2015, I founded StraubJunqueira together with my partner, Eduardo. I've been working in my own company ever since. It's a small one, but I love what I do and we are getting bigger year by year.

Charlie ([07:02](#)):

I can tell you're one of the experts in your region, of course. Tell us what's keeping you busy today. What kind of work and services do you do at your company and what are some cool projects maybe you're working with?

Luiza ([07:16](#)):

Right now I have a bunch of different products from home. All of those coincidentally are working with wood construction. It's a very new technology and a very important technology here in Brazil and all over the world. All of those are wooden (inaudible). I have projects from commercial interiors, commercial buildings, retail. I have many different types of products from small to big one. I think that right now, the most important project that I'm working on is, a new headquarter, of a major technology company. It's an American company, but they are present all over and they are building the new headquarter here in San Paolo. It's the biggest project and probably it will be LEED platinum. We are working hard on it and probably it will be platinum.

Charlie ([08:34](#)):

Amazing what a cool project. It seems like these big companies look to you to do that work and that's rare. I find Luiza to be both residential and commercial, right? Here in the U S my firm, we do all commercials. We don't do the residential. Is that unique there in Brazil that you're able to do both residential and commercial?

Luiza ([08:56](#)):

I believe that here in Brazil, we don't have many consultants firms. We don't have many specialists in certification systems here in Brazil. All the firms work with all kinds of projects. Actually, the residential projects are a small part of our work. The commercial one has more demand, but I think that here in Brazil, everyone works with everything.

Charlie ([09:30](#)):

How are healthy buildings right now? Obviously the pandemic. Unfortunately, it seems to be continuing here at the time we're recording this podcast. I know you've got some credentials WELL and Fitwell. You're starting to see some WELL and Fitwell projects or maybe WELL health safety ratings. Is that important? How do I know this is a healthy building? Is that happening?

Luiza ([09:54](#)):

It's growing here. It was growing before the pandemic and during the pandemic we saw a huge importance and many clients are asking us for the WELL certification systems, especially in the commercial buildings and also residential ones. We were pioneers here in Brazil with the WELL certification. I was responsible for the first certified WELL project in Brazil, but also we were late in America back in 2016, and. Now we have many projects pursuing WELL and Fitwell. We started working with Fitwell late about last year, but it took on a great importance here. We also started working with the health safety rating. Yes, it's growing here. It's very important here. I think it's that global movement, but here it's already working also,

Charlie ([11:10](#)):

Thank you. So important right now. It's not what's our impact on the environment, a program like LEED, what's our impact on the people and the health and everything we're going through yourself. Luiza, look back on

your career, your life so far? What are a few proud achievements? What comes to mind? What's on the highlight reel? What are you really proud of?

Luiza ([11:33](#)):

I think first is having certified the first LEED school project in Brazil, and Latin America. Also the first WELL project in Brazil and Latin America, not only for the pioneering spirit, but the importance of these two projects. The school one because I truly believe that education is a way to change society. The WELL project given the importance that we know that investing in health building is very important to people. There were two pioneering projects here and last but not least becoming a LEED Fellow.

Charlie ([12:14](#)):

That's a big one. I know it means a lot to you. LEED for schools program, for those listening to the podcast, maybe you don't work on K through 12 schools. I love that program. I can tell your passion there, Luiza. It's such a good program. I really love to hear that and congrats on LEED Fellow. What does that mean to you? I know you got that last year. What does that mean for you?

Luiza ([12:38](#)):

It's a very important achievement in my career. Definitely. Like you said, I teach some classes here from university to GBC classes to prepare students to become LEED GA. Every time that I start my class, I explain to them the difference in credentials. What is a LEED GA? What is a LEED AP? And then I tell them that there exists another classification of LEED experts that is LEED Fellow, but there is not a test to become a LEED Fellow. It's a process that you pass through and then you achieve, but you need to have at least 10 years of experience to work on many different projects and everything. They always ask me, "oh, wow. Why aren't you a LEED Fellow?" I'm talking about two or three years. I've got a goal. I explained to them that I wasn't prepared to become a LEED Fellow yet. It was my thought. It was my target at the time. I believe I am the fourth person here in Brazil to become a LEED Fellow. It's very new here and it's very important. I think because of the importance of it to me, I always teach that to my students. I always talk about LEED Fellow and how relevant to us here is someone who works with LEED. I believe it's very important to me. It was a very important,

Charlie ([14:32](#)):

Well, congratulations again, and well-deserved. Tell us about the teaching. I know when I look at your LinkedIn profile, a professor here teaches here, so it seems like you love to teach. What kind of classes are you teaching? Tell us about that.

Luiza ([14:50](#)):

I love to teach. When I was at the university, one day a colleague told me, "Oh, you have a lot of sustainability you should teach it." I said, "No, it's not for me. I don't like to teach "no, it doesn't fit me" but life took me this way. I was invited when I was very young, I had just graduated. Our professor asked me to have experience, to teach a class of his and I like it. I started to teach in very different schools and also in BGBC. I mainly teach sustainability issues related to construction. Sustainable buildings are mostly what I teach, but I also teach general sustainability concerns like ESG and everything related to sustainability, climate change and so on.

Charlie ([16:13](#)):

Exciting, I'm sure the students are like, "Yes, I did it. I need to know about green buildings and sustainability." All right. I love to ask this question. What are you reading up on? What's around the corner in the green building movement, the healthy building movement? What do you think is next? What do you think is trending? What's next?

Luiza ([16:34](#)):

I don't know if it's trending. Actually, I believe that we need to make green buildings more inclusive and accessible to all. Climate change is an urgent issue and it affects mainly the most vulnerable people. I truly believe that we have to give access to quality, sustainable buildings for everyone and not only the commercial buildings. We need to make it inclusive without exception to all. I don't think it's a trend, but I think it's a must do and we are responsible for that.

Charlie ([17:31](#)):

ESG reporting and carbon. What's the new language that we need to be talking about right now?

Luiza ([17:38](#)):

The new language it's already here, it's ESG. Actually it's not new. We know that ESG has existed for a long time, but now with climate change it's urgent and all the investors are looking for ESG investments. We need to prepare everyone to be in this boat, especially here in Brazil. All construction firms, all the real estate firms are with open eyes and trying to understand how to fit the ESG requirements. We have a lot of work on it, a lot of work to do on it. We are trying to help them to make it easy, but make them understand that it's very important.

Charlie ([18:34](#)):

Let's talk a little more about you. Let's talk about what you think is your specialty or gifts?

Luiza ([18:40](#)):

Actually, I don't believe that I have a specialty or a talent. I think that in my career I've always been interested in everything related to sustainability in a holistic way. I believe that I'm very generalist and I don't think being generalist, it's a bad thing. I think it's very important. I have all this view of sustainability. I cannot say that I'm very expert at that. I'm very good in something specific, for example, energy efficiency or materials, but I know a little bit about everything and I think it's very important to my consultant experience and work.

Charlie ([19:38](#)):

That's good stuff. Do you have any good habits or rituals? Like what keeps you productive?

Luiza ([19:44](#)):

I think I will maintain a (inaudible) frequency . I believe that in our area we cannot stop at any time. New technologies and new studies are released every day. I think it's very important to keep a routine of studying frequently.

Charlie ([20:09](#)):

Good. Let's talk a little bit about bucket lists. I'm a fan of a bucket list. Any adventure, any travel, maybe you want to write a book? I don't know. What

are a couple things that you really look forward to? Wishlist? An American saying "before you kick the bucket" for your end of life. What are some things you want to do to accomplish travel experience? In other words, what are some other experiences that you want to have? What are one or two things?

Luiza ([20:47](#)):

Yes. I love to travel. I love to know different cultures. I'd like to travel much more, now in the pandemic we are forbidden to do that. Currently I am pregnant with my second child, I need to count down and I won't have time to travel until he is born. After he's born, I'd like to go back to a formal education. I need to find a way to conciliate all of these things that I like to do work a lot. I also would like to spend more time with my children and to travel to new different cultures. I don't believe that I have something specific now. I think that these desires, these wish lists are changing every day and depending on the moments of our lives. For now, I'd like to stay calm and be prepared to receive my new child.

Charlie ([22:09](#)):

That's exciting times and travel's tough right now, once all this passes and the little one gets a little older. Is there maybe one place you really want to go to in the future?

Luiza ([22:24](#)):

It's difficult because there's a lot of places. In English, I don't know if it's right in Iceland. I've been watching some programs from Iceland and I'd like to be there

Charlie ([22:52](#)):

It's on my bucket list. Let's talk about books. Is there a book you would recommend, maybe it's one you read? It doesn't even have to be about Green Building.

Luiza ([23:04](#)):

Almost all the books that I read are related to green building or to sustainability. Right now I just started to read the new book by Bill Gates, but it's very early. Last year I read two books during the pandemic that helped me make sure that sustainable building, but also the health

buildings are very important to everyone which were health buildings by Joseph Allen and Don McCumber and the grading doors by Emily. And those are two books that I really like and I recommend.

Charlie ([23:49](#)):

Oh, great. Well, in the podcast show notes for everybody listening, I'll put links to the books here. Luiza, as we come to a close, I have two final questions. One is with your career, is there anything you wish you'd known earlier? Any career advice you wish you to have?

Luiza ([24:08](#)):

I believe first is to have a holistic understanding of sustainability, not just general sustainable engineering. If you would like to work with sustainability we need to have an understanding more holistic and because everything is connected. Climate change is here and as an architect, as an engineer, they have a huge responsibility to fight against climate change. The second never stops studying. It's very important to keep studying, keep at it frequently because like I said, it's changing every day.

Charlie ([24:53](#)):

No, that's great advice. I guess my last question is if someone's listening to this podcast right now, and they've really been inspired by your story and who knows, they might be down in Brazil where you are. What words of encouragement do you have for them, if they're just now thinking of getting into Green building?

Luiza ([25:23](#)):

Believe in it. If you believe it you can collect the fruits that you plant and you feel like working with it. It's very Good. You have a good reward and very good to know that you are working with yourself and that makes a huge impact in the society. Not only to you, but to everyone. Go on and believe in it.

Charlie ([26:11](#)):

Thank you. Thank you for those words of encouragement. To everyone listening, connect on LinkedIn with Luiza, let her know what you thought of her story. We'll put a link to your LinkedIn profile and just congratulations on all of your green building work, commercial, residential, your LEED

Fellow and all those firsts that you told us about today. Thank you for being on the podcast. I really enjoyed learning more about your story. Thank you.

Charlie ([26:38](#)):

I just want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year on the Green Building Matters Podcast. Me and the entire team were stoked and so glad to continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast at [gbs.com](#). Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to [gbes.com/podcast](#) for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode. And you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing, yes. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you in next week's episode.