

## Tamkine Tribune

### Africa Is Not Behind — It's Just Not Running the Same Race

Let us begin with a familiar fable: the rabbit and the turtle. One moves fast, full of pride; the other moves slow, full of intent. The rabbit sprints ahead, laughing; the turtle walks its path, unfazed. In the end, we know who wins, not because of speed, but because of direction, persistence, rhythm, and quiet consistency. Today, we propose a retelling of this story. In this version, the rabbit is global development orthodoxy; fast, loud, and obsessed with metrics. The turtle is Africa.

*Every few years, the rabbit hosts a summit. A report is published. Headlines follow: "Africa Is Falling Behind." The data is alarming, they say, low broadband penetration, delayed industrial uptake, insufficient unicorns, irregular educational progression. The graphs are red. The dashboards blink. But no one ever stops to ask the question that matters: behind whom, exactly? According to what metric? And who set the pace in the first place?*

You see, the rabbit built the racetrack. It set the rules. It defined progress by quarterly growth rates, number of startups, acceleration in tech adoption, and foreign direct investment. It called this "development" and assumed it was universal. Then it looked over its shoulder at the turtle and shouted, "Hurry up!" But the turtle wasn't running late. It simply wasn't running that race. It had chosen another direction altogether.

At the Tamkine Foundation, we've stopped clapping for rabbits. We are no longer seduced by the illusion of progress that accelerates without purpose, by velocity that lacks vision. We have seen too many reforms that prioritized speed over wisdom, imitation over innovation. Africa has always moved differently, not because it cannot move faster, but because it has memory.

And in that memory lies rhythm, cycles, plural timelines, and the refusal to race blindly toward a cliff just because someone else is sprinting.

*The problem is not that Africa is slow. The problem is that the world mistakes deliberation for delay. When our communities pause before adopting technologies, they are not resisting the future, they are negotiating its terms. When a rural school resists digitization, it may not be backward; it may simply recognize that a platform cannot replace a teacher who knows every child by name in a school that is barely a school. When a policy takes time to unfold, it may be because it is rooted in consultation, not command. These are not signs of inefficiency. They are signs of agency.*

*But the rabbit does not see this. It keeps running, keeps measuring, keeps publishing its reports. It warns that Africa is missing the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Africa, meanwhile, is asking whether it even wants to join the third. Because rushing into the future is not courage — sometimes it is desperation, sometimes it is denial. And Africa, in many places, is choosing to step carefully, to preserve coherence, to invent alternative routes rather than replicate broken and uncertain ones.*

At Tamkine, we design accordingly. Our programs and platforms are not built for acceleration, but for *alignment*. We do not ask how fast learners can complete a module, we ask how deeply they understand, how fully they grow, how confidently they adapt. We do not rank progress by imported benchmarks. We listen to context, to culture, to the unseen timelines that govern real transformation. And yes, we allow space for slowness, for



Africa is not behind. It is walking at its own pace, composing futures that do not resemble Western blueprints, and choosing timelines that make sense in its own ecosystems.

The turtle is not late. It is strategic. It is grounded. It is still moving, and it knows exactly where it is going.

So let the rabbits of the world run. We are not chasing them. We are building something else entirely, and we're right on time.

*#Tamkine\_together\_we\_will\_succeed*

**Tribune by Dr. Abdelilah Kadili, *President of the Tamkine Foundation***