

## **Vita Sanderson Biography**

Vita is chartered structural engineer who currently works at Arup where she supports development clients such as the World Bank and UN agencies on the implementation of social infrastructure, particularly in health and education. She is currently also the Vice Chair of the board at the Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) operational HQ in Amsterdam governance over programming decisions for their portfolio of humanitarian response projects globally as well as an elected trustee of MSF UK.

Vita started her career at the structural engineering practice Elliott Wood, working predominately on retrofit of existing buildings in London. Following the collapse of the Rana Plaza Factory in Bangladesh, Vita then took leave of absence to undertake structural inspections of other garments factories as part of the ACCORD agreement set up in response to the disaster. She then moved to Nepal following the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, working as part of team constructing UNICEF Transitional Learning Centres in remote Himalayan communities. Following this, Vita began working for Médecins Sans Frontières as field staff initially in south-eastern Ukraine, adapting existing clinics for a new hepatitis C programme, before moving to South Sudan. Here, Vita managed a 60-strong team constructing a new 160 bed field hospital in Agok in the disputed area of Abyei.

While at Arup she has worked on large scale schools retrofitting and reconstruction programmes in Western Nepal and Peru, undertaken research work in low-cost seismic construction techniques with the University of Bristol, developed school design guidance for the Ministry of Education in Bhutan and worked in Zimbabwe in response to Cyclone Idai. Recently she has focussed on supporting countries in improving resilience, sustainability and inclusivity of their buildings through the strengthening of their Building Regulations and Codes, working in Myanmar, Zanzibar, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.

Vita received the Smeaton Medal in 2021 for her commitment to engineering to reduce risk in places where the effects of natural disasters or conflict significantly impacts populations.