

# ANNINA VAN NEEL

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## The Tiekie Box Project

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2023 Global Fellow



### BIG BOLD IDEA

**Decolonize Black cultural heritage for the global African diaspora by accelerating restitution and healing of trans-generational trauma incurred by colonialism and slavery.**

### ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Tiekie Box Project (TTBP) aims to liberate Black cultural heritage tied to colonialism and slavery. TTBP facilitates and encourages a highly cultural, emotional, and spiritual reconnection between the African Diaspora and descendants to their raw ancestral knowledge and resources distributed globally. TTBP uses immersive storytelling, artistic expression, and meaningful decolonized interpretation of African archaeology, archival data, and written history to address the trans-generational wounds of slavery and colonialism. Bespoke, community-led and site-specific tools such as film screenings, talks, and art exhibitions shape the future of a holistic restitution of African cultural heritage.

### PERSONAL BIO

Annina Van Neel is the founder and chief executive officer of The Tiekie Box Project. Born in Namibia, she received her bachelor's degree in environmental and geographical science and archaeology at the University of Cape Town. While there, she gained foundational knowledge of cultural heritage. Her passion for African heritage was reignited when she emigrated to the British Overseas Territory of Saint Helena Island to work as the environmental officer for the airport construction project. In that role, she encountered the neglected but most significant physical trace of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: The African Burial Grounds on Saint Helena Island. Annina has been campaigning for the preservation of this sacred site and history through creative community engagement and activism. Her journey is chronicled in the full feature length documentary, "A Story of Bones." She is a member and adviser to international Diaspora groups such as the St. Eustatius Afrikan Burial Ground Alliance and the International Commission for Cultural Heritage SOAD. She is collaborating with several museums and institutions actively decolonizing their collections and exhibitions. After 12 years of working abroad, Annina is returning home to Namibia with her family to learn about her own colonial history and the Nama and the Herero genocide.

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#### Organization/Fellow Location

Swakopmund, Namibia

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#### Organization Structure

Nonprofit

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