

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS: A CASE STUDY
OF SATAWU's HIV PROGRAMMES IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY.**

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Abstract:

This research examines a possible welfare role of transport trade unions in the face of HIV/AIDS, particularly in the trucking industry. It uses SATAWU as a case study to see what the union, as a transport union, is doing to fight the spread of HIV in the industry. This study was motivated by a lack of previous research on the subject and also the claim of some studies that truck drivers are partly responsible for the spread of HIV in rural Southern Africa. The research was done through in-depth interviews with SATAWU officials, members of the Road Freight Association, truck drivers and other stakeholders.

The main argument in this research is that although government has policies and programmes in place to fight the spread of HIV, there are certain things the unions can do to help seeing that they have more influence on the workers and they have easier access to them. The study examines programmes that are already in place and what is still lacking especially in relation to union involvement. The research also investigates union involvement in existing programmes and establishes what truck drivers and their families think should be done to fight the scourge and its aftermath. SATAWU remains remotely involved despite the spread of the scourge among truckers and the effects thereof on the family. Truckers remain vulnerable and so are their families.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation/thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

(Name of candidate)

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_____ day of _____, 2005

To my late mother, Elizabeth M. Lebesse who passed away on December 22nd, 2004 for her love and support through my years of study, and to all my friends who supported and encouraged me during the writing of this thesis, my sincere thanks.

Preface

This research was born out of an interest in the role of trade unions in South Africa. My interest lay particularly in the union's role in the struggle not only for a better life through better wages and working conditions, but also through their involvement in the political struggle. It was also born out of concern regarding the spread of HIV and AIDS and through curiosity raised by existing study which seemed to blame truck drivers for the spread of HIV/AIDS in rural Southern Africa. I decided then to examine the role of trade unions in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Although this study is aimed at examining the welfare role of trade unions, its scope is limited to the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) since my interests were establishing the validity of the claim that truck drivers were responsible for the spread of HIV. The purpose of the study then was to examine the welfare role of trade unions and to see if SATAWU has any policies or programmes to help fight the spread of HIV in the trucking industry.

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