

# The ImpleMentors

## A short history and the future of the A21 Dual System



### Q What is this A21?

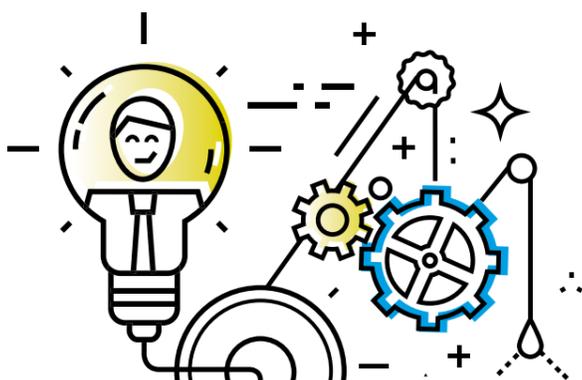
- A** The A21 is a learning programme, a modern apprenticeship of the 21st century, designed for the South African landscape.

### Q Who came up this idea?

- A** While visiting Switzerland in 2011, the National Minister of Higher Education and Training saw the benefits of the dual system in the education and training of learners and the economy of the country. The result of which is extremely low unemployment, especially among the youth. The Minister then tasked his Department with developing and implementing a South African version of the Dual System.

### Q How is it being implemented?

- A** In 2012, the National Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) partnered with Swiss South Africa Cooperative Initiative (SSACI) to develop a local dual system. During the early days of 2012 to 2014 four different pilot processes were tried utilising both National Technical Education (NATED) and National Certificate Vocational (NCV) qualifications. All pilots have to date been implemented utilising artisan occupations, originally electrician, welder, mechatronic and vehicle body builder qualifications.

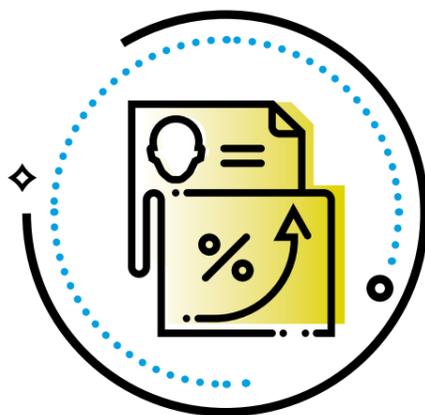


### Q Did the pilot projects work?

- A** The NATED based pilots were reasonably successful but the mechatronic dual pilot that was based on the NCV failed due to the poor recruitment process and complex academic nature of the NCV.

### Q Are there any reports on those original pilot projects?

- A** Yes, the projects were evaluated independently, and reports can be requested from the Department of Higher Education and Training on request.



### Q What happened after the initial pilot projects?

- A** A second and far more comprehensive pilot process was started in 2014 this time with the extra help of the German International Cooperation Agency that joined DHET and SSACI. However, this time the pilot projects utilised the emerging and industry-based occupational qualifications that are being developed under the auspices of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.

### Q How is the second pilot project going?

- A** They are progressing well at two sites in Ekurhuleni Gauteng as well as two sites in Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape. The occupations being piloted are electricians and plumbers over a three-year period. Pilots in the Western Cape were started in January 2019.

### Q Are there any reports on these second pilot projects?

- A** Yes, there are ten very detailed fact sheets for each workstream that covers the entire project for year one. Each fact sheet gives key factors for success, lessons learnt so far and also offers the most relevant strategic and policy aspects that are to be considered by stakeholders. The fact sheets will be updated as the project continues to be rolled out.

### Q Where can I get these fact sheets?

- A** They are available on request from the DHET.

### Q So it seems that an A21 is only for artisan trades?

- A** Not at all, an A21 can be developed and implemented for any occupation that has a work-place based component to it.



### Q Are all A21s only three-year long programmes - what about shorter courses?

- A** The time required for the learning programme is determined by the qualification. There are some qualifications that need only six months, such as a bicycle mechanic. A21s can be developed with any of the job creation programmes, like the national Yes 4 Youth, the provincial DEDAT Work and Skills Programme and any current Learnership or Internship Programme - the key is a registered occupational qualification or part qualification.