2020 Global Town Hall Series
Latin America
USGBC convened the sustainability community for its inaugural Latin America Town Hall to celebrate regional accomplishments and reaffirm strategies for moving toward a healthier, more resilient future.

Nicolette Bohnett shared some of the amazing progress being made across Latin America, while Alejandra Cabrera, Diana Guerra, Pamela Castellán, Viviana Valdivieso, Francesca Mayer Martinelli, María Fernanda Aguirre, and Felipe Faria from our partner green building councils, provided greetings and highlights from their individual markets. Dave Witek introduced the many functionalities of the Arc platform that help make performance measurement accessible for all, and Mahesh Ramanujam, President & CEO, shared his vision for creating a strong and healthy economy through the healthy people and healthy places strategy.

Regional Highlights

**Mexico & Central America**

With more than 1,700 LEED Projects across the region, Mexico and Central America are contributing to a sustainable future for all.

Mexico is home to some unique and excellent examples of green building, including Grupo BIMBO’s LEED Gold baked goods distribution center in Mexico City. The center serves 200,000 customers in the area, providing jobs and food for the local community. Grupo BIMBO's energy-use reductions have allowed them to continue servicing their community while simultaneously reducing their annual carbon emissions by 269 tons.

In Central America, you will find examples of excellence in green building, including the award-winning MP Service HQ with the highest LEED score in Central America, and the world's first purpose-built luxury surf coaching facility at Surf Simply in Costa Rica. Each are unique and innovative developments emblematic of Central American ingenuity. In Guatemala, green building is becoming a national priority, with some schools of architecture offering specific courses on LEED certification.

With a combined total of 862 LEED Accredited Professionals, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean are demonstrating their commitment towards a higher quality of life for the more than 200 million people who call the region home.
South America

Spanish-speaking South America is making a collective effort to ensure a better future for its communities.

South American companies are tackling rising energy needs and concerns of resilience with projects like CORPORATIVO 194 in Ecuador, which features 10 floors of LEED Platinum office space that showcase the benefits that sustainable workspaces can have on occupants. More than 90% of regularly occupied spaces have exterior visuals and natural lighting, increasing worker mood and productivity. The project also emphasizes parking for bicycles, helping to reduce emissions while encouraging healthy habits for employees.

The LEED Gold Data Center GTD Lidice 2 in Chile, one of two projects in the country to achieve a maximum score in energy optimization, highlights how crucial infrastructure can be improved across South America. Data centers have become extremely relevant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and GTD Lidice 2 has transformed them into a prime example of sustainability driving resilience. Falabella Retail S.A., also headquartered in Chile, is making a substantial community impact in South America. Specializing in multinational department stores, Falabella has over 30 certified projects across the continent. Falabella seeks to generate efficiencies and increase productivity through the construction of LEED certified shops and buildings that emphasize eco-friendly systems.

In Peru, the Cusco-Chincheros International Airport will be the first LEED airport in the country once completed. This unique project is providing current and future economic opportunities to the region, perfectly blending sustainability and business. Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru established the first LEED Lab in Latin America and is pursuing LEED for several projects both on and off campus. A member since 2014, they see sustainability as a part of their long-term goal and mission for teaching.

With 34 member organizations, such as Terranum Desarollo, MANE Sucursal Colombia, Inmobiliaria Las Salina, South America is building a better future for all.

Brazil

Brazil is a powerhouse in Latin America with over 17.6 million Gross Square Meters of LEED certified space.
Organizations across Brazil are setting their sights on zero. In 2019, Petinelli, a Curitiba-based engineering and consulting firm, successfully certified their headquarters as the first LEED Zero building in the world. Today, their headquarters is a living laboratory and showroom that demonstrates the possibilities of LEED Zero buildings. Elsewhere in Brazil, the nonprofit Adventist Education has taken initiative and retrofitted 60+ of their schools, two of which will be LEED Zero by 2021, and all of which will be using Arc to track performance. Their headquarters will also be LEED Zero Energy, Zero Water, Zero Waste, and Zero Carbon.

As the host of the annual Greenbuilding Brazil International Conference which saw over 7,000 participants engage in more than 50 online technical sessions last year, Brazil is helping to grow and educate the green building community in Latin America.

### Committing to the Next Generation

Our children deserve not only a good education, but also the guarantee that they are spending their days in buildings that keep them safe and healthy. LEED certified schools help to ensure a healthy learning environment by prioritizing factors that protect students’ physical health, such as indoor air quality monitoring, and provide for their psychological health through techniques like increased daylighting.

The LEED Gold Rochester School in Bogota, Colombia has a high commitment to benchmarking performance indicators in their operations and maintenance, utilizing the Arc system to ensure the team is meeting their performance goals. This has allowed Rochester School to be the first school project in Latin America to recertify with LEED v4.1. The 1.8 million square foot project was headed by a specifically designated Sustainability Team that regularly monitors the building's performance with Arc. The team additionally surveyed students and staff and found a high level of satisfaction across the board, especially in the categories of indoor air quality, daylight, indoor lighting and views to outdoors. Since 2012, Rochester School has led the organization of the Green Apple Day of Service event, developing academic activities with other educational institutions, the government sector of the Municipality of Chía and private entities, carrying out activities for the benefit of the community, by planting more than 1000 native species of trees in different areas of the municipality, cleaning the nearby areas, and providing training in sustainability topics.
In Nicaragua, sisters Hilaria and Isola Salinas are working to design an exciting new school that will supporting a safe and healthy education for girls in the region. Escuela Vera Angelita has been designed with local materials, movement sensors for lighting, cross ventilation, solar panels and many other elements and features that support student health and help to conserve important resource. The school's design puts sustainability education at its forefront, with a farm component where girls are going to grow their own food and a botanical garden where they will learn about different fauna and flora species. When the project is complete, the school's syllabus will include re-planting trees and bamboo on the highest parts of the farm to teach students the importance of sustainable agriculture while increasing water resources for the school and surrounding communities.

The Tecnológico de Monterrey, has not only achieved LEED Gold certification for their Campus Library, they have also worked to improve worldwide understanding of the importance of healthy buildings. Along with 14 other prestigious institutions of higher education, the Tecnológico de Monterrey has formed a network of universities that collaborate with the UN and other international organizations to implement the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education, research, and social entrepreneurship. Through this collaboration, the universities hope to share knowledge and innovations and collaborate with public and private actors to lead, guide and support local, national, and global proposals that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Additionally, they plan to communicate their progress in and be held accountable publicly. In addition, Tec de Monterrey has been a pioneer in the region on promoting sustainability through hands-on education, beginning a LEED Lab in 2017 and certifying the first LEED O+M v4 Platinum LEED Lab project in Latin America. In early 2020, they began another LEED Lab group, which is currently undergoing a LEED Certification for the prestigious cafeteria "La Carreta."

Creche Hassis School, located in Florianópolis, serves up to 200 children and was the first public building in Brazil to achieve LEED Platinum. The building puts special consideration into the comfort and well-being of its students. Through increased daylighting, thermal comfort and low emitting materials, Creche Hassis ensures that its students can properly focus on their studies in an environment that is beneficial to their physical and mental health. Impressively, Creche Hassis is also completely energy self-sufficient through solar panels and has achieved LEED Zero Energy.

Schools across Latin America are bringing healthy buildings to students of all ages, ensuring that students in their communities, and across the world are receiving safe, healthy, and sustainable educations.
Cultivating Healthy Communities

Communities are shaped by their buildings and landscapes. Every design decision for influences how people engage with the world around them and how they interact with each other. A good building is not only healthy and sustainable, but also capable of supporting and improving a community. This is the force that drives projects like JAPAN HOUSE, located in São Paulo, a LEED project created by the Japanese Government that promotes Japanese culture in an innovative and unique place. The essence of JAPAN HOUSE is to be surprising every day. São Paulo (SP) was one of the 3 locations chosen, together with London and Los Angeles. Places specially selected to spread all the characteristics of Japan, from the ancient culture to the innovative perspectives. At JAPAN HOUSE, traditions are side by side with the future.

In Port Au Prince, Haiti, the LEED Platinum William Jefferson Clinton Children’s Center is bringing the community together in an entirely unique way. When the 2010 earthquake left hundreds of thousands of Haitian children in need of care, the need for a healthy, resilient children’s center was obvious. Through the combined efforts of USGBC, Fondation Enfant Jesus, the Clinton Foundation and many other partners, construction has been under way to build a LEED Platinum orphanage that can also serve as a community resource in times of emergency. The primary design goal of the Clinton Children’s Center was to make the structure fully self-sufficient, generating adequate power for its needs, and collecting and processing all rainwater and well water for its occupants. The electrical system is designed to be make use of solar and a backup on-site electrical generator, creating a closed-loop system. These technologies will work in sync to provide power to the building, with enough solar energy to power the building during the day and charge batteries for nighttime operation. The center’s water is fully filtered and treated with UV lighting for the entire building, and reverse osmosis technologies provide the purest water for cooking and drinking with refillable water coolers located throughout the site. Today, the building is up and running and is producing more energy than it uses. The building has by far the cleanest drinking water in the entire country, has a natural septic system, and is built to withstand the most serious of disasters while remaining fully operational. The Clinton Children’s Center is the cornerstone of a recovering community of orphaned and HIV-positive children. To learn more and virtually explore the project site, please watch this video.

One of the most exciting LEED certifications is LEED for Cities and Communities. This rapidly growing system challenges developers to design entire neighborhoods that bring communities together while adhering to modern sustainability and equity standards. One such project is Vivero Parque Residencial, from Constructora Bolívar, an urban community and landscaping development in Cali, Colombia. Vivero Parque Residencial
is the first project in South America to achieve pre-certification status for v4.1. The primary objective of Vivero Parque Residencial is to provide its future inhabitants with the structural, sustainable and architectural systems necessary for optimal life quality. Vivero Parque Residencial was planned as an equitable, sustainable, and resilient community in accordance with the objectives of USGBC and the United Nations. The project creates a model of an inclusive city, where people of all ages can access and utilize recreational and quality of life services. The project team hopes that the high standards of the project will allow the Vivero Parque community to become a reference for Latin America.

LEED has the power to build healthy urban communities. From cultural centers, like Japan House São Paulo, to community resources like the Clinton Children’s Center, and planned developments like Vivero Parque Residencial, LEED projects are strengthening community ties across Latin America.

Healthy Homes, Healthy People

Perhaps no building is more important to a person’s health than their home. The place where you live, eat and sleep can create profound consequences for your respiratory, neurological, and mental health. Ensuring that we build with safe, sustainable materials is the first step to creating homes that have a net positive effect on their residents. These effects are only amplified when put in the context of multifamily residences. The design and maintenance of large multifamily residences are high impact and centralized, making them perfect candidates for LEED certification.
VERT 79 is the first LEED certified housing project in Latin America to certify as a New Construction under LEED Version 4. The Colombian project does not use mechanical systems for ventilation and air conditioning. Instead, all residential units and common areas are naturally ventilated, guaranteeing renewed air flow throughout the building. This strategy creates significant savings in energy consumption and refrigerant use. The lighting system is efficient with LED lamps and luminaires and occupancy sensors in common areas and basements. This system and the electrical system have an alternative energy supply from solar panels installed on deck that provide around 38,688 kWh / year. A waste management plan was implemented during the development of the construction phase. It was achieved that 98% of the waste produced on site will be diverted from the final disposal in sanitary landfills. On the other hand, 33% of the materials are recycled. VERT 79 is the first LEED certified housing project under the New Construction version 4 modality in all of Latin America.

Earlier this year in LLUM, a 20-story multifamily residential project, was successfully recertified from LEED Silver to LEED Gold. LLUM comprises 15 “suspended homes,” designed to provide families with the comforts of a single-family residence in the convenience of an apartment building. Occupant comfort and well-being was a major priority for the project, with particular focus on thermal comfort and daylighting. Curitiba has a mild subtropical climate and homeowners prefer operable windows for thermal comfort control. Laguna’s design allows the building to provide adequate thermal comfort to all residents year round. The building façade plays a critical role in preventing excessive heat gain in the summer and capturing the sun’s warmth in the winter.

These innovations eliminate the need for mechanical cooling and heating for 90% of the year. Not only does the glass façade provide thermal comfort, but it also allows the residents to enjoy plenty of natural daylight. Homeowners can reduce their electricity costs and their carbon footprint by taking advantage of daylight, but they
may also find their homes more restful. Exposure to daylight helps to reinforce circadian rhythms and promote better sleep and overall improved health and well-being. The building’s biophilic design provides a framework for the satisfying experience of nature in the built environment. The play area for children is encircled in greenery, as is also the case with a sundeck and landscaped outdoor terrace—accessible to all building occupants—that are planted with Jaboticaba berry trees, a native Brazilian species.

With tens of thousands of registered projects, the demand for qualified LEED Green Raters is growing every day. They are individuals authorized by GBCI to perform verification services, based on their demonstrated experience and expertise in residential green building and verification. Up until recently, there was only one LEED Green Rater in the entirety of Latin America. However, thanks to a recent GBCI training event, the number of LEED Green Raters in the region has jumped to 14 across six countries. With more people training to become LEED Green Raters, Latin America is increasing its capacity to build healthier homes and raise the living standard for all.

Partnership is the New Leadership

Each GBC across Latin America brings together green building professionals and member organizations for education, advocacy, community building, and technical training. This collaboration creates thriving green building communities that span entire nations and work together to innovate and implement new solutions.

Awareness is paramount to the LEED movement. In recent years, GBC Brasil produced media that impacted more than 5 million people through hundreds of online stories, radio interviews, newspaper articles and TV spots. In March of this year, to encourage professionals to remain safe and motivated at home during the COVID-19 Pandemic, GBC Brasil also opened their expansive online education platform for free use and reached over 4,000 professionals.

Advocacy and engagement with national, state, and municipal governments is critically important work done by many of the GBCs in Latin America. For example, in Mexico, SUMe is working with the states of Campeche and Yucatán on developing critical guidelines for energy efficiency in building operations, purchasing, or leasing agreements, as well as technical standards, and convening leaders to discuss state and national strategies. Guatemala GBC is collaborating with Guatemala City Municipality, conducting training and working to incorporate sustainability strategies in different instruments and projects in a city level. El Salvador GBC is likewise deeply involved with the City of San Salvador Metropolitan Area Planning Office to develop guidelines to help shape a more sustainable future for the capital.

Financial incentives and programs are another key element to driving market transformation. Colombia GBC
(CCCS) has been instrumental in helping to create both public sector incentives and private sector green bonds to support the growing green building industry. Likewise, Peru and Guatemala GBC are working with private banks to create financial incentives for green affordable homes.

Education is at the heart of GBCs in Latin America. From LEED Labs established in Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico that are educating the next generation of green building professionals, to the highly technical training programs, project team education, and commercial support offered by GBCs. In Peru, the council drives innovation by promoting and educating the market on multiple rating systems, and supporting teams that register for the first SITES, WELL, and EDGE projects in the country. Chile GBC hosted the first education program in 2020 on social equity and offers a huge range of highly technical sessions on topics from Arc to LEED certification, to a collaborative five-part series on LEED Residential this October.

Collaboration across borders is another hallmark of the GBC network. As was announced during the Town Hall events, SUMe has hosted a regional training on TRUE Zero Waste and the first Green Rater workshop in Spanish. CCCS in Colombia will offer the first LEED for Cities and Communities Professionals training in a few months which will be open to the entire region.

GBCs continue to grow, not only in membership but in activity and influence. Their continued success means that the future of buildings is healthier, more resilient, more equitable and more sustainable than ever before.

Leading Latin America to A Greener Tomorrow

Across Latin America, dedicated LEED Professionals are working to promote green building in their communities. It is these innovators that turn policy into practice, creating workspaces and communities that are healthier, more resilient, more sustainable, and more equitable.

Maria de Lourdes Salinas is a LEED Fellow, who has been involved in the Green Building industry since 2006 and has worked in internationally recognized firms and projects in the U.S.A., Australia, Southeast Asia, and Mexico. She has specialized in performing analyzes, investigations and providing environmental consultancy, from small low-income housing developments, to large infrastructure projects, such as the tallest skyscrapers in LATAM and Airports. She is the Founder and Director of THREE Environmental Consulting, a firm with over 10 years of experience, specialized in technology based
environmental consulting, with over 100 projects in various countries, and more than 35 LEED certified projects. She has been a LEED Accredited Professional since 2008 and has been accredited to other awards such as Enlace E+E, BID Network, Santander Scholarship for SME companies, and the Prize E-100 for Valuable Entrepreneurs. In 2019, she participated at the U.N. Headquarters in New York, developing commitments aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals for entrepreneurs. Over the years, she has also been an instructor, speaker, coach, advocate, and inspiration for thousands of green building enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, and developers.

In Colombia, Dr. Angelica M. Ospina Alvarado is helping to support sustainable design as the Technical Director of the Colombia Green Building Council. Angelica is a LEED Fellow as well as one of the founders of the Colombia Green Building Council in 2008. Over the past twelve years, Angelica has volunteered her knowledge and experience by serving as member of the board of directors and as director of the technical committee. Over her career, Angelica has been a forefront leader of the adoption of green building practices and LEED certifications in Colombia. Her technical rigor and integrative approach have brought together the work of academia, industry, professional associations, and government to advance the field. In addition to her work with the Colombia Green Building Council, Angelica is also a part time professor at Universidad de los Andes and leads the sustainable construction field at the Construction Engineering and Management Master Program from the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department.

Thank you to our LEED Fellows across Latin America: Cesar Ulises Treviño, Dario Ibarguengoitia, Jorge Lopez de Obeso, Diana Paez, Maria de Lourdes Salinas, David Rodriguez, Andres Prera, Rinato Miranda, Diego Ibarra, Gabriela Mesquita, Adriana Petrella Hansen, Anderson Benite and Guido Petinelli.

By bringing healthy buildings to communities across Latin America, LEED Fellows and green building leaders have helped to create not only a more sustainable built environment, but also a more resilient economy and a healthier population.
Speakers

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